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The Nebraska Bird Review
A Magazine of Ornithology of the Nebraska Region

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TABLE OF CONTENTS
1965 (Fortieth) Spring Migration and Occurrence Report .......... 54
Two Unusual Birds Reported ........................................ 65
Correction to 1964 Spring Report ................................... 65
Honorary Member — Harold J. D. Turner ............................. 66
Excerpts from Letters .................................................. 66
M. A. Carriker, Jr. ..................................................... 68
A Parasitized Prairie Chicken Nest ................................... 68
Book Reviews .................................................................. 69
Index of Volume XXXIII ................................................ 70

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1965 (Fortieth) Spring Migration and Occurrence Report

Two hundred seventy two species are listed in this report. The number for each reporting area is given in parentheses after the area name. The practice of not distinguishing between Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted Flickers because of the great amount of hybridization has been continued.

Two dates indicate the first and last record for the particular area. The symbols used in the tabulation are: for the months, Ja, F, Mr, Ap, My, Je; W - to indicate a species which was present before January 1; - S to indicate a species which remained after June 30; P to indicate a species which is present all year, although the same individual birds may not be present during the whole year and the number of birds present may vary greatly during the year; c to indicate an approximate date, either reported as “about ……” or given to the reporter as “a week ago” or the like; j and p in the Gage County column to indicate observations made in the adjoining counties of Jefferson and Pawnee, respectively; s in the Scotts Bluff column to indicate observations made in adjoining Sioux County, x in the Lincoln County column to indicate species which were present on May 23, when Mrs. Shickle made her last trip before leaving for the summer, and which probably were present after that date.

In the tabulation the information is presented in an approximate west (left column) to east (right column) order. The names of the reporters (and of the observers where known) and any special comments are given below by counties in alphabetical order:

Adams (Central) (155), Hastings; Miss Vera Maunder for the Brooking Bird Club. Mrs. Ethel Marian had a Rufous-sided Towhee in her yard January 26. The Turkey Vulture was seen by Mrs. O. W. Ritchey, who has seen the species many times in the South.

Adams (South) (120), Holstein; Harold Turner, Robert Spicknall. Unidentified Gulls were seen from March 31 to April 5. Thrushes were seen from May 7 to 15 but not seen well enough to distinguish between Swainson’s and Gray-cheeked. A Loggerhead Shrike was seen January 9. A Warbler, probably Orange-crowned but possibly Tennessee, was seen May 4. A note on a sighting of a probable Cassin’s Sparrow is given on page 65.

Cass (166), Plattsmouth; Mrs. Donald Wood and Mrs. Paul Heineyman. The “P” records for geese were from the Plattsmouth Waterfowl Management Area. On March 23, about the peak of the build-up, a count showed 245 White-fronteds, 300 Canadas, 8,000 Blues and Snows, and 80,000 ducks, with Mallards and Pintails the most common. Four Bald Eagles were also seen on the count.

Douglas (60), Mrs. W. A. Neeland (Mrs. Neeland’s address is Hemingford, in Box Butte County, but she lives in Dawes County). Blue Jays are P in the Pine Ridge but not in Mrs. Neeland’s area. A bird, probably a House Wren but too far away for positive identification, was seen May 27 and 29 and June 11. White-crowned Sparrows were seen as late as early May.

Douglas-Sarpy (194), Omaha and Bellevue; C. H. Swanson, Mrs. Howard Holmgren, J. M. Malkowski, Dr. Leon Powell, Mrs. S. A. Perkins, R. G. Cortelyou. Great Blue Herons were much scarcer than in previous years, and there were not over ten continued on page 64
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**Notes:**
- S: Species observed in Scotts Bluffs, Dawes, Lincoln, Omaha, Harlan, Adams, Benzonia, Hamlin, Platte, Linc. Gage, Douglas Sarpy, Cass, Nemaha.
- **S**: Species observed in other counties or locations.
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**Notes:**
- Dates are represented as month/day/year.
- Species names are abbreviated for brevity.
- The table includes bird species, their presence in different counties, and dates of observation.
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Nebraska Bird Review 63
active nests in the heronry adjacent to Fontenelle Forest, compared to forty to fifty a few years ago. The Mississippi Kite was commented upon on page 49. A Myrtle Warbler was seen January 7, and Mr. Swanson reported a Louisiana Waterthrush on January 19.

Gage (115), Beatrice; Kent Fiala. A lone Franklin’s Gull was seen February 20, a Brown Thrasher March 9, a Rufous-sided Towhee February 14, and a Lincoln’s Sparrow January 24. The identification of the Golden-winged Warbler was checked by comparing its song to that given in Peterson’s Field Guide to Bird Songs.

Hamilton (130), Aurora; Mrs. Kermit Swanson. A Mourning Dove and a Common Grackle were seen February 20.

Harlan (80), Stamford; Mrs. John Dankers. Slate-colored Juncos were seen after the January 24 date given, but the dates were not recorded.

Lancaster (138), Lincoln; Ralph Harrington for Audubon Naturalists’ Club. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen January 16 and a few Common Grackles January 2.

Lincoln (182), North Platte and Hershey; Mrs. M. F. Shickley, Mrs. M. A. Cox, Mrs. W. H. Nielsen, Mrs. Ken Pruess, Mrs. Glenn Viehmeyer. The wintering Great Blue Heron was seen January 10. Comment on the Old-squaw was given on page 49 and on wintering Sandhill Cranes on page 28. Common Grackles and two Mourning Doves were seen January 3.

