

*The*

# BLUEBIRD



THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

Vol. 34, No. 2

Summer-Fall 1967

## New Checklist of the Birds of Missouri

Finally, after some 30 years, a new updated checklist of Missouri birds is available. The last checklist was compiled by the late Dr. Rudolph Bennett (*Checklist of the Birds of Missouri*, 1932; University of Missouri Studies, Vol. VII, No. 3; out of print). The new checklist is compact enough to carry in the field, yet detailed enough for accurate reference.

David Easterla and Richard Anderson were responsible for compiling the checklist and the typing was done by Mitzi Anderson. The list includes 373 species authentically recorded in Missouri with an additional eight species which hopefully might someday be authenticated for the state. Of the total, 10 species no longer occur in the state and two of these are extinct. Seasonal status, abundance status and distribution in Missouri are indicated for each species; listing is in phylogenetic sequence.

No checklist can be perfectly up to date and the authors will welcome any records they might have missed and which might change the status of any species. They would like their efforts to be considered a stepping stone to further revisions and perhaps to a book on the birds of Missouri. Following are changes that should be made in the current printing of the checklist:

- 44—*Gadwall*, not Gadwell
- 133—Least Sandpiper T, c; add *WR, a*
- 223—Rough-winged Swallow SR, add *c*
- 233—Black-capped Chickadee PR, add *c(n)*
- 320—Bobolink T, u; \*SR, ca(n), change to *T, u; SR, ca(nw)*

Checklists are sold at the rate of 30 for \$1.00 plus postage. Minimum order, \$1.00. Postage rates: add \$.10 for first \$1.00 purchase; \$.15 for \$2.00 purchase and \$.20 for \$3.00-\$4.00 purchase.

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# The Audubon Society of Missouri

Founded 1901

It is the purpose of the Audubon Society of Missouri to further conservation education in all its aspects with particular emphasis on wildlife. The Audubon Society of Missouri is dedicated to the proposition that only through education can a total conservation consciousness be insured and will constantly try to further this education at all levels.

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# THE BLUEBIRD

Volume 34

Number 2

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## Editor's Comments

Some avid hunters are prone to criticize those nature enthusiasts who merely watch or photograph wildlife. They argue that nature lovers preach too much in defense of wild things, yet do not help foot the bill for wildlife management. They think that everyone who tramps the woods should have to buy a license.

Some nature enthusiasts have their counter arguments. They claim that avid hunters care nothing for wildlife except those forms they hope to align in their gun sights. They also argue that those who buy licenses have undue influence on the wildlife managers who are recipients of their money. This presumably tempts game managers to concentrate all their efforts on shootable wildlife while ignoring non-game species.

There may be occasional truth in such opposing blasts but mostly they are blind shots and everyone knows that blind shots are pretty risky. Hunters pay for the privilege of their sport because it does require careful management, especially on a man-dominated landscape; nature enthusiasts do not pay because their sport does not extract anything from the landscape. Nature lovers who really understand ecology are not against hunting, but against abuses of the land. And they as well as all outdoorsmen should realize that no competent game manager can exert his efforts on shootable game to the exclusion of other species; they all are part of nature's delicate web of dependencies. What the opposing critics need to do is get together occasionally and share their common concern.

*The Audubon Society of Missouri* members who attended the 1967 annual meeting shared in just such a venture. Ed Stegner, an ardent conservationist and executive secretary of Missouri's *Conservation Federation*, spoke convincingly of interests we have in common with the sportsmen's clubs he represents. He even pointed out how some of the conservation resolutions we endorsed were nearly identical to those that the *Federation* agreed upon at their own annual meeting!

After Mr. Stegner's enlightening presentation and the friendly discussion that followed, we might do well to offer the *Federation* members an opportunity to hear our views. We would hope they might then realize, as we did, just how much the two organizations need to cooperate toward common goals.

## Reporting for the Seasonal Survey of Birds

Largely for reasons of economy, *The Bluebird* has been limited to two issues during each of the past two years. We are now planning to reinstate the publication as a quarterly. This will mean that all reports of bird observations should be sent to our new compiler, John Hamilton (see address on page 13), within one week of the end of each reporting period. These periods are:

Spring Survey .....March through May  
Summer Survey .....June through August  
Fall Survey.....September through November  
Winter Survey.....December through February

News items related to local chapters and individual members should be sent to our news-letter editor, Richard Dawson, 5600 East Gregory, Kansas City, Missouri 64132.

