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## Review of *Birds in Kansas, Volume II* by Max C. Thompson and Charles Ely. Lawrence

Thomas E. Labedz

University of Nebraska State Museum, tlabedz1@unl.edu

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**Birds in Kansas, Volume II.** Max C. Thompson and Charles Ely. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas, Museum of Natural History, Public Education Series, No. 12., 1992. Distributed by the University Press of Kansas, Lawrence. xvi + 424 pp. Maps, photos, and references. \$14.95 soft.

It has been nearly 30 years since the last of several excellent compendia of Kansas birds was published. *Birds in Kansas* continues this tradition and raises it to a new level of excellence for Kansas. Readers expecting a Kansas version of Robert's *The Birds of Minnesota* will be disappointed, but very few others can complain.

*Birds of Kansas, Volume II* is the final volume and contains an explanation of species accounts and accounts for the passerines. Volume I, published in 1989, contains introductory, historical, and physiographical chapters, an explanation of the species accounts, and accounts for non-passerines.

Each species account contains common and scientific names and a map showing occurrence and breeding distribution within Kansas. In addition, many accounts are accompanied by a photograph of the species. The bulk of each account contains information on the species' status in the Kansas, period of occurrence, breeding information, habits, habitats, field marks, and even food preferences.

Strong points of this book include the authors' extensive personal experience with the birds of Kansas and this is expressed in the Kansas-based discussions of the biology of the birds. Historical discussions exist where appropriate for species with expanding or shrinking ranges. Vagrant species are given full treatment in species accounts instead of being relegated to an appendix. Species with easily distinguishable races have separate maps for appropriate races. And the authors point out areas of needed study within Kansas.

Data from non-professional ornithologists were extensively utilized in this book. The authors have critically examined these records for errors and retained for use only the most reliable sightings. In addition, the authors warn readers of difficult identification of certain species and give clues to aid in the

readers of difficult identification of certain species and give clues to aid in the field, both for visual and auditory encounters. Readers are warned which species might require documentation or other verification for sightings. These combine to form a scientific resource.

No endeavor this large can be completed without some errors. Most do no serious harm to the book. The only serious error is that the map labeled for Alder Flycatcher appears to really be that for the Willow Flycatcher and no map is included for Alder Flycatcher. While the introduction states that each species is accompanied by a map, no map exists for five species. Text concerning breeding did not match the map for Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Mountain Bluebird, Sage Thrasher, Red-eyed Vireo, American Redstart, Black-and-white, Prothonotary, or Hooded warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Cassin's or Henslow's sparrows, Western Meadowlark, and House Finch. Distribution text for Ash-throated Flycatcher does not match the map. The citation for Imler is incorrect in the text but correct in the Literature Cited section.

A base map of Kansas is not included in Volume II and rivers are used as reference in some species accounts yet no map labeling rivers exists. Twenty-seven pages are unnumbered and space is wasted with several pages having as few as four lines printed on them. Some Kansas breeding species lack egg descriptions while some non-breeding species do have nest and egg descriptions. Some photographs offer little to identify the species and some are not quite of publishable quality.

Overall *Birds in Kansas, Volume II* is an excellent resource for professional and non-professional ornithologist alike and is among the most affordable state bird books of recent publication. *Birds in Kansas* will remain the single best source of bird information for Kansas for many years. **Thomas E. Labedz**, *University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska*.