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THE NEBRASKA BIRD REVIEW

A Review of Nebraska Ornithology

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THE NEBRASKA BIRD REVIEW

A Review of Nebraska Ornithology

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A STUDIO OF THE DISTRIBUTION, MIGRATION AND HYBRIDISM OF THE ROSE-BREASTED AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS IN THE MISSOURI VALLEY REGION

By MYRON H. SWENK*

The genus *Hypomele s* contains only two species, the common Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*H. ludovicianus*) of eastern North America and the equally common Black-headed Grosbeak (*H. melanocephalus*) of western North America. The former species is subspecifically undivided, but the latter has been separated into two subspecies, which might be called the Pacific Black-headed Grosbeak and the Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak (see Oberholser, 1919). The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is a species of the lower Canadian and Transition zones, while the Black-headed is more a lower Canadian and Austral species. The accompanying map shows the general breeding ranges of the two species, and it is readily apparent that they are approximate, or at places quite contiguous, near the international boundary in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and in the eastern

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*An abstract of this paper was read at the twenty-first annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club at St. Louis, Missouri, December 31, 1935.—Ed.*

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portions of the Dakotas and Nebraska and the north-central part of Kansas.

As a contribution toward an elucidation of the problems of the distribution and migration of these two species in the Missouri Valley region, a detailed consideration of their status in Nebraska is presented. In Nebraska, the Rose-breasted Grosbeak is now a more or less common summer resident and breeder along the wooded streams and in the farm groves and town parks over the greater part of the eastern one-third of the state, or west to about the 98th to 99th meridians. The Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak occupies the stream valleys and other wooded sections over most of the western three-fourths of Nebraska, or east to about the 98th to 99th meridians.

THE ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

The early ornithological observers passing along the Missouri River all reported seeing the Rose-breasted Grosbeak in what is now Nebraska, the first record being that of Thomas Say, who recorded the "Rose-breasted gros beak (Loxia ludoviciana)" from Engineer Cantonment (now Fort Calhoun, Washington County), on May 1 and 6, 1820. Prince Maximilian, on his return journey down the Missouri in 1834, near the present Omaha, Douglas County, reported that on May 13 there were "numbers of the red-breasted Fringilla ludoviciana; we shot a good many of them, but they were so fat we had considerable difficulty in preserving the skins." J. J. Audubon, while on his trip up the Missouri in 1843, shot two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks on May 9, when his boat stopped for wood a few miles below Bellevue, Sarpy County. F. V. Hayden, with Lieutenant G. K. Warren's party, en route on foot from their grounded boat at Cedar Island to Fort Pierre, collected a male (No. 4848, U. S. N. M.) at "Ponka Island, Neb." on May 10, 1856, and a female (No. 4851, U. S. N. M.) at "Running Water" (= the Niobrara River) on May 12, 1856 (Baird, 1858).

We do not now know how far to the westward along the tributaries of the Missouri the distribution of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak originally extended. It seems quite certain, however, that the species has extended its range to the westward during the past seventy-five years. The late L. Sessions told the writer on September 12, 1905, that at that time the Rose-breasted Grosbeak was much more common at Norfolk, Madison County, than it had been in the early 1870's, and that it was gradually becoming more common there year by year. In a letter dated March 3, 1915, the late A. J. Leach of Oakdale, Antelope County, stated that it was then very common in that vicinity, but that in the early days it was seldom if ever seen there. Westwardly the distribution of the species is almost entirely along the streams. It follows the Niobrara River west to Bristow (and possibly to the mouth of Long Pine Canyon), the Elkhorn to Neligh (or possibly to Inman), the Platte to Kearney, and the Republican to Inavale.

The writer has examined specimens of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak that were taken at Peru, Nemaha County, by G. A. Coleman, who reported it to Bruner (1896) as a common breeder at that place, six males arriving there in 1889 on May 6. M. A. Carriker, Jr., took a set of five fresh eggs at Nebraska City, Otoe County, on May 19, 1899, another of three fresh eggs on May 19, 1901, and noted the presence of the species in 1900 on August 16. J. S. Hunter records it for the Platte River region in Cass and Sarpy Counties, May 4, 1892. The writer observed it at South Bend, Cass County, on May 17, 1905, May 8, 1909, May 25, 1910 and May 25, 1912, and J. T. Zimmer collected a specimen there on May 9, 1917. It was recorded at Weeping Water, Cass County, on the 5th N. O. U. field day, May 19, 1907.

From Beatrice, Gage County, it was reported by M. L. Eaton and A. S.
Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks

Pease in the 1890's, while during the same period F. A. Colby found it nesting in Gage County, and collected several sets of eggs there in 1894 and 1895 (May 21, 1894, set of 3; May 16, 1895, set of 3; May 27, 1895, sets of 3 and 4; June 6, 1895, set of 3) (Bruner, 1896). During the latter 1890's the writer first noted it at Beatrice on May 12, 1898, May 2, 1899, May 5, 1900, and May 13, 1901. On the latter date the bird was on a completed nest with one fresh egg in it. A nest with three fresh eggs in it was found by the writer on June 14, 1899. Miss Mary Sturmer in 1924 also reported it as breeding at Beatrice. Amos Pyfer reports it as a common breeder at Lanham, in southern Gage County. Many observers have reported the Rose-breasted Grosbeak as a summer resident and breeder in the vicinity of Lincoln, Lancaster County. D. A. Haggard reported it as a "common summer resident" at Lincoln in the early 1890's. J. S. Hunter made the same report of it for the late 1890's, and took a set of four eggs at Saltillo, a few miles south of Lincoln, on June 15, 1899. Bruner (1896) records it as a breeder at Lincoln for the same period. It was recorded from Lincoln on the 9th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 20th, 22nd and 26th N. O. U. field days held, respectively, May 6, 1911, May 10, 1913, May 16, 1914, May 5, 1917, May 20, 1922, May 10, 1924, and May 12, 1928.

Miss Mary St. Martin finds it a common breeder at Wahoo, Saunders County. It was found on the 18th N. O. U. field day, May 15, 1920, at Ashland in the same county. Mrs. H. F. Hole, the Misses Agness and Susie Callaway, and others report it as a common breeding bird at Fairbury, Jefferson County. It was recorded there on the 21st N. O. U. field day, on May 12, 1925. C. O. Carlson reports it as a breeder at Crete, Saline County, and A. S. Pearse has reported it at DeWitt, Saline County (Bruner, 1896). Mrs. L. H. McKillip reports it as a breeder at Seward, Seward County, and Mrs. O. W. Ritchey makes the same report for David City, Butler County. Wilson Tout noted it at York, York County, on May 24, 1898. Milford Pew in the 1890's found it present but uncommon at Hebron, Thayer County, and although it summered there he did not actually find a nest. It is a common summer resident and breeder at Superior, Nuckolls County, according to Mrs. H. C. Johnston and other members of the Superior Bird Club. It was seen there on the 23rd N. O. U. field day, on May 9, 1925. Mrs. George L. Day and Miss Marian Day report it nesting in Superior during the summer of 1932 (L. O. I. No. 67, p. 3). A. M. Brooking reports it as a fairly common summer resident at Inland, Clay County.

At Red Cloud, Webster County, the late J. M. Bates, C. S. Ludlow and Mrs. George Trine all have reported the Rose-breasted Grosbeak as present in small numbers and breeding there. The late Mrs. A. Arnold in 1924 reported it as present and breeding at Inaville, a little to the west in the same county. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are rather common in the vicinity of Hastings, Adams County. Mrs. A. H. Jones found a pair feeding their young in the grass under some trees at Hastings on July 3, 1924. It was seen at Hastings on the 17th, 25th and 30th N. O. U. field days held, respectively, May 10, 1919, May 14, 1927, and May 14, 1932. Also in 1924, Mr. and Mrs. C. K. Hart reported it as breeding at Prosser, Adams County. G. E. Hudson in 1920 found summering birds at Grand Island, Hall County. Dana A. Anderson reports it as a breeder at St. Edward, Boone County, and Mrs. J. R. Swain at Greeley, Greeley County. At Kearney, Buffalo County, C. A. Black finds the Rose-breasted Grosbeak quite uncommon and reports that he has seen only a few individuals there in many years of residence. One specimen, taken June 2, 1901, is in his collection and indicates that the species breeds in that locality. H. Hape- man and M. A. Mortenson both find this species present and breeding at Minden, Kearney County.