Logan (125), Stapleton; Earl W. Harrington for Audubon Naturalists’ Club. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen January 16 and a few Common Grackles January 2.

Nemaha (80), Auburn; Mrs. B. F. Mowery. An unidentified goose was seen January 1, unidentified gulls March 31, and unidentified longspurs on January 1.

Platte (119), Columbus; Mrs. John R. Armstrong. A note on a probable sighting of a Hooded Oriole is given
on page 65.
Sarpy—see Douglas.
Scotts Bluff (142), Scottsbluff; Mrs. Harry Banghart, Mrs. J. W. Brashear, Mrs. Alvin Vance, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Young. The Swainson's Hawk was seen by the Young's at close range on a post.
Webster. Now listed under Adams (South) for reasons explained on page 34.

Two Unusual Birds Reported

I saw a Hooded Oriole at Camp Sheldon May 12. This is a YMCA camp about three miles south of Columbus, between the Loup and Platte rivers on Beaver Creek. The "In some regions the hood, rump, and underparts are fiery orange" of Audubon Bird Guide described it perfectly. I am sure the top of the bird's head was orange, for I watched it a long time and had a very good view of it. In fact, I saw it on two days, for I went back to see it the second time to be sure it was all orange on head and neck.

—Mrs. John R. Armstrong, Columbus

I saw what I believe was a Cassin's Sparrow here May 7. NOU member William Youngworth had suggested the possibility when he wrote me that it is a western form of the Pine-woods (now Bachman's) Sparrow and that its song is similar to that of the Field Sparrow, but reversed. Although the migration period of the Field Sparrow does vary in time and duration it seemed to be over by May 7, when in the morning I heard a bird call from the yard which has considerable bushes and the like growing in it. The call sounded a bit like the Field Sparrow's, but did not seem to carry through normally. The incident had slipped my mind by early noon when I started my daily hike, until what appeared to be a grass sparrow flushed from short growth in the pasture lane and perched in a mulberry tree nearby. I had a side view as it flew, and it appeared to have a graduated tail. There were not many leaves out, and I had a good view of it on the perch, both with and without glasses. It was of dull grayish coloration, with whitish under the bill and a lightly contrasting whitish line about the eye. As the bird twisted and turned its head, somewhat nervously, I noticed that the crown had no medial stripe. When I moved a step or two nearer the bird flew to an ash tree farther away. Then I thought about the call I heard that morning and it suddenly became apparent that it was the coveted Cassin's Sparrow I had seen.

—Harold Turner, Holstein

Correction to 1964 Spring Report

Lines fifteen through ten from the bottom of the left column on page 69 of the October 1964 issue (Volume XXXII) are a duplication of lines immediately above, and displaced the last part of American Widgeon and the first part of Shoveller. The missing information is (repeating the last of line 16 and the first of line 9 from the bottom):
... Lincoln (Mar 8 - May 10), Logan (Mar. 28), Nemaha (Mar. 30), Platte (Mar. 15), Scotts Bluff (Mar. 26 - May 10). SHOVELLER, Adams (Mar. 23 - May 9), Brown (Apr. 12), Cass (Apr. 1), ...

1966 ANNUAL MEETING, LINCOLN. APRIL 30 and MAY 1

Annual dues ($3.00 Active, $5.00 Sustaining) are payable to George W. Keim, 1114 South 47th, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68510
Honorary Member — Harold J. D. Turner

Harold Turner, who was elected to Honorary Membership in the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union at the 1965 annual meeting, was born on July 21, 1908, on the farm between Bladen and Holstein where he still lives. He has been interested in wildlife as far back as he can remember, an interest which undoubtedly prompted his parents to give him a copy of Wood's Illustrated Natural History for Christmas at an early age. He became an ardent outdoorsman, and started tramping around carrying a .22 caliber rifle as soon as it was permissible. Although he enjoyed the sport of hunting and trapping, he definitely disliked seeing the beauty of feather and fur destroyed. This led him to an interest in taxidermy, and in 1922 he enrolled for a correspondence course in it.

In the spring of 1926 he was delighted to make the acquaintance of Mr. A. M. Brooking (NBR 14:27), who founded what is now the Hastings Museum, using the Brooking collection of mounted bird's and mammals as a basis. A firm friendship developed, and in January of 1933 Mr. Brooking told him that if he would send a dollar "right away" to Myron H. Swenk (NBR 10:1) (whom he met later) in Lincoln, he could yet get in on the reorganized Nebraska Ornithologists' Union and receive The Nebraska Bird Review from the start. Mr. Turner did send in the dollar, and has been a member of NOU ever since.

Although Mr. Turner became fairly skillful in taxidermy, especially with birds, he gave it up after about 20 years in favor of spending more time in the great outdoors in contact with living creatures. His outdoor interests include entomology and botany, and to some extent, geology and astronomy. He is primarily a field observer, and his many long hikes across country have been rewarding, particularly in the sighting of prairie species. Being more hobbyist than business man, he has engaged eagerly in recording and reporting his ornithological observations, and is a consistent contributor to the Bird Review. These records proved very useful in meeting Chandler S. Robbins' request for data on arrival and departure dates for migratory species of the family Fringillidae to be used in the last volumes of Bent's Life Histories of North American Birds.