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### Members: Have You Paid Your 1968 Dues?

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THE BLUEBIRD is the official publication of the Audubon Society of Missouri. Articles, essays and reports on all phases of natural history and conservation are welcomed and will be printed within limits of space available. Manuscripts should be typed, double-space, on one side of 8½x11 paper. Illustrations should be in the form of glossy prints, 5x7 or larger, or as original drawings. Send articles and other correspondence to the editor: James P. Jackson, 105 Terry Lane, Washington, Mo. 63090.

# Bob and Elena – Pet Loggerhead Shrikes

By Charles R. Bell, Maryville

How was I to know a casual remark that the Loggerhead Shrike is such a handsome bird, was to result in two nestling shrikes being given to me a few weeks later. They had been deserted in the nest after the parents had met with disaster, and the young man who had been observing their nest remembered my words of admiration and brought the two babies to me.

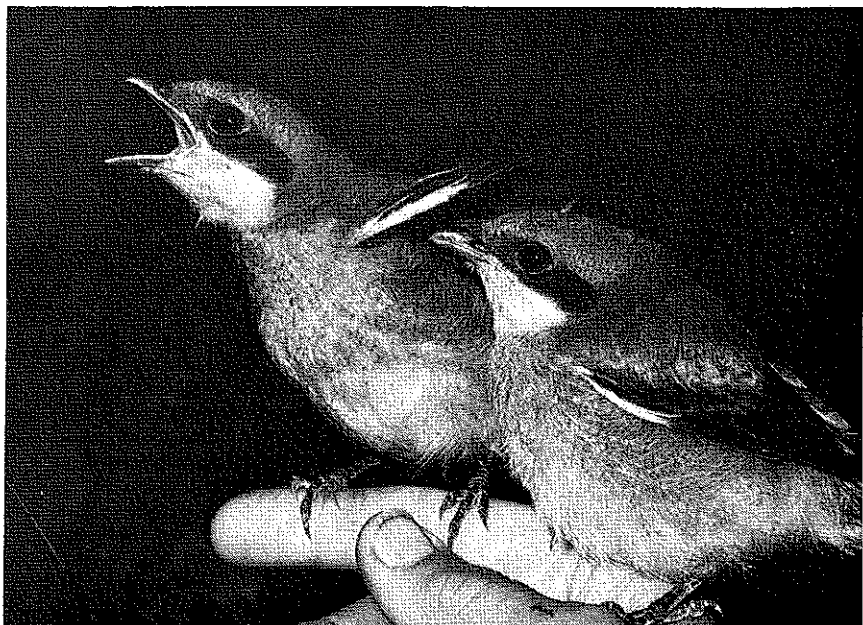
They were well feathered but with very short tail feathers, and although half-starved were too wild and fearful to accept food. For three days I had to force-feed them by prying open their bills and inserting a June beetle (*Phyllophaga fusca*). On the fourth day they first opened their mouths voluntarily to receive food, and within a week were flying to my hand when a June beetle was offered.

It was not by coincidence that I had a large supply of June beetles on hand, frozen in the home freezer. In fact I had ten quarts of them, collected under street lights on warm May nights, and held in readiness for feeding any baby purple martins that might fall from their apartment house in my garden. Experience had taught me that in July for the past few years, young martins, yet unable to fly, often fell from the martin house, and my supply of June beetles, handed to them, saved their lives. This insect, so prevalent in this area and easy to collect in a sufficient quantity, is an excellent food for most wild birds which are meat-eaters by nature. The shrikes were also fond of raw chicken livers cut into small pieces.

After the shrikes learned to fly to me for food and after an ultimatum from my wife that the shrikes must vacate our screened-in breezeway before the arrival of guests, I released my little pets on a sunny, calm June morning. Immediately they flew to the roof of the house, and then, seeking the highest point available, flew to the television antenna. At this point I gave up ever seeing them again, thinking their next flight would take them some distance away. The vantage point on the antenna appealed to them however, and they remained there about a half hour until hunger pangs made them conscious of me, standing below on the patio waving a June beetle in one hand and calling "here baby."