The Rose-breasted Grosbeak is, of course, a very common bird in the Omaha vicinity. L. Bruner, L. Skow and I. S. Trostler all reported it as
a breeder there in the 1890's, and the latter observer cited it as "a common summer resident, arrives April 20 to May 10, breeds May 25 to June 10, departs for the south during latter September" (Bruner, 1896). Many other observers have subsequently reported it from that locality. It was recorded for the Omaha vicinity on the 2nd (at Florence), 6th (at Bellevue), 13th 14th, 16th, 19th, 24th and 28th N. O. U. field days, which were held, respectively, on May 14, 1904, May 8, 1908, May 8, 1915, May 6, 1916, May 11, 1918, May 14, 1921, May 15, 1926 and May 17, 1930. J. E. Stipsky finds it a not very common breeder at Hooper, Dodge County, where he found nests on May 26, 1929 (2 eggs), May 29, 1932 (1 egg), May 31, 1931 (3 nests: 1 empty and 1 each with 2 and 3 eggs), June 2, 1935 (2 eggs), June 5, 1932 (broken eggs), June 14, 1931 (3 young), June 29, 1935 (4 eggs), and July 9, 1933 (3 young). L. Bruner (1896) reported it as a breeder at West Point, Cuming County. Aughey (1878) says of it: "Rather abundant in Northern Nebraska. Examined two specimens in June, 1865. Each had about a dozen locusts in its stomach." The locality referred to as "Northern Nebraska" was probably Dakota County, where Aughey gathered other material during that month. It was reported as common at South Sioux City, Dakota County, by I. N. Gabrielson (1914) and observed there on the 27th N. O. U. field day, on May 11, 1929.

Extending along the Elkhorn, the Rose-breasted Grosbeak has been recorded for Norfolk, Madison County, by the late L. Sessions, and from Battle Creek in the same county by Miss Mollie A. Taylor. The late A. J. Leach in 1915 reported it as a common bird at Oakdale, Antelope County. At Neligh, Antelope County, M. Cary (1900) reported it as a common summer resident in the late 1890's, arriving May 4 to 12, breeding early in June and leaving September 8 to 26. In 1900 the first ones arrived in numbers at Neligh on May 7, it was common on May 9, and by May 17 was nest-building. Along the Niobrara, Mrs. John Truman has reported it as summering at Bristow, Boyd County.

The relatively few records of the occurrence in Nebraska of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak west of longitude 100° seem all to refer to migrating birds, quite probably individuals on their way to the Canadian breeding grounds of the species. Such records include a pair observed by J. L. Childs (1908) at the forks of the Dismal River in Hooker County, late in May (between the 22nd and 30th) of 1907; a bird seen at North Platte, Lincoln County, on May 29, 1954 (antea, iii, p. 102); and a specimen collected and mounted by M. J. Maryott at Oshkosh, Garden County, about 1929. The observation of the species at Inman, Holt County, on April 30, 1928, by Dale Stephens, probably concerns a migrating bird. The late J. M. Bates (1900) found it in Long Pine Canyon on May 16, 1899, and considered it as "surely very rare in our parts." However, Will C. Smith had found a nest at Long Pine, and collected the eggs, on June 6, 1898, and found other birds summering there in 1900. Rev. Bates noted it there on June 11. F. M. Dille reports that the species was never observed by him at Valentine, Cherry County, in the twelve years of his bird observations at that place.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK

In northeastern Nebraska and along the southern boundary of the state, east of the 97th meridian, and in central Nebraska east of the 98th meridian, the Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak during the past quarter century has apparently been slowly extending its breeding range and building up its commonness to the eastward, having in this period put in an appearance in several localities in which it was previously unknown. It is, of course, possible that this apparent eastward movement may be but a return or reinstatement to a previous breeding range from which the species disappeared during the late 1890's. Evidence to support such a theory is found in a statement made by D. A. Haggard in
ROSE-BREASTED AND BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAKS

an unpublished manuscript to the effect that the Black-headed Grosbeak was a rare summer resident in the vicinity of Lincoln during the early 1890's when (about 1892) R. E. Dinges (Bruner, 1896) claimed to have found a nest with eggs of this bird near Lincoln. But it is certain that the Black-headed Grosbeak now occurs in at least small numbers over a fairly large area in eastern Nebraska, in which, despite the fact that there were numerous competent bird observers in the area, it was apparently wholly absent during the first ten or fifteen years of the twentieth century.

F. V. Hayden, while traveling on foot along the Missouri River to Fort Pierre with Lieutenant Warren's party in 1856, from their grounded steamboat at Cedar Island, passed out of Nebraska territory on about May 12 and reached "Bijou Hill, Neb." (in Brule County, South Dakota) on May 16, where he took not only a female (No. 4852, U. S. N. M.) Rose-breasted Grosbeak, but also a female (also No. 4852, U. S. N. M.) Black-headed Grosbeak, and on the following day, May 17, an additional male (No. 4850, U.S.N.M.) and a female (No. 4851, U.S.N.M.) of the latter species (Baird, p. 499, 1858). While these of course are not Nebraska records, they do indicate that these two species occurred together in this locality, only about forty miles north of the Nebraska-South Dakota line, at the 99th meridian, before civilization and tree planting could have had any effect upon the ranges of the two species. The first record definitely for Nebraska is that of Aughey (1878), who states: "I have seen this bird myself only along the Republican River in southwestern Nebraska. Two specimens were sent to me from Kearney Junction in June, 1875, to identify."

The Black-headed Grosbeak was first reported from Sioux County by L. Bruner (1896), and every ornithologist subsequently to visit that region has found it common there. In 1900, J. C. Crawford, Jr. (1901), L. Bruner, J. S. Hunter and M. Cary found it common in Monroe Canyon from May 24 to June 1, the party collecting several specimens. In 1901, M. Cary and M. A. Carriker, Jr., found it common in Warbonnet Canyon from May 26 on to July 24 (when they left the region), Cary finding a nest on May 30. They collected four specimens (1♂, 3♀) at Indian Creek on July 12 and 13, 1901. L. Bruner and the writer found it at Glen, Sioux County, along the White River, August 5 to 20, 1903. J. T. Zimmer collected a male at Glen on July 14, 1910, while on July 9, 1910, he collected a female specimen at Crawford, Dawes County.

In Scotts Bluff County the species is less common, but L. M. Gates saw some female Black-headed Grosbeaks in the grove near Henry on June 27, 1915, under circumstances indicating that they were, or had been, nesting, though no nest was found. C. E. Mickel and R. W. Dawson found it in 1916 near Mitchell, on June 16, 18 and 21, and on July 8 found a female bird on her nest. Also near Mitchell, in 1927, Mrs. J. W. Hall saw a male and two females on May 21, while on May 29, the male was seen again, when it sang most of the morning. She has commented on the increase of this species in the Mitchell vicinity in recent years (antea, ii, p. 79).

The Black-headed Grosbeak follows the Niobrara River eastward, more or less commonly, across the state to its mouth. L. Bruner noted it at Valentine, Cherry County, in the early 1900's (Bruner, Wolcott and Swenk, 1904) and it has since (1924) been reported from there by Mrs. Fred Tyler of Lincoln. At Simeon, south of Valentine, Mrs. Lulu K. Hudson has noted it during the migration season, but not as a breeder. However, H. C. Oberholser (1920) saw an adult male at the Tate Ranch, near Tate Lake in southeastern Cherry County, on June 18, 1915, which indicates its probable nesting in that locality. A little farther east, at Long Pine in Brown County, this bird is more common. Will C. Smith found it there on June 15, 1898, while in 1899 the late J. M. Bates (1900)
found it not uncommon about Long Pine, and discovered the birds nesting in a hedge on June 14 of that year. Rev. Bates noted it again on June 23. Mr. Smith found a pair with young about one week old at Long Pine on July 6, 1899. L. M. Gates found it near Long Pine on August 19, 1894 (antea, ii, p. 124). In the summer of 1902, the writer found the Black-headed Grosbeak very common along the Niobrara from the bridge south of Springview to Cars in Keya Paha County. A pair was observed nest-building in one of the small canyons near the bridge on June 16, and on June 20 a pair with a newly finished nest was noted in Long Pine Canyon at Winfield. The writer did not observe the species east of Cars, but L. Bruner (Bruner, Wolcott and Swenk, 1904) noted it at the city of Niobrara, Knox County, in August of the same year (1902).