Excerpts From Letters

(May 12) I had a Green-tailed Towhee in the yard this afternoon.
(May 18) Yesterday I counted 20 Black-bellied Plovers on Dry Lake.
—Mrs. Oona Bassett, Tryon

We saw a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher May 9, on our way home from the Superior meeting, less than two miles east of Fairbury on Highway 136. It was sitting on telephone wires which were at least forty feet off the road. —Mrs. Sigvald Jensen, Weeping Water

On July 6 I saw a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher here on our place eight miles east of Crawford. A boy who had been running a tractor in our field described the bird to me on July 5 and said he had seen it repeatedly that day, but I couldn't get away just then to check on it. —Mrs. Levi Richardson, Crawford

On July 14 I found a male Townsend's Warbler! It was feeding in the willows around the spawning ponds. I watched it for about forty-five
minutes until it finally retired down into the thicket.

The female Hooded Merganser that spent all spring and summer on these ponds left some time last week. I last saw her August 17. —Mrs. W. H. Nielsen, North Platte

On June 20, Harry and I saw a pair of Chestnut-collared Longspurs in the Watson ranch area, Twenty-five miles north of Scottsbluff in Sioux County on Highway 71. We were three miles east of the highway and turned north about three miles.

June 28 Mrs. Jack Brashear, Mrs. Alvin Vance, Mrs. P. Cooper Ellis, Miss Lydia Bolz and myself returned to the area to look for the McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs' nests but none were sighted. We saw some more Chestnut-collareds at that time. Since then Mrs. Brashear drove along the highway only and saw more McCowns. Some were dead, probably hit by cars.

On July 11, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Witschy went up and took pictures of both kinds, along the road which is north and east of the highway. He estimates at least twenty-five pairs of each in that area. He has good pictures of them. —Mrs. Harry Banghart, Scottsbluff

Ida May Heywood of Peru reported that a Chuck-will's-widow sang near her house nearly every night at 8:20 for a period of about one month from the middle of May to the middle of June, 1965.

When I awoke this morning, September 4, the trees on the hill behind the house had many Flickers and several Sparrow Hawks. Several times the Sparrow Hawks chased Flickers, and twice I saw them actually hit Flickers but both times the Flickers flew away afterwards. I finally counted six Sparrow Hawks but had no idea how many Flickers there were. Some were obviously immatures. —Doris Gates, Chadron

On April 11 I had quite a thrill when I saw two Whooping Cranes just south of Kearney. When we first saw them they were flying just behind and slightly higher than a flock of Sandhill Cranes. Even though their wingbeats seemed to be no more rapid than those of the Sandhills, they were soon flying ahead of that flock. —Mrs. Kermit Swanson, Aurora

Late on July 13 I chanced to see a bird in the bushes and at the edge of the roof. When it flew to a tamarack and perched about the dead branches it was plain to see that it was a wren. Its three-syllable call separated it from the Bewick's, and it evidently was an immature Carolina Wren, with only the tail and rump rusty brown. Although this is not my first observation of the species, it is not commonly seen here.

On the morning of August 19 I looked from an upstairs window and saw a Yellow-throated Vireo flitting about in the tops of some choke-cherry trees that had been allowed to grow there. The closeness of the observation and the distinctiveness of the yellow breast, contrasting sharply against the white belly, left no doubt as to its identity. This is a new species for me.

From my upstairs "observatory" —an open, unscreened window—I saw a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on the morning of August 31. With the aid of a 20x telescope all details of identification were clearly seen. I have identified this species here once before. —Harold Turner, Holstein

1966 ANNUAL MEETING, LINCOLN, APRIL 30 and MAY 1
M. A. Carriker, Jr.

Word was received of the death of M. A. Carriker, Jr. A letter from his son, Dr. Melbourne R. Carriker of Woods Hole, Mass., gives the following information: He "died on the very early morning of July 27, 1965, at a clinic in Bucaramanga, Colombia, South America, after an illness of about a month and a half. He was 86 years old. His wife (my stepmother) survives him. He was Research Associate of the U. S. National Museum in Washington, D. C., and made his home in Colombia for some 20 years. His extensive collection of Mallophaga of Central and South America and accompanying records were willed to the U. S. National Museum and will be packed and shipped from Bucaramanga by a representative of the National Museum.

"Dad's technical library of books and reprints, Colombian curios, and the like were given as a memorial to Dad to the Historical Society of Santander in Bucaramanga. It will be housed in La Casa de Bolivar."


A Parasitized Prairie Chicken Nest

In the course of farming operations on the Jake Clem land southwest of Palmyra, Lancaster County, an active Prairie Chicken nest was located in a brome grass waterway. According to the landowner, the hen had flushed twice from the nest while he was plowing near the waterway. When the author checked the nest on May 10, the hen was present, but did not flush. On June 5, word was received that the nest had begun to hatch, as evidenced by two pippering eggs. When the nest was checked on June 7, the following was found:

11 Prairie Chicken eggs: all unhatched (4 eggs examined, dead embryos, about 19 days).

12 Pheasant eggs: 4 successful, 6 with dead embryos, 21 days, 1 infertile, 1 with dead embryo, decomposed, age unknown.

A dead Pheasant chick, one day old, was found in the nest. Eggs of both species were well distributed within the nest. One successful Pheasant egg was noted deep within the nest. Three of the Prairie Chicken eggs were slightly cracked, possibly as a result of the hen flushing from the nest.

Embryos, approximately nineteen days old, were found in four of the Prairie Chicken eggs examined. The seven remaining eggs were transferred intact to Roger Sharpe, University of Nebraska, for further studies.