I did not realize what a ridiculous spectacle I was making until later when a neighbor asked me what in heavens name had caused me to go through such antics. But success was mine, for after several flights down toward me and back to the roof, one shrike and then the other alighted on my hand for food. I knew the battle was won, and about every half hour throughout the rest of the day, I fed them. They soon became familiar with the surroundings but continued to prefer perching on the television antenna and the weather vane atop the garage. That night they slept in a densely foliated magnolia tree quite near the breezeway. They have continued roosting there each night since, and have survived unharmed several thunder storms with winds and heavy rain.

In a short time they took steps to establish their territory on and around the patio, darting at a robin, a catbird, a blue jay or a sparrow who chanced



*The Shrikes, Bob and Elena*

Photo by J. Donald McIntyre

to invade their domain. Not once have the shrikes attacked a purple martin however, even though both species of birds sit together on the antenna at the same time.

The shrikes were without names at the time of their release, so when our guests, Bob and Elena, arrived, we decided to "honor" them by giving their names to our favorite pets. Bob, a bit larger, has his band on the right leg while Elena's is on the left. Only by this means could we tell them apart. Since both sexes of shrikes are identical, we have only assumed that we have a male and a female.

They loved to bathe, and this nearly proved fatal for Elena one day. She was so drenched from her bath that she could not fly, and a neighbor's pup mauled her injuring one wing severely but not breaking any bones. Elena did not fly for a week, and had to be kept in a cage on the breezeway until she could fly again.

Since shrikes in their normal habitat often frequent locust trees with large thorns on which they impale mice and beetles, I cut a small locust tree at the farm, and making use of the Christmas tree holder, set it up on the patio. It soon became a favorite perch for the shrikes, and shortly I saw Bob impale a plump June beetle on a sharp thorn. It was only after their appetites were satisfied that the shrikes impaled any food on the thorns. Usually four insects at a feeding were all they cared for. The impaled food was not forgotten and at the first sign of hunger they returned to the thorn tree for the morsel earlier put aside.



The shrikes, like all birds, are early risers, and for several mornings at six o'clock they perched on the window sill of our bedroom, calling harshly for breakfast. This needless to say, did not endear them to my wife who had already despaired of keeping the wrought iron patio chairs clean. They have at least four distinct tones of voice, a rasping call for food, a more pronounced screech of belligerence, staccato notes of alarm, and a contented semi-song when resting after a full meal.

It has now been two weeks since the pet shrikes have had complete freedom, and while they depend upon me for the major part of their food, I notice that they quite often dive into the grass for an insect or catch an ant crawling on the stone patio. They are thus becoming more independent and I predict that with a few more weeks they will desert their foster father and fly to the open countryside nearby, there to mingle with their fellows, forgetting entirely their early dependence upon a human being.

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## Spring Survey – March 1 through May 31

By *Floyd R. Lawhon*

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The spring of 1967 was quite variable, as usual. Over the state as a whole there was an early spring during March and April. This brought many early migrants. Then an abrupt turn about brought an unseasonably cool and moist early May. There were scattered frosts in May and late migrants were held back while some trees, after leafing out, were nipped by frost and had to start all over again. Though an odd spring, it provided many good bird observations.

*Loons through Ibises*—One common loon was seen at Fellows Lake, near Springfield, by Jacquelin Henry on May 13th; another was seen by Mary Louise Myers at Shawnee Mission Lake (Kansas) on the same date. A loon in breeding plumage was also reported from the Kansas City area in mid-May by Dean and Elizabeth Cole. The best grebe of the season was no doubt a red-necked grebe recorded from the St. Louis area on April 17th by Kathryn Arhos (E.C.). Horned grebes were reported several times from the St. Louis area and one was seen near Columbia. Two horned grebes on May 1st were the only ones seen at Squaw Creek Refuge (H.B.). The eared grebe was common in western Missouri but the only records for the St. Louis area were on March 18th by Paul Bauer and on March 26th by Kathryn Arhos. White pelicans were reported from several areas over the state but not in large numbers. Double-crested cormorants were either way down in numbers or, in some areas, not observed at all. Only three sightings of five and six were reported from the Squaw Creek area and only one was sighted at Columbia. Herons were down in numbers, probably due to favorite areas being dried up. The snowy egret which was seen in the St. Louis area (J.E.C.) would have been a welcome sight in western Missouri. Black-crowned and yellow-crowned night herons are holding their own at the Squaw Creek area. An early yellow-crown was seen there on April 2nd (J.L.H.). David Easterla found what may be a small nesting colony of the yellow-crowns at One-Hundred and Two River, east of Maryville. American and least bittern were reported