A little south of Niobrara, at Neligh, in Antelope County, M. Cary (1900) found the Black-headed Grosbeak a rare migrant in the late 1890's. He saw it there on May 9, 1898, and also several of them early in September of the same year. By 1911, however, the bird had worked down the Elkhorn Valley as far as Norfolk, Madison County. On September 23, 1911, the late L. Sessions told the writer that this bird had been present commonly about his home in Norfolk all through the summer of 1911, that being the first time he had ever noted any of them there.

A few Black-headed Grosbeaks occur well out in the sandhills during the summer, as well as during the migration season. J. L. Childs (1908) found the species “quite abundant” at the forks of the Dismal River, in Hooker County, May 22 to 30, 1907. J. T. Zimmer (1913) and the writer saw one in the thickets along the Middle Loup River in Nebraska National Forest at Halsey, Thomas County, June 9, 1911, and Zimmer noted the species again on August 20 of the same year; while in 1912 he noted a pair there regularly from mid-May to June 10, and at longer intervals thereafter. On May 19, 1912, Zimmer (1913) saw one far back in the sandhills, in a pocket of hackberry trees. The birds follow the Middle Loup eastward beyond the 99th meridian. In a letter dated December 20, 1906, G. P. Anderson (1901) of Dannebrog, Howard County, reported to L. Bruner the finding of a nest of this bird along the river at that place during the preceding summer. He found the species “not scarce” in that locality. Miss Edith Bowler reported that in 1934 this species had bred for the fourth successive year at Bartlett, Wheeler County (antea, ii, p. 82), and Mrs. J. R. Swain reports it as a breeding bird at Greeley, Greeley County.

Aughey has recorded that he had seen the Black-Headed Grosbeak “only along the Republican River in southwestern Nebraska”, up to 1878. Just how far to the eastward along the Republican it extended at that time is not now known, but twenty-five years later it occurred east at least to McCook, Redwillow County. The writer (1912) noted this bird along the Republican at Ives siding (now Parks), on the Burlington Railroad west of Benkelman, in Dundy County, on July 23, 1903. It undoubtedly extended on west along the Republican and Arikaree Rivers into Colorado. F. C. Lincoln (1915) has listed it as a common summer resident in Yuma County, Colorado. The writer noted it on July 3 and 4, 1933, along the Frenchman or Whiteman’s Fork of the Republican, in Hayes and Hitchcock Counties, from Wauneta eastward (antea, i, p. 87). On July 25, 1903, he noted it at McCook, Redwillow County, and found it again at that place in July, 1911, and on June 19, 1912, on which latter date he noted it at Indianola and Lebanon, also, in the same county. Undoubtedly it occurred at this time all along the Republican east to Webster County, or perhaps farther. It is a common species at North Platte, Lincoln County, according to Wilson Tout, Harry Weakly, and others of the North Platte Bird Club. At Stapleton, Logan County, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Glandon find it a very common summer resident and breeder (antea, ii, p. 86). It follows Medicine Creek northwest through Frontier County to Curtis, where the writer saw and heard a fine male on June 30, 1911,
where Rees Heaton had at that time in his collection a mounted male specimen that he had collected there previously. L. Bruner identified it at Holdrege, Phelps County, early in the 1900’s (Bruner, Wolcott and Swenk, 1904). The late J. M. Bates noted it at Bloomington, Franklin County, on the early date of April 24, 1926, and the late Mrs. A. Arnold reported that it bred near her home at Inavale, Webster County, in both 1922 and 1924.

Aughey’s record from Kearney, Buffalo County, in June, 1875, shows that the range of the species extended down the Platte River to the 99th meridian more than a half century ago. It long has been, and still is, a common summer resident and breeder at Kearney, according to C. A. Black, who had resided at that place for many years past. H. Haup has noted in 1913 that for a number of years past it had nested regularly every season in his yard in Minden. In the Hastings, Adams County, vicinity the Black-headed Grosbeak was apparently rare or absent up to 1914, at least no observer recorded it from that vicinity prior to that year. In a letter dated July 28, 1914, A. M. Brooking, then of Inland, located a few miles east of Hastings, in Clay County, reported that he had that summer found it nesting there, that being the first time he had ever seen the bird so far to the east in the state. The next season (1915) Mr. Brooking collected a nest and eggs of the species at Inland on May 30. During the next few years following 1915 it was repeatedly found summering and nesting in and around Hastings (A. M. Brooking), and at Prosser, a few miles to the northwest of that city (Mr. and Mrs. C. K. Hart). It was noted at Hastings on the 17th, 25th and 30th N. O. U. field days held, respectively, on May 16, 1919, May 14, 1927, and May 14, 1932. In short, within the decade from 1914 to 1924 the Black-headed Grosbeak increased steadily in commonness in the Hastings vicinity, so that by the latter year it could be called a common and regular summer resident and breeder throughout the region. Mr. Harold Turner reports it from near Holstein, Adams County, in both 1934 and 1935.

Both the late J. M. Bates and C. S. Ludlow first report the Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak from Red Cloud, Webster County, on May 2, 1912, though it probably was present in that locality prior to that date. Mr. Ludlow has recorded it for every year since 1912, and Mrs. George Trine has reported it yearly since 1925, for it is now a common summer resident and breeder in the Red Cloud vicinity. It is decidedly more common in that locality than is the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Mr. Ludlow had a pair of these birds nesting on his farm on June 6, 1926, while in 1929 Mrs. Trine had the interesting experience of finding a deserted pair of young Black-headed Grosbeaks to maturity. In 1933 Mrs. Trine noted the birds courting on May 21, and in 1934 they were nesting near Utah, Seward County. In the 33rd N. O. U. field day at Superior, May 9, 1926, it was identified by nearly all members of the field party. It is known to nest at Superior, according to Mesdames Johnston and Day. Mrs. Day found it nesting there in both the summers of 1931 and 1932 (C. O. I. No. 61, p. 3, and 67, p. 3; nates, i, p. 83).

Wilson Tout (1902) found the Black-headed Grosbeak to be an uncommon migrant at York, York County, in the late 1890’s. In the spring of 1897 one of these birds was brought to school by a boy who had “shot it by mistake for an English Sparrow.” Mr. Tout (1901) observed the species at York “once or twice in the late spring” (April 26, 1899) during the next three years, and in 1900 another dead one was brought to him at school at Utica, Seward County. Farther east, along the Big Blue River at Crete, Saline County, this bird was not observed until the last few years. C. O. Carlson has noted it there during the past few years and on June 1, 1930, Miss Margaret Diemer saw three male Black-headed
Grosbeaks at the Y. W. C. A. camp along the Blue River near that place (L. O. I. No. 52, p. 4). At Fairbury, Jefferson County, Mrs. H. F. Hole reported that the Black-headed Grosbeak made its first observed appearance in 1920, when it was identified there by her on July 4 of that year. No observer had ever reported seeing it previously in that locality. It was again seen by members of the Nature Department of the Fairbury Women's Club in the summer of 1921. In 1923 Mrs. Hole noted its first arrival on May 12, on the occasion of the 21st N. O. U. field day. In the summer of 1923, Mrs. Hole was certain that it nested in town, though no nest was actually found. She reported that it was seen near her home nearly every day from June 6 on, the male coming to get water at one certain pool and singing from the top of a barn cupola in the yard next door. Though Mrs. Hole did not see any Black-headed Grosbeaks in 1924, other Fairbury observers did. No one reported seeing it in 1926, however (L. O. I. No. 18, p. 1). Members of the Fairbury Nature Department have reported it since, including its date of first arrival as May 6 in both 1934 and 1935.

Aside from the old record of Mr. Dinges previously mentioned, no one reported this bird at Lincoln, Lancaster County, until in 1911, when J. T. Zimmer collected a male specimen (No. 459, Zimmer Collection) at Lincoln on May 29. Twelve years later, in 1925, Leighton Williams saw one at the Lincoln Auto Club Park on May 16. Two years later, on May 9, 1927, Mr. and Mrs. E. G. King identified the species in Wyuka Cemetery at Lincoln (Worley, 1929), and again on the 26th N. O. U. field day at Lincoln on May 12, 1925, it was identified and included in the day's census. These were all regarded as migrants. On May 19 and June 16, 1930, however, males of this species appeared at the feeding board of Mr. and Mrs. Addison E. Sheldon in Lincoln, and remained through the summer. The species has also established itself as a summer resident (and probable breeder) in southern Gage County, for Mrs. F. J. Patton of Blue Springs identified a male Black-headed Grosbeak as a new bird for that locality on July 18, 1927. This bird was not singing, only its metallic call note being heard. The first record of the Black-headed Grosbeak for the Omaha vicinity is that of I. S. Trostler, who found one dead under a telegraph wire, against which it had apparently flown and killed itself, near Bellevue, Sarpy County, October 26, 1894. He regarded it as "a rare straggler" in that vicinity. There were no other Omaha records until members of the Nebraska Audubon Society identified the bird on their annual field day on May 9, 1925 (the same day the Kings identified it at Lincoln. It was again seen at Omaha, and identified by A. M. Brooking and C. A. Black, on the 26th N. O. U. field day, in Fontenelle Forest, on May 17, 1930 (L. O. I. No. 51, pp. 7, 8 and 9). A little later, on May 30, 1930, Mrs. Mary B. Shoek and Miss Sue Wilson again observed the species in Fontenelle Forest (L. O. I. No. 63, p. 1). There is as yet no evidence of its breeding in the Omaha vicinity.