Measurements on eleven Prairie Chicken eggs showed average length to be 41.4 mm., average diameter to be 32.4 mm.

Further inquiries indicated that Prairie Chickens have been observed periodically during the last five years in this vicinity, and that a recently established booming grounds is located about fifty yards from the nest site.

—Carl W. Wolfe, Sr. Biologist, Research Section, Game, Forestation and Parks Commission

(In a note accompanying this item Mr. Wolfe said "Though we have found many duck nests parasitized by Pheasants in the course of our work, this is the first instance of a Prairie Chicken nest brought to my attention."

Mr. Sharpe reported that the seven Prairie Chicken eggs sent to him were all fertile, with the embryos about 75% developed.)
Book Reviews


Special publication Number 1 of the Cornell Laboratory is a paper-backed bulletin illustrated with drawings by George Miksch Sutton and William C. Dilger. It not only lists the birds that might be found in the Black Hills and their status but tells something of the ecology of the area and gives photographs of Harney Peak, the Badlands and some other scenes. A map and “Gazetteer” direct one’s attention to the points of interest.

BIRDS OF THE BLACK HILLS is a good traveling companion for the bird student and the general naturalist who might take in the Black Hills of South Dakota during a vacation or for some serious study.

—Doris Gates


James Fisher and Roger Tory Peterson, well known ornithologists of Great Britain and the United States, have collaborated in publications before to the benefit of bird students. THE WORLD OF BIRDS is a most colorful (paintings by Peterson) large volume encompassing introduction to bird study as books, binoculars, recorders, and cameras that might be useful; origin and adaptations of birds and examples of families from all over the world; something of the history of hunting by early man, and the place of birds in their cultures; and societies dealing with birds. The major part of the book (100 pp.) is taken up with world maps that show graphically the distribution of families of birds.

The book is very colorful, deals with a large number of topics, and would certainly arouse interest. It is more for the un-initiated but valuable source material for one who already knows something about the subject. —Doris Gates

NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS EGGS.—by Chester A. Reed, Revised Edition. Dover Publications, Inc., New York. 372 pp. 566 photographs of eggs, 51 plates and 31 other photographs of nests and the like, all in black and white. $3.00

North America in this case means north of the Mexican border plus Baja California. This is a revised edition of a book originally published in 1904, which was “a description of how, when and where they build their nests, and the appearance of their eggs”. Those who want a reference book to determine such information for a particular species will be satisfied; those who want a book that will enable them to identify an unknown egg or unknown nest will have a harder time of it, for the book does not contain any “key” or the like by which an egg or nest may be quickly and easily identified. Identification is a matter of considering what species might be involved and then eliminating those whose descriptions don’t fit. If the searcher has not included the proper species in his list of possibilities he will come up with the wrong answer or no answer. —Ed.

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INDEX OF VOLUME XXXIII

Albinos, 51
Alexis, Oscar, 29
Anderson, Ollie, 29
Appleby, Elizabeth, 29, 34
Armstrong, Mrs. John R., 64, 65
Audubon Naturalists' Club, 46, 64
Avocet, American, 20, 38, 48, 51, 58
Banghart, Mrs. Harry, 30, 65, 67
Bassett, Mrs. Oona, 46, 47, 51, 66
Bird Records from Northern Nebraska during the Breeding Season, 2
Bittern, American, 16, 35, 47, 55
Least, 16, 35
Blackbird, Brewer's, 12, 18, 32, 44, 48, 62
Red-winged, 12, 18, 20, 32, 44, 46(2), 48, 62
Rusty, 18, 44, 62
Yellow-headed, 18, 34, 43, 48, 51, 62
species, 34
Bliese, John C. W., 29
Margarete, 29
Bluebird, Eastern, 12, 13, 17, 31, 41, 48, 60
Mountain, 12, 41, 61
Bobolink, 12, 43, 48, 57, 62
Bobwhite, 10, 16, 20, 30, 37, 47
Bolz, Lydia, 30, 67
Book Reviews, 19, 27, 48, 69
Brashear, Mrs. Jack, 30, 46, 50, 65, 67
Brooking Bird Club, 34, 54
Brown, George W., 29, 51
Laurie, 29
Linda, 29
Marian G., 29
Randy, 29
Bufflehead, 16, 36, 56
Bunting, Indigo, 13, 18, 44, 48, 63
Lark, 13, 44, 63
Lazuli, 63
Snow, 45
Burd, Treva, 30
Canvasback, 16, 30, 36, 56
Cardinal, 4, 12, 18, 32, 44, 48, 63
Carriker, M. A. Jr., 68
Catbird, 3, 5, 11, 17, 41, 48, 60
Chat, Yellow-breasted, 17, 43, 62
Chickadee, Black-capped, 11, 17, 20, 31, 34, 41, 48, 60
Chicken, Greater Prairie, 30, 37, 57
A Parasitized Prairie Chicken Nest, 68
Christmas Bird Count, 1964, 29
Chuck-will's-widow, 67
Chukar, 19, 37, 57
Comstock, Mrs. J. S., 30
Coot, American, 16, 37, 47, 57
Cormorant, Double-crested, 16, 20, 35, 47, 55
Cortelyou, R. G., 9, 13, 19, 32, 34, 47, 54
Counties,
Adams, 9, 30, 35, 54, 65(3), 67
Boyd, 5
Brown, 2, 3, 35, 65
Buffalo, 18, 30, 51(2), 67
Burt, 51
Cass, 9, 14, 30, 32, 35, 54
Chase, 20
Cherry, 2, 3, 4
Clay, 9, 14
Dawes, 3, 9, 20, 25, 35, 54, 66, 67
Deuel, 50
Douglas, 9, 30, 35, 51, 54
Gage, 64
Garden, 9
Grant, 6
Greeley, 46
Hall, 46
Hamilton, 64
Harlan, 20, 64
Hayes, 19
Holt, 5
Jefferson, 54, 66
Knox, 2, 3
Lancaster, 30, 32, 35, 64, 68
Lincoln, 9, 28, 35, 49, 50, 51(2), 64, 66
Logan, 30, 64, 65
McPherson, 35, 51, 66
Nemaha, 9, 35, 64, 65, 67
Nuckolls, 47
Otoe, 46
Nebraska Bird Review 71