from northwest Missouri in mid-May. One least bittern was seen by Jacquelin Henry at Lake Springfield on May 15th, and also a cattle egret on the same date, at the same place. Two cattle egrets were seen near East St. Louis (Illinois) by Catherine Simon of Alton (Illinois). Glossy ibises were observed several times at Squaw Creek Refuge by several people, the first record being on April 9th by Burgess, Brown and Lawhon.

*Geese through Ducks*—Geese went through the Squaw Creek area in early March in numbers totalling nearly half a million (H.B.). During the week of March 12th, Burgess estimated 4,000 large Canadas, 5,700 small Canadas, 1,400 white-fronts, 220,600 snows and 230,600 blues, a total of 462,300 geese. The same week also provided a high count for ducks on the Refuge, a total of 131,940 (H.B.). This included some 100,000 mallards and 30,000 pintails. The following week, March 19-25, brought an increase of other species: 2,300 gadwalls, 3,200 shovellers and some 22,200 green-winged teals. After that week, the trend was downward in numbers with the exception of the shovellers which peaked at 15,000 in early April.

Cinnamon teals were reported from Squaw Creek Refuge, two on April 1st (D.E.) and one on May 19th (H.B.). Due to low water in northwest Missouri, mergansers were few for the season. The largest concentrations of diving ducks for the state were reported from the St. Louis area (J.E.C.), where an estimated 1,000 redheads, 7,000 canvasbacks, 2,500 lesser scaup and 200 goldeneyes were seen on March 5th. These were observed by Dick Anderson and Paul Bauer. There were a number of old-squaw sightings in the St. Louis area, two on March 18th (J.E.C.), three on March 23rd (R.A.), two on April 2nd by Jim Rushill, two on April 6th (J.E.C.) and again on April 10th. Greater scaup were identified by a group in the St. Louis area on April 6th, as were red-breasted mergansers.

*Hawks and Eagles*—John Hamilton reported a Mississippi kite at his home near the Missouri River bluffs; another, seen at Shawnee Mission Park (Kansas) on March 22nd, was an unusually early date (E.C.). An early date for the turkey vulture in the Columbia area was March 11th. Ted Anderson reports Swainson's hawk for the Kansas City area on April 18th; they were seen frequently in the St. Joseph area, though mostly in small numbers. The latest report on a wintering rough-legged hawk was a lone bird seen at Squaw Creek Refuge on April 2nd (H.B.). Eagles which had wintered in northwest Missouri were mostly gone by April; two immatures seen on April 2nd were the last ones (H.B.,F.L.). Five marsh hawks were reported from the prairie area near Columbia on March 5th (I.C.A.). The osprey was reported from Squaw Creek (D.E.), from the St. Louis area on April 15th (J.E.C.), and from Shawnee Mission Lake near Kansas City on May 14th (M.L.M.). An early peregrine falcon was reported from the Columbia area on March 22nd (I.C.A.), and one from Squaw Creek on May 7th (D.E., H.B.). One pigeon hawk was observed in the St. Louis area on April 5th (J.E.C.).

*Gallinaceous Birds*—A prairie chicken was seen just west of Kansas City, Kansas, on February 15th (M.L.M.). A total of twelve prairie chickens were observed on Tucker Prairie east of Columbia on March 5th (I.C.A.). Last year, in northwest Missouri, the bobwhite quail was thought to be at an all-time high but they seem even more plentiful this year. Pheasants also seem to be up in numbers this year in northwest Missouri.

*Rails through Coots*—Because of low water and ideal marsh areas, the Squaw Creek area was excellent for rails. One king rail was seen in the area on May 14th (D.E.), and two on May 19th (D.E.). Virginia rails were quite common. *Easteria* reports the first ones in late April and many were seen by the Missouri Nature Conservancy group on May 19th. Soras were also abundant with the high count of 31 at a marsh near Squaw Creek Refuge (D.E.). In the St. Louis area, Virginia rails were found on April 17th, and a king rail was seen on April 25th by several area birders. (J.E.C.).