MIGRATION

The first returning spring migrant male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reach southeastern Nebraska during the last half of April or the first week in May. Cooke (1912) gives April 29, 1894, as the earliest date of spring arrival in southeastern Nebraska in thirteen years' record, and May 1 as the average date. The earliest recorded dates of arrival available to the writer are April 17 for Fairbury, April 23 for Hastings, April 24 for Lincoln, April 26 for Falls City and Superior, April 27 for Red Cloud and April 28 for Omaha. The actual movements of the species are, however, more apparent by a comparison of the average dates of arrival over a series of years. The species, following the Republican, reaches the Kansas-Nebraska state line at Superior about May 1, and following the Little Blue River reaches the Nebraska line near Fairbury about May 2. Coming up the Missouri River and the Nemahas, the Omaha and Lincoln vicinities are reached by May 9, by which date the birds have also pro-
gressed along the Little Blue to the Hastings vicinity. By an average of May 6, the species has reached up the Missouri to Sioux City. The spread westward along the Republican from Superior is much slower, the birds not reaching Red Cloud, less than thirty miles to the westward, but almost at the western limit of distribution of the species, until May 7. The first birds to arrive are almost invariably males, the females coming a few days later.

The writer found male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, just returned from the south, at Falls City, Richardson County, on April 26 and 27, 1904. At Fairbury, the dates of first arrival in nine out of the last eleven springs have been April 17, 1934 (NDFC); April 28, 1927 (Ho); April 29, 1933 (C); April 30, 1926 (NDFC); May 1, 1928 and 1931 (C); May 3, 1933 (NDFC); May 6, 1930 (C); and May 19, 1925 (C), an average date of about May 2. At Superior, dates of arrival for three years are April 26, 1927, April 28, 1929, and May 9, 1925, according to records of the Superior Bird Club, an average date of about May 1.

Dates of first arrival at Omaha during the last ten springs were April 29, 1928 (Sh & Wil) and 1932 (Mi); May 1, 1926 (E) and 1927 (Mi); May 2, 1930 (Mi); May 4, 1929 (ONSC), 1931 (Mi) and 1934 (E); May 6, 1933 (El); and May 9, 1935 (E), an average date of about May 3. T. C. Stephens (1914) has given its dates of first arrival at the Sioux City vicinity in 1910 to 1913 as May 11, 8, 1 and 4, respectively, averaging about May 6.

T. C. Stephens (1914) has given its dates of first arrival at the Sioux City vicinity in 1910 to 1913 as May 11, 8, 1 and 4, respectively, averaging about May 6.

There was at one time in the study series at the University of Nebraska a skin (now apparently destroyed) of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, taken at Lincoln and made up by one of Professor Bruner's taxidermy students, that bore on its label the surprisingly early date of April 4, 1890. The accuracy of this date cannot, however, absolutely be depended upon, and the earliest reliable recorded date of arrival for the species at Lincoln is April 24, 1925 (L. G. Worley; L. O. J. No. 5, p. 3). Dates of arrival at Lincoln in twenty-six other springs are April 27, 1913 (D); April 27, 1913 (D); April 28, 1900 (Wi); April 29, 1931 (Ty); April 30, 1901 (Cy); 1914 (D) and 1915 (D); May 1, 1917 (D) and 1926 (Ty); May 2, 1916 (D) and 1928 (S); May 3, 1962 (Sw); May 4, 1912 (Sw); May 5, 1919 (Mi) and 1934 (Wi); May 6, 1899 (W), 1910 (Z); and 1911 and 1932 (Sw); May 9, 1907 (Z); May 10, 1924 (22nd N. O. U. field day); May 11, 1909 (Z); May 12, 1918 (D) and May 13, 1908 (Z), an average date of about May 3.

Dates of arrival at Hastings during the last twelve years are April 23, 1933 (F); April 26, 1930 and April 28, 1932 (BBC); May 1, 1935 (Ca); May 2, 1924 (J) and 1928 (BBC); May 3, 1925 (J); May 5, 1926 (J); May 6, 1934 (Y); May 9, 1927 and 1929 (J); and May 12, 1931 (BBC), an average date of about May 3.

*The names of the persons and organizations responsible for the migration dates used in this paper are indicated in the text by symbols, of which the following is the key: B = J. M. Bates, BBC = Brooking Bird Club, C = Misses Agness and Susie Callaway, Ca = Mrs. J. D. Carns, Car = M. A. Carricker, Jr., Cy = M. Cary, D = R. W. Dawson, E = Miss Mary Ellsworth, El = Misses Emma and Mary Ellsworth, F = Dr. Feese, H = Mr. and Mrs. C. K. Hart, Ho = Mrs. H. F. Hole, J = Mrs. A. H. Jones, Jo = Mrs. A. M. Jones, Jr. = E. H. Jones, L = C. S. Ludlow, M = C. E. Mickel, Mi = C. A. Mitchell, NDFC = Nature Department of the Fairbury Women's Club, ONSC = Omaha Nature Study Club, S = Mrs. Addison, Sh = Mrs. Mary B. Shoek, Sw = M. H. Swenk, Sy = Miss M. Caryle Sylla, T = Mrs. George Trine, Ty = Mrs. Fred Tyler, W = R. H. Wolford, Wi = Miss Louisa Wilson, Wil = Miss Sue Wilson, Y = Mrs. Roy Youngblood, and Z = J. T. Zimmer.
At Red Cloud, in sixteen springs, C. S. Ludlow and Mrs. George Trine have noted the first arrival of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak on April 27, 1933 (L); May 1, 1930 (L) and 1935 (T); May 2, 1929 (L); May 4, 1932 (L); May 5, 1934 (T); May 6, 1926 (L); May 7, 1918 and 1931 (L); May 8, 1911 (L); May 10, 1914 (L); May 12, 1910 and 1927 (L); May 13, 1920 and 1921 (L); and May 18, 1919 (L), an average date of about May 7.

The first completed nests with eggs are to be found in southeastern Nebraska about the middle of May (13th and 15th at Beatrice), but nests with eggs may be found in the same region as late as the middle of June (14th at Beatrice; 15th at Lincoln). Nests with eggs are found in northeastern Nebraska early in June or even in late June (Hooper, June 29, 1935). Both sexes assist in the incubation of the eggs, which lasts about fourteen days. The young are reared during July and early August, the male and female birds taking turns feeding them. They are in the nest about nine days. The molt takes place during August, when the birds are silent and inconspicuous. They gather in family groups or small troops in late August and early September to feed along the streams, or in other places where food is plentiful. The southward departure starts in September, and the birds are practically all gone by the end of that month.

The very latest Nebraska dates are of one seen at Lincoln on October 2, 1917 (D), and an adult male in winter plumage taken at Dunbar, Otoe County, October 3, 1901 (Jn).

At Red Cloud in twenty-four springs, the late J. M. Bates, C. S. Ludlow and Mrs. George Trine have noted the first arrival of the Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak on April 24, 1925 (T); April 25, 1926 (B); April 26, 1933 (L); April 29, 1927 and 1928 (L); 1931 and 1935 (T); April 30, 1921 and 1929 (L); 1930 and 1934 (T); May 1, 1913 and 1916 (L) and 1932 (T); May 2, 1912, 1922 and 1926 (L); May 3, 1914 (L); May 4, 1919 (L); May 5, 1924 (L); May 6, 1916 and 1920 (L); May 11, 1917 (L); and May 15, 1918 (L), an average date of about May 1, which is a full week earlier than the average date of arrival of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak in the same locality.