Pawnee, 54
Phelps, 22
Platte, 64, 65(2)
Sarpy, 9, 18, 30, 35, 51, 54, 65
Scotts Bluff, 9, 25, 30, 35, 65(2)
Sheridan, 2, 3, 4, 5.
Sioux, 9, 54, 67
Webster, 9, 34, 65
York, 7
Cowbird, Brown-headed, 12, 18, 20, 22, 44, 48, 63
Cox, Mrs. Morris A. 9, 46, 64
Crane, Sandhill, 37, 46, 57
Wintering Sandhill Cranes in Lincoln County, 28
Whooping, 57, 67
Creeper, Brown, 17, 31, 41, 60
Crossbill, White-winged, 63
Crow, Common, 11, 17, 20, 31, 40, 48, 60
Cuckoo, Black-billed, 10, 17, 39, 58
Yellow-billed, 10, 17, 39, 58
species, 46
Curlew, Hudsonian, see Whimbrel
Long-billed, 10, 38, 57
Dachauer, Rev. Alban J., 29, 46
Dankers, Mrs. John, 64
Day, Frederick, Ira, In Memoriam, 27
Marian, 47
Dennison, M., 30
Dickcissel, 13, 18, 44, 48, 63
A Study of Nesting Dickcissels in Nebraska, 22
Dove, Mourning, 10, 17, 20, 31, 39, 46, 48, 58, 64(2)
Rock, 10, 17, 20, 31, 39, 48, 58
Dowitcher, Long-billed, 17, 38
species, 20, 57
Duck, Ring-necked, 16, 36, 55
Ruddy, 36, 56
Wood, 10, 16, 36, 46, 47, 51, 55
species, 32, 54
Eagle, Bald, 16, 31, 37, 54, 56
Golden, 31, 37, 56
Edwards, Harold, 13, 15, 16
Egret, Common, 16, 35, 47, 55
Snowy, 16, 35
Ellis, Mrs. P. Cooper, 67
Enderson, Dr. James H., 47
Evans, Raymond D. 9
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Nesting in Clay County, 14
Falcon, Peregrine, 37, 51, 56
Prairie, 2, 5, 10, 37, 56
species, 47
Feikert, Merlin, 29
Fiala, Kent, 64
Field Day, Fall (1964), 20
Spring (1964) correction, 19
Spring (1965), 47
Finch, Cassin's, 63
House, 13, 32, 44, 63
Purple, 44, 63
Rosy, 25
Fink, Bill, 29
Flicker, 10, 17, 20, 31, 39, 48, 59, 67
Flycatcher, Acadian, 18, 40, 59
Empidonax, 40, 48, 59
Great Crested, 2, 4, 11, 17, 40, 48, 59
Least, 2, 5, 17, 40, 48, 59
Olive-sided, 59
Scissor-tailed, 9, 11, 66(2)
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Nesting in Clay County, 14
Traill's, 2, 18, 40, 59
Yellow-bellied, 59, 67
Fontenelle Forest, 18, 29, 49, 54
Foster, William L., 47
Fouchek, Florence, 30
Gadwall, 16, 20, 30, 35, 47, 55
Gates, Doris, 9, 47, 48, 49, 69
Honorary Member, 26
Leroy M., Honorary Member, 25
Gifford Preserve, 29
Glandon, Earl W., 30, 64
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray, 42, 48, 61
Godwit, Hudsonian, 58
Marbled, 58
Goldeneye, Common, 30(2), 36, 56
Goldfinch, American, 13, 18, 20, 32, 44, 48, 63
Goose, Blue, 16, 30, 35, 54, 55
Canada, 10, 15, 16, 20, 30, 32, 35, 50, 54, 55
Snow, 16, 30, 35, 50, 54, 55
White-fronted, 15, 16, 30, 35, 54, 55
species, 34, 64
Goshawk, 30, 36, 56
Grackle, Common, 12, 18, 20, 29, 32, 44, 48, 62, 64(3)
Grebe, Eared, 35, 47, 55
Horned, 20, 35, 55
Pied-billed, 16, 20, 35, 47, 55
Western, 35, 55
Grosbeak, Black-headed, 12, 44, 48, 63
Blue, 12, 44, 48, 63
Evening, 44
Rose-breasted, 12, 18, 44, 63
Grouse, Sharp-tailed, 10, 31, 37, 51, 57
Gull, Franklin's, 17, 20, 38, 48, 58, 64
Herring, 17, 20, 38, 58
Ring-billed, 17, 20, 38, 48, 58
species, 54, 64
Habitat, A Changed, 15
Hansen, Mrs. Ethel, 29
Hansell, Lena, 30
Hanson, Carrie, 29
Harrington, Ralph, 29, 30, 46, 51, 64
Hawk, Broad-winged, 16, 36, 56
Cooper's, 16, 20, 30, 36, 56
Ferruginous, 16, 36, 56
Marsh, 10, 13, 16, 20, 31, 37, 47, 56
Pigeon, 16, 56
Red-shouldered, 10, 16, 36, 56
Red-tailed, 10, 16, 20, 30, 36, 47, 56
Rough-legged, 16, 31, 36, 56
Sharp-shinned, 16, 20, 30, 36, 56
Sparrow, 10, 16, 20, 29, 31, 37, 56, 67
Swainson’s, 10, 20(2), 36, 47, 56, 65
species, 52
Heineman, Mrs. Paul, 9, 16, 30(2), 54
A Changed Habitat, 15
Heron, Black-crowned Night, 10, 16, 35, 47, 55
Great Blue, 10, 16, 20, 35, 46(2), 47, 54, 55, 64
Green, 10, 16, 35, 47, 55
Little Blue, 35, 47, 55
Yellow-crowned Night, 16, 35, 55
Heywood, Ida May, 67
Holmgren, Mrs. Howard, 54
Hughson, Mr. and Mrs. David, 30
Hummingbird, Broad-tailed, 34, 39
Ruby-throated, 10, 13, 39, 59
species, 34
Hurlbut, Edith, 34
Ibis, Glossy, 8
Glossy Ibis in York County, 7
White-faced, 8
White-faced Ibis in Grant County, 6
Jay, Blue, 11, 17, 20, 31, 40, 48, 54, 60
Piton, 31, 40, 60
Jensen, Mrs. Sigvald, 66
Jones, Mrs. A. M., 29, 30, 34
Junco, Oregon, 32, 45, 63
Slate-colored, 18, 32, 45, 63, 64
White-winged, 13, 45, 63
Keim, Mr. and Mrs. George, 29, 51
George, 47
Kelley, Mrs. E. L., 30
Kellog, H., 29
Killdeer, 10, 16, 20, 31, 37, 46, 47, 57
Kinch, Carol, 29
Kingbird, Cassin’s, 19, 40
Eastern, 11, 17, 20, 40, 48, 59
Western, 11, 40, 48, 59
Kingfisher, Belted, 11, 17, 20, 31, 39, 59
Kinglet, Golden-crowned, 17, 31, 42, 61
Ruby-crowned, 31, 42, 61
Kite, Mississippi, 56
Mississippi Kite Seen in Fontenelle Forest, 49
Knowles, Lawrence, 29
Lark, Desert Horned, 25
Horned, 11, 17, 20, 31, 40, 48, 59
Northern Horned, 30
Prairie Horned, 30
LeDioyt, Glenn H., 9, 30
White-faced Ibis Seen in Grant County, 6
R., 30
Lionberger, Mrs. Earle, 32, 47(2)
Logan, Mrs. E. C., 34
Long, Loris, 30
Longspur, Chestnut-collared, 45, 64, 67
Lapland, 32, 34, 45, 64
McCown’s, 64, 67
Smith’s, 45
species, 64
Loon, Common, 35, 55
Record of Common Loon in Buffalo County, 18