*Shorebirds*—Piping plovers were first reported at Squaw Creek on April 20th and the high count was five on May 7th (F.L.). An early snowy plover was found at Browning Lake on March 25th (J.L.H.). Golden plovers were in small number at Squaw Creek but 400 were recorded for the St. Louis area (J.E.C.). Black-bellied plovers were observed several times in the Squaw Creek area and two ruddy turnstones were found there in mid-May (D.E.), plus five more on May 21st by R. A. Brown and Floyd Lawhon. Woodcock with two young were reported seen by Mrs. Ezra B. Entrikin in the Columbia area on April 29th. One whimbrel was reported near Squaw Creek on May 16th (D.E.). Willets were particularly numerous in northwest Missouri with 107 counted on May 7th (D.E.), and 60 reported by Elizabeth Cole at Shawnee Mission Lake on May 15th. Yellowlegs seemed to inundate the Squaw Creek area in late April, when an estimated 500 greater, and 10,000 lesser yellowlegs were observed on the 23rd. Knots in breeding plumage were a particular treat in the Squaw Creek area; two were seen on May 7th (D.E.), one on May 14th (R.A.), and four later by Rositzky and Lawhon. White-rumped sandpipers moved in early in May and numbered into the hundred at Squaw Creek with 500 estimated on May 21st (F.L.). Thirty were also reported from the Springfield area (I.F.). Again in the Squaw Creek area, dunlins and long-billed dowitchers were fairly common throughout May. A few short-billed dowitchers were definitely identified in late April (J.L.H.) with many other shorebirds in the same area. Western sandpipers were reported from northwest Missouri, as were sanderlings, but the Baird's sandpiper was also seen in small numbers. Stilt sandpipers were below their usual numbers for the area.

Conditions were not particularly good in the St. Louis area for shore birds; that is, not compared with northwest Missouri. One buff-breasted sandpiper was reported from St. Louis on April 9th (J.E.C.), but in northwest Missouri there were sightings throughout May. Perhaps the best shorebird for the St. Louis area was the Hudsonian godwit, of which there were several sightings. Several reports of avocets, in ones and twos, came from northwest Missouri but Sally Vasse reported one from the Mississippi River area (actually in Illinois) north of St. Louis. The rarest bird of the spring for northwest Missouri was no doubt the black-necked stilt, first spotted by Harold Burgess at Squaw Creek Refuge, then later seen by other observers. Both the Wilson's and the northern phalaropes were common in northwest Missouri; an estimated 1,000 of the Wilson's were seen at Squaw Creek on May 7th (F.L.).

*Gulls and Terns*—The glaucous gull was reported from the St. Louis area on March 1st and 5th (J.E.C.,R.A.). Franklin's gulls were fairly common at Squaw Creek and one Bonaparte's gull was seen at Browning Lake near St. Joseph on March 31st (J.L.H.,F.L.). There were several reports of

Bonaparte's gulls from the St. Louis area during April. An early Forster's tern was seen at St. Louis on April 9th (R.A.); others were also reported from Columbia on May 4th (I.C.A.) and from St. Joseph. The common tern, least tern, Caspian tern and black terns were all seen in the Squaw Creek area as well as the Forster's.

*Cuckoos through Kingfishers*—Bob Bright of the Table Rock Lake area reported a roadrunner nesting in the garage of a man who works for him. In a letter forwarded by David Easterla, Bright relates, "The male roadrunners are singing now and you can hear three or four at a time from almost any location in this area."

Short-eared owls were reported from St. Louis (J.E.C.), Springfield (I.F.), and Squaw Creek (J.L.H.,H.B.). R. A. Brown reports hearing a poor-will in the Table Rock area in early May; he had heard one in the same area the year previously. An estimated 3,500 to 4,000 chimney swifts dropped into one big chimney on the University of Missouri campus at Columbia on May 7th. By the third week in May, according to Mrs. Entrikin, most of them had moved on.