Dates of spring arrival at Hastings during the last twelve years are April 26, 1930 (BBC); April 28, 1927 (BBC); April 30, 1925 (at Prosser, H); April 30, 1929 (J); May 1, 1924 (J); 1928 (BBC), and 1933 and 1935 (J); May 2, 1926 and 1932 (BBC), and 1934 (Sy); and June 29, 1931 (J & Jo), an average date of about May 1, which is only two days earlier than the average date of arrival of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak in the same locality.
Nesting is under way in southern Nebraska by the last week in May (May 27 at Hastings and May 30 in Sioux County). The incubation of the eggs is normally completed in late June or early July. Both sexes assist in the incubation. When the female is incubating she may call the male, who will take her place and soon begin to sing (J). He sings much of the time he is on the nest. Both sexes feed the young birds. The young birds usually leave the nest in July, ordinarily in the early or middle part of that month, but sometimes during the last week in July (Mrs. A. Arnold, at Inavale) or the first week in August (T, at Red Cloud). Like the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, the Black-headed becomes silent and inconspicuous during the latter part of August, gathering in groups in favorable localities to feed, and departs for the south in September. Mrs. George Trine has noted its departure from Red Cloud early in September. The latest date for the bird in the state is the Omaha record of I. S. Trestler, already referred to, of October 26, 1894.

HYBRIDISM

From the above detailed data, it is evident that at this time there is a considerable overlapping of the ranges of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak in east-central Nebraska, especially between the 97th and 99th meridian. Both species occupy the Republican valley in Nuckolls and Webster Counties, the Little Blue valley in Jefferson, Thayer, Nuckolls, Clay, Adams and eastern Kearney Counties, the Big Blue valley in southern Gage and eastern Saline Counties, the Platte valley in Buffalo and Hall Counties, the tributaries of the North Loup in Greeley and Boone Counties, the upper Elkhorn valley in Antelope and Madison Counties and the lower Niobrara valley in Boyd, northern Holt and Knox Counties, as well as some of the wooded intervening territory. They also occur together in the vicinity of Long Pine, Brown County.

So far as the writer can ascertain, there is no corresponding areas elsewhere in the Missouri valley where this overlapping of these species obtains to anything like the same degree. There are parts of the prairie provinces of southern Canada where the two species occur together, as for example Lake Johnson and Lost Mountain Lake in Saskatchewan (C. G. Harrold, 1933). In North Dakota both species are reported from the southern Devil’s Lake vicinity and both the Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Gabrielson and Jewett, 1924) and the Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak (Oberholser, 1919) have been recorded from Morton County, the first from Mandan on July 11, 1913 (S. J. Jewett), and the second from Fort Rice in the same county. As previously mentioned, F. V. Hayden took both species in Brule County, South Dakota, in 1886, and both occur in Clay County in the same state (Agersborg, 1885, and Visher, 1915). An apparently breeding male Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak was recorded from Yankton, Yankton County, July 7, 1931 by William Youngworth (1931). In Kansas, Goss reported both species in the Riley-Geary County region, the Black-headed at Manhattan, and east to Topeka, July 11, 1884 (1885), and the Rose-breasted at Junction City (1891). There are other instances of minor overlappings, but nothing to correspond with the extensive overlapping that occurs in east-central Nebraska and north-central Kansas.

Since there is good evidence to believe that the extensive overlapping of numbers of these two species of *Hesperiphona* in east-central Nebraska is of relatively recent development, data on the behavior of the two species when thus brought together is of more than passing interest, and becomes especially so when evidence accumulates that the two species are hybridizing rather freely in the areas inhabited in common. The first evidence of hybridization was an adult male hybrid specimen collected by A. M. Brooking at Inland, Clay County, on May 18, 1920. This specimen
has the normal plumage of the adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, except that the chest and breast are buffy cinnamon, this diluting the normally rose red chest patch to a dull buffy red, and extending below it across the breast as a broad, pure buffy cinnamon band. The rump and upper tail coverts are pale buffy, instead of white as in the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. This specimen is aberrantly large, the wing and tail measuring 105.5 and 80.5 mm., respectively, these being more typical measurements of the Black-headed Grosbeak. It has been preserved as a skin, and is now in the writer's collection. A second and very similar adult male hybrid specimen was collected in the same locality by A. M. Brooking and J. E. Wallace three years later, on May 24, 1925. The second specimen is of

Detailed map showing the known breeding stations of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak (dots) and Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak (triangles) in the Missouri Valley region. The western breeding limits of the former are shown by a line of dots, the eastern breeding limits of the latter by a line of dashes. Note locations and extent of overlappings of the breeding ranges of the two species, especially in the Missouri River Valley area of southern South Dakota and northeastern Nebraska and thence in a band of varying width across Nebraska, between the 97th and 99th meridians, expanding into another large area in southern east-central Nebraska and northern east-central Kansas.
only average size for the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, the wing measuring 100 mm. and the tail 76 mm. This specimen was mounted by Mr. Brooking and is now in his collection in the Hastings Municipal Museum (No. 2897). It is believed that both of these birds would have been local breeders at Inland, for, two weeks previously, on May 10, 1923, two normal male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were taken by Mr. Brooking at Inland and at Ayr, in Adams County (Nos. 2611 and 2611-A, Brooking Collection). These hybrid birds have been put on record by the writer (1930).

On June 28, 1930, G. E. Hudson collected another adult male hybrid between these two species near Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska. The bird was in full song and the testes were much enlarged, but in the case of the hybrid these cannot be taken as proof that the bird was breeding. This specimen is much more nearly intermediate between the Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks than were either of the two hybrid birds taken by Mr. Brooking in Clay County. The chest, middle of breast, sides and flanks are light buffy cinnamon, as in the Black-headed, with rose-pink overlapping the buffy cinnamon on the chest and the middle of the breast, as in the Rose-breasted. The white middle of the abdomen and blackish streaks on the flanks are as in the Rose-breasted, as are the pin under wing coverts and axillars, but the pale buffy cinnamon rump, the much reduced white band on the middle wing coverts and the large white spots on the tips of the innermost greater wing coverts, tertials and secondaries are as in the Black-headed. The three outer tail feathers are extensively white terminally, as in the Rose-breasted, but the color of the bill is that of the Black-headed. The size of the wing and tail corresponds more closely to the measurements of the Rose-breasted, but the size of the bill and tarsus tallies better with the Black-headed (Hudson, antea, i, pp. 32-33).

After the publication of the finding of this strongly intermediate hybrid by Mr. Hudson, in the spring of 1933, about the middle of May, Miss Mary McGirr of Greeley, Greeley County, found a grosbeak in her yard, also evidently a hybrid. It had apparently been stunned in a fight, and after a careful examination by Miss McGirr and Mrs. J. R. Swain, it was released, after which it remained in the neighborhood. This bird was closer in size to the Rose-breasted but the plumage was more nearly that of the Black-headed. There was a salmon-pinkish spot on the breast, extending down centrally to the abdomen and overlying the cinnamon brownish of the chest and breast. The under wing coverts were also salmon-pinkish. The back was cinnamon brownish with black spots, the upper side of the wings and tail otherwise as in the Black-headed Grosbeak, and the bill dark colored as in that species (Swain, antea, i, p. 69).

Among the most interesting of the evidences of hybridization between the Rose-breasted Grosbeak and the Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak are the observations made in 1930 and 1931 by Mr. and Mrs. Addison E. Sheldon of Lincoln, in their yard at 1319 South 23rd Street. On May 19, 1930, a fine male Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak appeared on the Sheldon premises, where it visited the feeding board daily, sharing the sunflower seeds with several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks of both sexes and a pair of Eastern Cardinals with their two fledged young of the first brood. As Mrs. Sheldon wrote the writer on May 21, this new patron of their lunch counter seemed to dominate, not only over the other grosbeaks, but even over the Robins and Brown Thrashers, as well as the Wood Thrushes, Catbirds and other species. On June 8, the writer had the opportunity of watching the Black-headed Grosbeak repeatedly visit the Sheldons' feeding board. The odd thing was that no female Black-headed Grosbeak had been seen at the feeding board during all of this period (L. O. J. No. 51, p. 9). On June 15, a second male Rocky Mountain Black-headed Grosbeak appeared and also began visiting the feeding board. Still later, what were at first identified as probably female mates of these two male Black-headed Grosbeaks occasionally also appeared
(L. O. I. No. 52, p. 4). But repeated subsequent observations made by Mrs. Sheldon, after skins of female Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks (furnished by the writer) had been examined by her, showed that neither of the two male Black-headed Grosbeaks had really brought a female of his species to the feeding board, though the visits of both males continued through the remainder of June and July of 1930. That these two male Black-headed Grosbeaks were mated, however, is indicated by the fact that, toward the end of June, they were repeatedly observed feeding some fledged young grosbeaks, recently out of the nest (L. O. I. No. 61, p. 1).