Magpie, Black-billed, 3, 4, 11, 20, 31, 40, 48, 60
Malkowski, James, 30, 46, 47, 54
Mallard, 10, 16, 20, 22, 30, 32, 35, 47, 54, 55
Marian, Mrs. Ethel, 54
Mastin, Mrs. Kay, 29
Maunder, Vera, 29, 54
McIntosh, Mrs. James, 28

Meadowlark, Eastern, 12, 18, 31, 43, 46, 48, 62
Western, 12, 18, 20, 31, 43, 46, 48, 62
species, 31, 43, 46
Meeting, The Sixty-fourth Annual, 47
Merganser, Common, 16, 30, 36, 56
Hooded, 16, 56, 67
Red-breasted, 30(2), 36, 56
Mockingbird, 11, 41, 60
Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Lee, 20
Lee, Glossy Ibis in York County, 6
Rosalind, 29
Morrow, Ronnie, 29
Morton, Margaret, 9
Mowery, Mrs. B. F., 46, 64
Murphy, Mrs. S. L., 30
Neeland, Mrs. W. A., 9, 13, 34, 54
Nelson, Burton, 29, 34
Nesting Report, 1964, 9
A Study of Nesting Dickcissels in Nebraska, 22
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Nesting in Clay County, 14
Song Sparrow Nesting at Plattsmouth, 14
Nielsen, Mrs. Walter, 9, 46, 64, 67
Nighthawk, Common, 17, 20(2), 39, 59
Sennett’s, 25
Nutcracker, Clark’s 25
Nuthatch, Red-breasted, 3, 4, 17, 31, 41
White-breasted, 11, 17, 20, 31, 34, 41, 48, 60

Oldsquaw, 56
Oldsquaw at North Platte, 49
Oriole, Baltimore, 4, 12, 18, 44, 48, 62
Bullock’s, 12, 34, 44, 62
Hooded, 65
Orchard, 4, 5, 12, 18, 44, 48, 62
Osprey, 16, 20, 37, 46, 56
Ovenbird, 17, 43, 62