*Woodpeckers through Swallows*—Red-headed woodpeckers seem to be building up in numbers. Sapsuckers were reported as unusually numerous in the St. Louis area (J.E.C.). In northwest Missouri, where western kingbirds were fairly numerous in past years, they were hard to find this year; scissor-tailed flycatchers, on the other hand, were reported from several areas along the western border of the state. Most reports were from the Kansas City area (M.L.M.,E.C.), but they were also seen in the Springfield area. Far more unusual, though, was a scissor-tail seen along the Mississippi River levee south of St. Louis on May 20th (J.E.C.). Numerous observers saw this scissor-tail and admitted that it "stole the show" from a flock of some 35 cattle egrets. An unusually large concentration of swallows was reported from Squaw Creek on May 14th, when approximately 10,000 of them, of four species, were observed. In order of abundance they were: barn swallows, bank swallows, tree swallows and rough-winged swallows.

*Jays through Shrikes*—Two late red-breasted nuthatches were seen at Krug Park in St. Joseph on May 14th by F. Lawhon and Simon Rostizky. Bewick's wrens, unusual in northwest Missouri, were reported by John L. Hamilton. Long-billed marsh wrens were heard and frequently seen in northwest Missouri due to good marsh conditions (J.L.H.,D.E.).

A late report not included in the winter survey was a Townsend's solitaire in the Kansas City area on February 20th, seen by Ruth Swanson.

*Vireos through Warblers*—It is surprising how warbler observations were reported from northwest Missouri. They seemed plentiful in the area during the first two weeks of May where a wet, cold weather pattern apparently held their migration in check. But according to some observers in the Kansas City area (M.L.M.,E.C.), warblers were scarcer this spring than in many years. I. C. Adams of Columbia reports a few species not normally seen there but reports others, one would normally see, as being missing. As an example, Mrs. Entrikin reported what would probably be the first Columbia record of a Swainson's warbler. The St. Louis area seemed to have large concentrations of warblers which stayed late due to the cool and wet early May period.

*Meadowlarks through Sparrows*—Yellow-headed blackbirds were more numerous at Squaw Creek this spring than usual. On May 21st, a total of 90 were reported (R. A. Brown, F.L.). Two sightings of yellow-heads in the St. Louis area were better than average for that area (J.E.C.). On March 5th, an estimated 8,000,000 blackbirds descended on Squaw Creek Refuge late in the afternoon; on March 19th there were still several million estimated on the Refuge.

A male western tanager was seen on the May 7th Forest Park bird walk in St. Louis, and was verified by Earl Hath. There were two reports of painted buntings in western Missouri, one by Elizabeth Cole at her home in late May, and one by Fern Shumate from Springfield. James Fairlee reported seeing a pair of lark buntings along the Missouri River bottoms southeast of St. Joseph on May 25th and 27th. LeCont's sparrows were reported in small numbers from most areas. The only report of a sharp-tailed sparrow was from Squaw Creek on May 20th (D.E.). Vesper sparrows and clay-colored sparrows were more numerous than usual in northwest Missouri. Lapland longspurs were reported from the St. Louis area, and so was the infrequently recorded Smith's longspur (J.E.C.). Both species were reported from Maryville by David Easterla.

I. C. A. — I. C. Adams

R. A. — Richard Anderson

H. B. — Harold Burgess

E. C. — Elizabeth Cole

J. E. C. — James Earl Comfort

D. E. — David Easterla

J. L. H. — John L. Hamilton

I. F. — Irving Fay

F. L. — Floyd Lawhon

M. L. M. — Mary Louise Myers

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## A Missouri Book

*The World of the Opossum*, by James F. Keefe, with photos by Don Wooldridge, is a delightful and authentic study, in depth, of the United States' only native marsupial, or pouched mammal. The authors are best known to Missourians for their work with the Missouri Department of Conservation; Keefe is the department's information officer and Wooldridge is its chief photographer. The book is one of the Living World series, edited by John K. Terres who was formerly editor of the *Audubon Magazine*. It is published by the J. B. Lippincott Company and the price is \$4.95.