At the close of the 1930 nesting season, Mrs. Sheldon banded eleven adult and three small young grosbeaks, all presumably of the Rose-breasted species. When the grosbeaks returned in May, 1931, there was one peculiar male that had every appearance of being a hybrid. This bird remained through the summer of 1931. Through the courtesy of the Sheldons, on June 7, the writer had an excellent opportunity to study this individual. Its breast patch was the blended colors of rose-pink and cinnamon, instead of the clear rose-pink of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The patches at the sides of the breast patch that are white in the Rose-breasted Grosbeak were cinnamon buff in this bird. The bill was blackish above and dusky-white below, not white as in the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The interscapulars had prominent brownish-buff spotting, quite unlike the usually plain black of the Rose-breasted. On the throat, there was a considerable irregular invasion of the black with cinnamon pink (L. O. I. No. 61, pp. 1-2). One cannot refrain from the surmise that this was one of the unbanded young birds of a preceding local mating of the two species on the Sheldon premises. The Black-headed Grosbeaks were not seen by the Sheldons in 1932, 1933 or 1934; but on May 28, 1935, a male appeared, and a female on May 29. Both were there on May 30 and then disappeared (antea, iii, p. 82).

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The European Starling Seen Again at Red Cloud, Webster County.—Another record of the European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*) for this vicinity was made when I saw four of these birds in my yard on February 15, 1936.—Mrs. Harvey Rickerson, Red Cloud, Nebr.

The European Starling at Davey, Lancaster County.—On April 8, 1936, in a small grove immediately to the east of the town of Davey in northern Lancaster County, I saw and studied at a distance of forty feet an European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*). The bird, apparently a male, flew only a short distance away when flushed, and seemed located in this bit of woodland where there were numerous dead branches with woodpecker holes.—Myron H. Swenk, Lincoln, Neb.

An Apparent Predominance of Hoyt Horned Larks in Logan County in Midwinter of 1936.—On January 30, 1936, Mr. Glenn Viehmeyer recovered a specimen of Horned Lark from a cat. On examining this specimen we noted that it was larger and differently colored from the Horned Larks occurring in Logan County that we had previously handled, and accordingly sent the specimen to Prof. M. H. Swenk for identification and preservation. On February 1 he replied that the specimen was a typical adult male of the Hoyt Horned Lark (*Otocoris alpestris hoyti*), and that this apparently was the first definite record of this subspecies for Logan County. Becoming interested in the matter, during the following two weeks Mr. Viehmeyer and I made careful observations of the Horned Larks in entirely different locations in Logan County, he at the edge of the sandhills and I on the tableland, and independently we came to the same conclusion, namely that there were very few Horned Larks in this locality during the severely cold weather of the first half of February except the Hoyt Horned Larks, and that the Saskatchewan Horned Larks, which are our common breeding form of this species, had migrated to a warmer location while the Hoyt Horned Larks had taken their place in the fields.—Earl W. Glandon, Stapleton, Neb.

The Severe Cold of Early February, 1936, Apparently Proves Directly Fatal to Bird Life.—On September 29, 1935, a female Red-breasted Nut-hatch (*Sitta canadensis*) put in an appearance in our yard, and immediately began visiting the suet rack and feeding tray, relishing especially the sunflower seeds. This bird was subsequently almost constantly about, visiting our feeding tray many times daily, without interruption, until February 8, 1936. On that day, in the midst of the prevailing blizzard, I saw this bird clinging to a pine tree just outside of the window, heavily covered with snow, apparently very weak and seeming to move its head only with difficulty. While I was debating whether to go out and try to capture it, to bring it into the warm house and perhaps revive it, my attention was distracted for a time and the bird disappeared, and has not since been seen. There was plenty of food easily available within a few inches of the nuthatch, and I am convinced that it perished directly from the extreme cold of that day and the days immediately preceding, and not from any lack of food supply. Probably there have been many similar, but unobserved, cases of the severe cold of early February proving directly fatal to birds.—Mrs. Jane B. Swenk, Lincoln, Neb.

The Harlan Hawk Wintering in Webster County.—During the extremely cold wave of the first week in February, a hawk was caught in a steel trap near here and frozen to death. It was sent to Prof. M. H. Swenk on February 11, and he identified it as a typical specimen of Harlan Hawk (*Buteo harlani*). This is the first definite record of this species for Webster County, and it is also especially interesting in showing that at least some individuals of the Harlan Hawk winter at the latitude of 40°, even during extremely cold weather.—Charles S. Ludlow, Red Cloud, Nebr.
EDITORIAL PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

After due consideration, your Executive Committee and subsequently the North Platte Bird Club (at a meeting held March 21), both unanimously approved the dates of May 15 and 16 for the thirty-seventh annual meeting and thirty-fourth annual field day of the N. O. U. The local committee announces that the annual dinner and evening program will be held in the banquet room of the Pawnee Hotel on May 15. The suggestion also has been made that this meeting be one at which Nebraska waterfowl might especially be discussed, inasmuch as the North Platte vicinity is very waterfowl conscious at this time because of the new storage reservoir, covering several sections, and said to be the largest body of water in Nebraska, which this spring has been visited by thousands of these birds. The regulating reservoir, which will not be quite as large as the storage reservoir, is also expected to be full of water by May 15. A number of our N. O. U. members have long been asking for an annual meeting in western Nebraska, and now that this idea is to be carried out, it should receive the full support of our entire organization. The meeting offers a great advantage to see these large water reservoirs, both of which are to be operated as game reserves.

It was the privilege of your editor to attend the North American Wildlife Conference at Washington, D. C., referred to in our comments in the last number of the Review (ante a, iv, p. 11), on February 3 to 7. This conference was attended by about 2,000 delegates, representing all parts of the United States, as well as Canada and Mexico. While a large part of this body of delegates was interested chiefly in the conservation and restoration of our game birds, mammals and fish, and these forms of wildlife received the bulk of the attention of the conference, the basic interests of the ornithologist and bird lover were not wholly overlooked, and those parts of the program that dealt with wildlife habitat restoration, which affects all of our birds alike, received much consideration and emphasis. The prevailing sentiment at the conference was that if the conservationists and conservation-minded people of this continent could be brought together into an international federation, with the avowed purpose of securing adequate recognition of the needs of our wild creatures, that the necessary legislative and financial support to this movement would be forthcoming, and such an organization, known as the General Wildlife Federation, was set up. This Federation aims to bring all organizations interested in wildlife conservation and restoration into a permanent unified agency, with similar smaller organizations set up in each state. The Nebraska Wildlife Federation was organized at Lincoln on March 14 at a meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce, and was attended by approximately 200 people representing various state and local organizations interested in the protection, conservation and restoration of all forms of wildlife in Nebraska. It is intended that a county wildlife council shall be organized in each Nebraska county, and that these ninety-three county councils shall be grouped into fifteen district wildlife councils, which in turn will support and control the Nebraska Wildlife Federation.
The 1936 Migration Season

The average temperature of the three winter months for Nebraska as a whole was 18.4°, which is 6.9 degrees below the normal. The month of January had for the whole state an average temperature of 17.8°, which is 5.5 degrees below the normal, and this was especially true eastwardly, where the average temperature was 9.5 degrees below the normal as compared to 1.4 degrees in the western part of the state. These lower than normal average January temperatures were due to the fact that on January 20 there began an unusually prolonged and extremely cold period of weather, which for the next thirty-one days maintained an average temperature below zero in the eastern and central parts of the state. The first half of January averaged moderately warm over the state, with much alternate freezing and thawing. January was also a wet month (0.92 inch), with high humidity, especially eastwardly in the state, the eastern, central and western divisions of the state having, respectively, 242%, 151% and 100% of the normal January precipitation, which all fell as snow, averaging, respectively, 18.4, 9.3 and 6.3 inches of snowfall in the three divisions mentioned, giving the whole state an average of 11.3 inches of snowfall as compared with the normal of 4.6.