Owl, Barred, 17, 39, 58
Barn, 39, 46, 58
Burrowing, 10, 17, 39, 50, 58
Great Horned, 10, 17, 31, 39, 48, 58
Long-eared, 30, 31, 39, 58
Screech, 10, 17, 31, 39, 58
Short-eared, 17, 31, 32, 39, 48, 58
Snowy, 17, 39, 51(2)
Partridge, Gray, 19
Pelican, White, 16, 20, 35, 55
Pennington, Iola, 20
Perkins, Mrs. S. A., 54
Pewee, Eastern Wood, 11, 17, 40, 59
Western Wood, 40, 59
Phalarope, Northern, 17, 38, 58
Wilson’s, 17, 38, 48, 51, 58
Pheasant, Ring-necked, 10, 13, 16, 20, 22, 30, 37, 47, 57, 68
Phoebe, Eastern, 11, 17, 40, 48, 59
Say’s, 11, 40, 59
Pine Ridge, 5
Pintail, 16, 20, 30(2), 35, 51, 54, 55
Pipit, Sprague’s, 42, 61
Water, 17, 42, 61
Plank, John E., 30, 46
Plattsmouth Bird Club, 13, 34
Plattsmouth Game Refuge, 13, 14, 15, 29, 30, 32, 34, 54
Plover, American Golden, 37, 57
Black-bellied, 16, 37, 57, 66
Piping, 37, 57
Semipalated, 16, 20, 37, 47, 57
Upland, 10, 17, 38, 47, 57
Pluta, Mrs. J., 29
Poor-will, 25
Powell, Dr. Leon, Jr., 29, 49, 54
Steven, 49
Pritchard, Mr. and Mrs. C. C., 29
Pruess, Mrs. Kenneth, 9, 47, 51, 64
Radford, Norma, 29
Rail, Virginia, 37, 57
Rapp, William F. Jr., 47  
Redhead, 16, 36, 55  
Redpoll, Common, 18, 63  
Redstart, American, 12, 18, 43, 62  
Reports, 1964 Christmas Bird Count, 29  
  Seventh Fall Record Report, 34  
Spring Migration and Occurrence Report, 1963 Correction, 19  
  1964 Corrections, 19, 65  
  1965 Report, 54  
1964 Nesting Report, 9  
Treasurer's, 52  
Ritchey, Mrs. O. W., 29, 54  
Robin, 12, 17, 20, 29, 31, 41, 46, 48, 60  
Sanderling, 39, 58  
Sandpiper, Baird's, 17, 20, 38, 57  
  Buff-breasted, 58  
  Least, 17, 20, 38, 47, 57  
  Pectoral, 17, 20, 38, 57  
  Semipalmated, 17, 38, 47, 58  
  Solitary, 17, 20, 38, 57  
  Spotted, 17, 20, 38, 47, 57  
  Stilt, 17, 20, 38, 58  
  Western, 38, 58  
  White-rumped, 17, 20, 47, 57  
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied, 17, 29, 31, 39, 46, 59  
Scaup, Lesser, 16, 36, 47, 56  
Scheiber, Hazel, 29  
Schneider, Mrs. J., 30(2), 30  
Scoter, Surf, 50  
  White-winged, 51  
Sharpe, Roger S., 47, 68  
Shickley, Mrs. M. F., 9, 46, 47, 49, 64  
  Wintering Sandhill Cranes in Lincoln County, 28  
Short, Lester L. Jr., Bird Records from Northern Nebraska during the Breeding Season, 2  
Shoveler, 16, 20, 36, 47, 51, 55, 65  
Shrike, Loggerhead, 12, 17, 42, 48, 54, 61  
  Northern, 31, 42, 61  
Sims, Marcia, 46  
Simpson, James, 34  
Siskin, Pine, 18, 32, 44, 63  
Smith, LeRoy, 51  
Snipe, Common, 16, 22, 31, 37, 57  
Snyder, Mr. and Mrs. Dan, 34  
  Wanda, 29  
Solitaire, Townsend's, 31, 41, 61  
Sommerhalder, Mrs. B. R., 9  
Sora, 37, 46, 57  
Sparrow, Baird's, 45, 63  
  Brewer's, 25  
  Cassin's, 65  
  Chipping, 3, 13, 18, 20, 45, 48, 64  
  Clay-colored, 45, 48, 64  
  Field, 13, 18, 45, 48, 64  
  Fex, 32, 45, 64  
  Grasshopper, 13, 45, 48, 63  
  Harris', 18, 32, 45, 48, 64  
  Henslow's, 18, 45, 63  
  House, 12, 18, 20, 31, 43, 48, 62  
  Lark, 13, 18, 20, 45, 48, 63  
  Le Conte's, 18, 45, 63  
  Lincoln's, 18, 45, 48, 64(2)  
  Savannah, 18, 32, 44, 48, 63  
  Song, 13, 18, 20, 32, 34, 45, 64  
  Swamp, 32, 45, 64  
  Tree, 18, 32, 45, 63  
  Vesper, 18, 20, 45, 63  
  White-crowned, 18, 29, 32, 45, 48, 54, 64  
  White-throated, 18, 32, 45, 64  
Spicknell, Robert, 34, 54  
Stacey, E. T., 29  
Shraling, 12, 17, 20, 31, 42, 48, 61  
Stein, Ruth, 29  
Stilt, Black-necked, 17  
Swarmer, Bank, 11, 17, 40, 48, 59  
  Barn, 11, 17, 20, 40, 48, 51, 60  
  Cliff, 11, 17, 40, 48, 60  
  Rough-winged, 11, 17, 20, 40, 48, 60  
  Tree, 17, 48, 59  
  Violet-green, 59  
  species, 51  
Swan, Whistling, 16  
Swanson, Carl, 30, 46, 49, 54  
  Mrs. Kermit, 64, 67  
Swift, Chimney, 2, 4, 10, 17, 34, 39, 48, 59  
  White-throated, 9, 10, 59  
Tanage, Scarlet, 44, 63  
  Western, 34, 44
Nebraska Bird Review 75