# VALUES OF COLLECTING BIRDS FOR SCIENTIFIC SPECIMENS

By *David A. Easterla, Assistant Professor of Biology*  
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Much time and energy has been spent involving debates over the pros and cons of sacrificing birds for scientific purposes. As will be seen in this article, any individual who would take either extreme, being against all scientific collecting of birds or sanctioning all collecting with no restrictions, would be foolish and uninformed. Despite the fact that birds have been collected for hundreds of years for various scientific pursuits, and the trend will undoubtedly continue, we still commonly hear people protest such acts. Since I hold valid state and federal collecting permits and am located at an educational institution, I am one of those individuals who besides being a birdwatcher, collect birds. Other birdwatchers sometimes seem perplexed by my actions because they are also aware of my very strong feelings concerning the conservation and preservation of our native flora and fauna, particularly birds. The same question always arises: "Why do you kill birds?"

Indiscriminate and illegal killing of birds is a crime and can be very damaging to a particular population of birds. The same could be true for scientific collecting if no restrictions were prescribed. However, legal and discriminate collecting of birds with restrictions (prescribed in the permits) for scientific purposes is necessary and not harmful to the population concerned. Just to be a birdwatcher, the sacrificing of birds' lives obviously is not necessary. In fact, often it is the opposite, some people helping injured birds to recover to normal health which is certainly a humane act. To be a serious birdwatcher or ornithologist, however, collecting is usually involved. If no collecting was done, the science of ornithology would come to a sudden halt or a very slackened pace, and future bird lovers would probably be able to learn little more than we know today about birds. Certainly ornithology could not have progressed to its present status without much collecting in the past.

Following are comments which should help to clarify the necessary role of some birds being sacrificed for science and why the species concerned are not affected detrimentally.

1. Biologists have determined through research that almost all species of birds have an annual reproduction that will greatly exceed the carrying capacity of the land where the species lives. Hence, each year a surplus is produced and many individuals will expectedly perish through starvation, disease, parasites, predation, and other natural catastrophes, without the population being affected detrimentally. This is nature's way of always being sure enough individuals of a population will be present for the next breeding season. In fact, population ecologists tell us that there is about an 85% annual mortality for first year birds and about a 45% annual mortality for adult birds. Providing the species is not one that is endangered, limited collecting

is only robbing the toll of those destined to perish through disease, starvation, etc. and definitely not hurting the breeding population as a whole.

2. *No collecting* should be allowed for those species that are endangered or rare throughout their total range (example—Kirtland's Warbler, Whooping Crane, etc.). However, this should not be confused with the accidentals and strays who have wandered from their normal range where they are commonly encountered. Occasionally individuals stray to the edge or out of their normal range and then are considered to be rare or casual for that particular area of occurrence. These often are those "rare" birds that are collected by ornithologists to substantiate state records and in return a howl of protests are heard because a "rare" bird was killed. Rare for the state, yes, but certainly not a rare species when the total range is considered.

3. Often it is stated that a single observation or photograph is just as good as a specimen. Regrettably this is far from the truth in most instances. Certainly sight records and photographs are very valuable and often they are fully satisfactory and no further data is needed. However, they are unsatisfactory for subspecific or racial determination, and a specimen is definitely needed. Also there is a greater chance of error if no specimen is secured. I am sure there is not one expert birdwatcher in the field today who would not admit that in the past some very embarrassing mistakes had been made in field identification. Certainly a mistake can be made in identifying a study skin specimen, too, but the specimen should always be present so others in the future could eventually correct the mistake. One hundred years from now, how will Missouri birdwatchers know which sight records of our time are reliable and which ones are questionable? If a specimen is collected, there should be little question for a record, regardless of how long ago the specimen was taken. Rarely do ornithologists accept a species of birds on a state list based solely on a sight observation. Usually the species will be considered hypothetical until more proof is offered in the form of a specimen and the subspecies can also be determined.

4. It is no easy matter to secure permits for legally collecting birds for scientific purposes. Both the state and federal governments are very careful in issuing permits and besides issuing restrictions in numbers and species taken, there must be definite objectives for collecting before the permits are issued. These restrictions obviously keep legal collecting at a discriminatory pace. Too, all bird specimens collected must be deposited in an educational institution.