The extremely cold weather of the last ten days of January continued until about February 19. February as a whole was more than 17 degrees colder than the normal (8.9°), and was the coldest February in sixty years of Nebraska weather records, the next coldest being February, 1899, which averaged 12.3°. Minimum temperatures ranged from 15 to 4.9 degrees below zero on various dates, but most frequently on February 5 and 8. Thawing temperatures occurred repeatedly during the last ten days of February, and maximum temperatures of 50° to 75° occurred during the last week. Precipitation in the form of snowfall was heaviest in the north-central counties and lightest in the western part of the state, and came as frequent light snows up to February 17, after which date light snows fell on two different days over most of the state. The accumulated snows of January and February disappeared rapidly during the last week of February.

March weather was on the whole warmer than normal, the entire period from March 1 to 28 at Lincoln being normal or as much as 24 degrees above normal (March 22); but the weather suddenly changed on March 29, and the last three days of the month at Lincoln were 6, 18 and 21 degrees below normal. March was very dry, with only traces or very light snowfall on a half-dozen days at Lincoln, but considerably heavier snows in the northern and western parts of the state during the last few days of the month.

At Lincoln, Eastern Robins began to be noted in February. Professor Raymond Roberts saw one flying over near 41st and Dudley Streets on February 15. Mrs. M. H. Swenk saw one in her yard at 1410 North 37th Street on February 22. A few days later they appeared commonly. Professor Roberts saw two Sparrow Hawks west of Lincoln on February 23 and M. H. Swenk noted one on March 17. The wildfowl migration began during the last week in February. Press dispatches from Beatrice, Gage County, dated February 27, reported that 5,000 or more wild ducks and geese could be seen daily at the outskirts of the city, where they were feeding in corn fields that had become flooded by the Blue River. On March 1, Professor Roberts noted many large flocks of ducks, apparently mostly Common Mallards and American Pintails, on the flat fields just northeast of Lincoln. During the week of March 1 to 7, large numbers of these two species appeared in southeastern Nebraska. A flock of at least 5,000 Common Mallards was reported on a pond between Lincoln and York by Theodore Schwartz, 1145 Washington, Lincoln, who thought that there had not been so many water-fowl in this area for a number of years. George Ainsworth, caretaker at the Lincoln Field and Gun
Club, said he had seen one or two flocks of geese and heard several more
as they passed over at dusk. The ducks, led by the Pintails, came into
southeastern Nebraska the first day after the severe cold let up, about
February 20. Professor Raymond Roberts heard geese on the night of
March 7, and on March 8 saw four flocks, of approximately 30, 30, 100
and 150, of Canada Geese migrating northward. Different persons heard
them commonly migrating on the night of March 8. On March 20, on a
pond in the field at the side of the highway between Tamora and Utica,
a flock of between 2,000 and 2,500 American Pintails was seen by L. M.
Gates, and although this flock was studied for some time with field glasses
no other species of duck was observed in it. After the cold period of the
last few days of March, geese were again noted migrating northward on
April 4 by Professor Roberts.

Western Meadowlarks were noted near Lincoln on March 7 by M. H.
Swenk. Professor D. B. Whelan noted them near his house on March 8
and 9. Frederick W. Haecker reports that he saw a flock of ten Sandhill
Brown Cranes soaring around above the Arrow Airport near Havelock
on March 15. Also on this date, L. M. Gates saw the Eastern Phoebe
near Pleasant Dale. On March 17 and next on March 24, Harris Sparrows
were heard singing in the shrubbery, and a Red Crossbill was noted flying
over the College of Agriculture campus, by M. H. Swenk. A small flock
of crossbills was noted by him in Wyuka Cemetery on April 7. On March
18, the Western Mourning Dove and Eastern Chipping Sparrow were
also noted by him on the campus. Also on March 18, L. M. Gates noted
the Eastern Common Bluebird, Eastern Slate-colored Junco and Western
Field Sparrow near Brownville, Nemaha County, the Migrant Logger­
head Shrike, Red-winged Blackbird and Western Meadowlark near Tecumseh, Johnson County, and two Northern Killdeers near Falls City,
Richardson County. On March 21, the Northern Killdeer arrived at
Lincoln. The Bronzed Grackle arrived on March 22. M. H. Swenk noted
the arrival of migrant Northern Yellow-shafted Flickers on March 23
and Professor Raymond Roberts noted the arrival of the first male scout
Northern Purple Martin on March 23. The Eastern Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was observed persistently attacking a spruce tree at Davey, Lan­
caster County, on April 8, by Mrs. C. A. Neff.

Under date of February 5, Mrs. Lily R. Button of Fremont reports
that a male Common Red-shafted Flicker had been a regular visitor all
through the winter up to that date at her window shelf, where he has been
making himself very much at home, feeding and taking nips at the red
cedar berries on some branches on the shelf. Mrs. Button says that this
species is unusual as a winter resident in her locality.

Under date of February 17, Mrs. Paul T. Heineman of Plattsmouth,
Nebraska, writes that during February the following kinds of birds were
visiting her feeding tray and suet racks: Northern Yellow-shafted
Flicker, Eastern Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Downy Woodpecker, Red­
bellied Woodpecker, Northern Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted
Titmouse, Eastern White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Brown Creeper,
Eastern Cardinal and Eastern Slate-colored Junco. The woodpeckers
and Brown Creeper were chiefly visitors at the suet. No Red-headed
Woodpeckers have been visitors at Mrs. Heineman’s home this winter,
as they have been in some previous winters. The Tufted Titmouse had
already been comfortably announcing spring with a single “Pe-ete, pe-ete,
pe-ete”. A Harris Sparrow appeared on her feeding board on February 1,
again on February 3, and a third time on February 17, the date of her
report. Mrs. Heineman found much amusement in the way the juncos
scratched on the feeding tray by jerking forward with both feet.

Under dates of March 4 and 11 and April 2, Mrs. A. H. Jones reports
on the 1936 bird migration at Hastings as recorded by the members of
the Brooking Bird Club. Mrs. A. E. Olson noted the Eastern Slate-colored
Junco, Shufeldt Oregon Junco and Harris Sparrow in her yard on January 10 (both species of junco were subsequently noted in large flocks in all Hastings parks during the last week in March and the first week in April by Mrs. A. H. Jones), and during the following weeks, when everything was covered with snow, these birds came regularly to her porch to eat the feed that she had scattered there. The Harris Sparrow was very fond of squash seed, which Mrs. Olson cut before putting it out. As soon as the ground became bare they all left and did not again return to feed. Mrs. A. H. Jones saw a Northern Shrike on January 12. Mrs. William Madgett noted a Bronzed Grackle at her feeding tray for a week beginning on January 20. On January 27 a Common Red-shafted Flicker and two Northern Blue Jays came to Mrs. A. H. Jones' window feeding box, where they were joined by a Bronzed Grackle on January 31. All continued to appear there every day until February 8, when the temperature had dropped to 22° below zero, and both the flicker and the grackle disappeared and did not subsequently return, nor was either species reported elsewhere until Mr. A. A. Adams saw a Common Red-shafted Flicker on March 8. The Northern Blue Jays, however, continued to be daily visitors in Mrs. Jones' yard, coming for suet and sunflower seeds, along with an Eastern Hairy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadees and an Eastern Brown Creeper. On January 31, Mrs. F. L. Youngblood reported seeing an Eastern Robin, perhaps a winter resident.

Mrs. C. A. Heartwell noted a Northern Short-eared Owl on February 1 and an Eastern White-breasted Nuthatch on February 10. The latter species was subsequently seen by her each day until February 25, and was also noted on March 29 at Nelson, Nuckolls County, by Mrs. A. H. Jones, and at Crystal Lake by Mrs. A. M. Brooking and Miss Carrie Hansen. On February 25 Miss Hansen saw a flock of geese, while she and Mrs. A. H. Jones saw three Northern Pine Siskins (seen also on February 27 by Mesdames A. H. and A. M. Jones and on March 6 by Mesdames A. H. Staley and Dwight Thomas), and Mrs. E. R. Maunder saw the first migrant Eastern Robin, and she and her daughter saw a number of longspurs. Mrs. A. M. Brooking saw American Pintails on February 27. Unidentified ducks, a Marsh Hawk and a Sparrow Hawk (both seen again March 22 by Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Jones) and horned larks were all reported by Mrs. A. M. Brooking on March 1. Mrs. E. R. Maunder reported the first Eastern Common Bluebird on March 3, which species again was seen later in the day by Miss Martha Cousley and Mrs. A. H. Jones. Several members of the Brookings Bird Club saw two male Mountain Bluebirds, in company with a single Eastern Common Bluebird, in Parkview Cemetery on March 5. Two days later, on March 7, two male and one female Mountain Bluebirds were seen in this cemetery by several observers. Mesdames A. H. Staley and Dwight Thomas noted the Northern Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbird and Song Sparrow on March 6. On March 7, Mrs. E. R. Maunder and Miss Vera Maunder saw Common Mallard and Shoveller ducks at the lagoon south of Hastings, while Mesdames J. D. Fuller and A. M. Jones and Miss Hansen noted the Northern Yellow-shafted Flicker. Mrs. Dorr Mahoney saw the first Western Mourning Dove on March 8. Mrs. Brooking noted White-fronted Geese on March 10, Lesser Snow Geese and Green-winged Teals on March 12, and the following day she and Mrs. Jennie Woodworth observed Baldpates and a Red-tailed Hawk (subsp.).