Tate, Mr. and Mrs. James, 46
Oldsquaw at North Platte, 49
James, 46, 47
The Surf Scoter in Nebraska, 50
Mrs. D. Jean, 47
Teal, Blue-winged, 10, 16, 19, 20, 22,
36, 47, 51, 55
Cinnamon, 19, 51, 55
Green-winged, 16, 19, 20, 30, 35,
47, 55
Tern, Black, 17, 39, 58
Caspian, 17
Common, 17, 38, 58
Forster's, 17, 38, 58
Least, 17, 20, 38, 58
Thrasher, Brown, 11, 17, 20, 31, 34,
41, 46, 48, 60, 64
Sage, 41
Thrush, Gray-checked, 17, 60
Hermit, 41, 60
Swainson's, 17, 41, 48, 60
Wood, 41, 48, 60
species, 54
Titmouse, Tufted, 11, 31, 41, 60
Towhee, Green-tailed, 63, 66
Rufous-sided, 13, 18, 29, 44, 46, 63,
64
Towne, Mary A., In Memoriam, 48
Tremaine, Dr. Mary, 47
Turkey, 10, 31, 37, 57
Turner, Harold, 9, 34, 47, 54, 65, 67
Ornithological Observations, 19
Honorary Member, 66
Vance, Mrs. Alvin, 30, 65, 67
Vee, 17, 41, 48, 60
Viehmeyer, Glenn, 9
Mrs. Glenn, 9, 30, 46, 64
Vireo, Bell’s, 3, 4, 12, 13, 17, 42, 48,
61
Red-eyed, 12, 17, 42, 61
Solitary, 42, 46, 61
Warbling, 12, 13, 17, 42, 48, 61
White-eyed, 42, 61
Yellow-throated, 3, 5, 42, 61, 67
Von Steen, Dale A., A Study of Nesting Dickcissels in Nebraska, 22
Vulture, Turkey, 16, 36, 47, 54, 56
Warbler, Audubon’s, 9, 12, 43, 61
Bay-breasted, 62
Black-and-white, 42, 61
Blackburnian, 19, 43, 62
Blackpoll, 43, 62
Black-throated Green, 43, 62
Blue-winged, 17, 42, 48, 61
Canada, 19, 43
Cerulean, 4, 62
Chesnut-sided, 43, 62
Connecticut, 43
Golden-winged, 61, 64
Kentucky, 43, 62
MacGillivray’s, 43, 62
Magnolia, 42, 61
Mourning, 43, 62
Myrtle, 17, 20, 29, 43, 46, 48, 61, 64
Nashville, 17, 42, 61
Orange-crowned, 42, 61
Palm, 62
Parula, 3, 4, 17
Prothonotary, 42, 61
Tennessee, 17, 42, 48, 61
Townsend’s, 66
Wilson’s, 17, 20, 34, 43, 62
Worm-eating, 17
Yellow, 12, 17, 42, 48, 49, 61
species, 54
Waterthrush, Louisiana, 43, 46, 62,
64
Northern, 17, 62
Waxwing, Bohemian, 61
Cedar, 12, 17, 31, 42, 61
Weigand, John P., Record of Common Loon in Buffalo County, 18
Three Species of Teal on One Reservoir, 19
Wensien, Mrs. Adolph, 9
Whimbrel, 57
Whip-poor-will, 39, 58
Wigeon, American, 16, 20, 36, 47, 55,
65
Wiley, Irene, 20
Willet, 20, 38, 57
Winter, Bertha, 47, 49
Witschy, Mr. and Mrs. Roy, 13, 30, 67
Mrs. Roy, 9, 46
Wolfe, Carl W., 9
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Nesting in Clay County, 14
A Parasitized Prairie Chicken Nest, 68
Wood, Mrs. Donald, 9, 13, 16, 30(2), 32, 34, 54
Song Sparrow Nesting at Platts­mouth, 14
Woodcock, American, 37, 46
Woodpecker, Downy, 11, 17, 31, 40, 48, 59
Hairy, 11, 17, 31, 39, 48, 59
Lewis', 25
Red-bellied, 2, 4, 11, 17, 31, 34, 39, 48, 59
Red-headed, 11, 17, 20, 31, 39, 48, 59, 64
Woon, Howard, 4
Wren, Bewick’s, 41
Carolina, 17, 41, 60, 67
House, 11, 17, 41, 48, 54, 60
Long-billed Marsh, 41, 60
Rock, 41, 60
Short-billed Marsh, 41, 48, 60
Winter, 17, 31, 41, 60
Yellowlegs, Greater, 17, 20, 38, 57
Lesser, 17, 20, 38, 47, 57
Yellowthroat, 12, 17, 43, 48, 62
Young, Mr. and Mrs. S. R., 30, 65
Mrs. S. R., 9
Youngworth, William, 18, 65

1966 ANNUAL MEETING, Lincoln, APRIL 30 and MAY 1

Annual dues ($3.00 Active, $5.00 Sustaining) are payable to George W. Keim, 1114 South 47th, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68510