On March 15, Baird Sandpipers were seen by Mrs. V. V. Moore and Miss M. Caryle Sylla. The Greater and Lesser Canada Geese, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Rocky Mountain Say Phoebe were noted on March 20 by Mesdames A. H. and A. M. Jones, Moore and Olsen. Also on this date, Mrs. A. M. Jones saw the American Common Pipit (seen also at Stromer lagoon, south of Hastings, on March 26). On March 21, Miss Martha Cousley, Mrs. Fuller, Mrs. A. H. Jones and Miss Sylla noted Blue Geese, Red-heads, American Buff-breasted Mergansers and the Eastern Phoebe.
On a trip to the Platte River north of Hastings on this same day, Mr. and Mrs. Brooking saw a flock of geese. An adult male Bald Eagle taken south of Minden on March 22 was reported by Mr. Brooking. Also on this date, Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Jones noted the Sandhill Brown Crane (more than 100), American Herring Gull, Lesser Yellow-legs, and one individual of the Chestnut-collarred Longspur. The longspur was observed at close range as it was feeding in the grass, and the very definite markings of the chestnut collar on the back of the neck were noted. There were large flights of geese over Hastings all of the night of March 25, and the lagoon near there was covered with waterfowl. On March 26 the Blue-winged Teal was noted by Mesdames Fuller, A. H. and A. M. Jones, Thomas, and Woodworth. A flock of eight or more Eastern Golden-crowned Kinglets was noted on March 26 by Mesdames A. H. and A. M. Jones, Staley and Thomas, and numbers were seen in a pine tree on March 28 by Mesdames Brooking and Misses Hansen and Sylla, and also at Nelson on March 29 by Mrs. A. H. Jones. These birds have never been observed before at Hastings in flocks, usually previously only two or three of them being seen at a time. On March 28 the lagoon had many Lesser Snow Geese and ducks and a few shore birds. Two Red-eyed Eastern Towhees were noted by Mrs. A. H. Jones, and Mrs. A. M. Jones observed the Field Sparrow (subsp.), on March 27. At Nelson, on March 29, Mrs. A. H. Jones saw a Barn Owl and saw and heard Red-eyed Eastern Towhees singing, and Mrs. Brooking and Miss Hansen noted the Bob-white at Crystal Lake and vicinity. On March 31, a male Eastern Common Bluebird was stunned by striking a screen in the yard of Mrs. D. P. Jones, who caught the bird and banded it. Mrs. Brooking reports that on April 8 there were great flocks of Lesser Snow Geese feeding in fields adjacent to the lagoon, and also many White-fronted Geese along the border of the lagoon, but that the Canada Geese had all departed.

At the Stromer lagoon, four miles south of Hastings, on March 26, Mesdames Fuller, A. H. and A. M. Jones, Thomas, and Woodworth noted the McCown Longspur in company with American Common Pipits and horned larks. The observation was made after a night of wind and dust and the birds seemed exhausted and kept close to the clumps of grass scattered here and there on the burned, plowed ground. Mrs. A. H. Jones reports that she had an unusual close-up view of the McCown Longspur, a species she had never seen before, but of which she felt certain of the identification, after a clear view of the black breast crescent and chestnut shoulder patch.

The Hastings observers have been interested particularly in Red Crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks occurring in that vicinity. On January 25, Mrs. Dorr Mahoney saw a pair of Red Crossbills in her yard, and when they left she noted that they were joined by a small flock. On February 22, about six Red Crossbills were seen by Mesdames Staley and Thomas. On March 2, Mrs. A. M. Jones saw a small flock of them flying over her house, while on the following day she had a close view of one in a tree in front of her house, and on March 6 Mrs. A. A. Adams saw them again in town. It is believed that these crossbills wintered in the Hastings vicinity, and probably were the same ones as were reported on November 30 and December 1, 1955 (antea, iv, p. 15). On March 7, Mrs. E. R. Maunder and daughter saw a pair of Pine Grosbeaks in Prospect Park. Red Crossbills were again seen in town on March 24 and 25 by Mrs. Thomas. On March 28, a flock of five of these birds, including two highly colored males, was seen in a large pine tree in the middle of town, by Mrs. Brooking, and Misses Hansen and Sylla, and along with them was a pair of Pine Grosbeaks. Later Mesdames A. H. and A. M. Jones joined the observers in Highland Park and found the crossbills in a pine tree there. They often came down to the ground, where they fed on cones for a time and then carried them back into the tree, at times alighting within eight feet of the observers. The birds sang a very low, but pretty, song.
They were still present on April 9, when Mesdames Brooking and A. M. Jones saw eleven of them in Heartwell Park.

Mrs. A. H. Jones reports that on April 1 she heard the alarm cry of an Eastern Robin in her yard. She went to the window where the feeding station is located, thinking to chase away a cat, but to her surprise a shrike was on the ground making a meal of an English House Sparrow. The shrike remained near the window for the next two hours, returning again immediately after it was chased away. Mrs. Jones states that probably because of the two inches of snow on the ground the shrike had apparently been driven into town for food. A similar instance occurred in her yard two or three years ago, she reports.

Under date of March 30, Mr. Harold Turner reports on his 1936 bird observations to date, made near Holstein, Adams County. On January 15, several American Rough-legged Hawks were seen (several again seen on January 18, two in the black phase, and six in the black phase on February 13, when they were common), an Eastern Hairy Woodpecker was noted, Horned Larks were present in large flocks and Tree Sparrows were numerous. A male Marsh Hawk was noted on January 26 and a female on February 13. A Northern Downy Woodpecker was seen on January 30. Several each of the Eastern Slate-colored Junco (again noted on March 26) and Harris Sparrow were seen on February 13. About a dozen American Pintails, including both sexes, were noted on the lagoon on February 24. The first Eastern Robins of the season were noted on February 25, and the first one was heard singing on March 5. A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers was noted at close range on March 1. The first Northern Killdeer were heard, and the first flocks of migrant Red-winged Blackbirds were noted on March 7. Other March arrivals were the Sparrow Hawk, a male on March 15 (again on March 25), the Northern Yellow-shafted Flicker on March 18, the Migrant Loggerhead Shrike on March 21, the Brown Crane (subsp.) on March 23, the Red-tailed Hawk on March 25, the Lesser Snow Goose on March 26 and the Bronzed Grackle on March 27.

Under date of March 10, Mrs. George W. Trine of Red Cloud reports that she noted a male Eastern Cardinal in her yard on March 6, but that he was not in evidence there on any of the following three days, so she fears he will not establish himself there. A few Red-winged Blackbirds were noted on March 8. Pawnee Lake near Red Cloud has been repaired, Mrs. Trine writes, and is slowly filling up with water, which gives promise that the place again will be a welcome stopping place for the migrating water birds. Under date of March 18, she reports the arrival of the Northern Killdeer, Western Mourning Dove and Northern Pine Siskin.

Under date of March 23, Mr. Wilson Tout writes that on March 15 he visited the big storage reservoir of the new irrigation project near North Platte and found it tenanted by a greater number of ducks, geese and cranes than he had ever previously seen anywhere at one time, the number running up into the many thousands of waterfowl.

Under date of February 20, Mr. Earl W. Glandon of Stapleton reports that on January 24, 1936, he and Mr. Glenn Viehmeyer banded a Great Horned Owl, from its size probably a male, that to a marked degree lacked the light tawny coloration in its plumage that is so evident in the local breeding form of the Great Horned Owl (Bubo virginianus occidentalis), but probably representing the dark phase of that subspecies approaching the Northwestern Great Horned Owl (B. v. hogophonus). It is believed that this bird came to Nebraska from somewhere to the northwest, and it was banded with No. 34-611347, and released. Its recovery would give interesting information on the breeding home of this type of Great Horned Owl, which is not uncommonly found in western Nebraska in winter.
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