5. One present day objection to collecting birds is that most data should and could be determined from specimens already collected. Why collect more of the same species? Is the day of collecting something of the past? This objection presupposes that specimens do not change once they are preserved; but they do. Color fading is probably the most evident change. Also, the assumption is made that one collecting effort is equal to any other. This is not true. Birds certainly vary in their plumage according to the season collected and specimens collected in the past may represent only one season. Too, there is much variation in age and sex of specimens taken. Also, to update and document the evolutionary changes occurring within a species, it is necessary to continue taking specimens; often this evolutionary rate may occur much more rapidly than originally thought (See Johnson, R. F. and R. K. Selander.

1964. "House Sparrows: Rapid Evolution of Races in North America," *Science*, Vol. 144, No. 3618, pp. 548-550).

6. It is important to remember that the range of a species is not constant but changes as the species continues to evolve and adapt to the changing climate and overall environment (example—Roadrunner, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and Painted Bunting continuing to expand their range in Missouri). Thus, specimens collected over a period of time are necessary for continued documentation.

7. Last, there may be individuals who object to the taking of *any* animal life, birds or otherwise, because of moral or ethical reasons. This belief would tend to be very unnatural since so much of nature is eat and be eaten, survive or perish, kill or be killed, and any ecological food chain will usually involve many animal deaths. I don't believe that many true proponents of ethical nonviolence exist since these individuals would have to be vegetarians (I see little difference in shooting a bird or hitting a slaughter cow over the head with a sledge hammer) and refrain from killing flies, termites, mosquitos, ants, snakes, mice, etc. and even refuse to take drugs for expelling parasitic roundworms, tapeworms and flukes.

Other considerations certainly could be brought to bear on this subject, but what has been mentioned should be sufficient to indicate the necessity of continued sane collecting.

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## For Missouri's Prairies

A new conservation group, the *Missouri Prairie Foundation*, has been organized to promote preservation of Missouri's precious few remnants of native tall grass prairie. It is a non-profit educational and scientific organization; membership is open to anyone interested in its worthy cause. For specific information, write to "*Missouri Prairie Foundation*," P. O. Box 200, Columbia, Missouri 65201.

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## Meet Me in St. Louis

*(In April, 1969, That Is)*

The National Audubon Society is not going to have its traditional fall convention in 1968. Instead it is planning a whopping big convention the following spring, in St. Louis, Missouri. The dates will be April 25-30, 1969.



# Summer Survey - June 1st to August 31st

Compiled by John L. Hamilton

R. R. 2 — Huntoon Road, St. Joseph, Missouri 64505

Unusually heavy rainfall, breaking the drought conditions that had existed in parts of the state for several years, marked the 1967 summer season in Missouri. June, July and August were all well below normal in temperature, held down by the rains and cloudy conditions. Opinions of the effect of the cool, wet weather on nesting species varied in different locations around the state, with many feeling that purple martins were one of the species most seriously affected. Spring migrants also were frequently held up by the cool, wet conditions and an interesting report of this comes from Camp Towanyak in the Shawnee, Kansas, area where a small warbler wave, consisting of two mourning warblers, two Kentucky warblers, one yellow-throat and one Louisiana waterthrush was observed on June 1st (M.L.M.). Similarly several breeding species were late in arriving in our area, both cuckoos falling in this category.

*Loons through Herons*—An unusually late common loon was recorded moving through Squaw Creek on June 4th (H.B.,F.L.), and another surprising loon report came from Table Rock Lake in southwestern Missouri where a single individual appearing to be a sub-adult was sighted on August 2nd. It swam strongly and dove repeatedly, although it could not be flushed (B.B.). An eared grebe was reported at Squaw Creek on June 13th (H.B.), and a single western grebe was seen there two days earlier (H.B.,F.L.,J.L.H.). Harold Burgess reports an estimated nineteen pair of pied-billed grebes using the Squaw Creek area during the summer season. July pied-billed grebe sightings were also reported for the Ozark Missouri area (I.F.). White pelicans were first sighted at Squaw Creek July 4th (J.L.H.), peaking to a total of 150 individuals from August 27th to August 31st (H.B.).

Heron reports for the period varied widely, with unusually heavy concentrations in some areas resulting in almost no sightings in others. Great blues were down in the LaGrange area, for instance, but incredible concentrations estimated at 300 birds a day were found in the Squaw Creek area in late July through most of August (H.B.). Concentrations of nesting herons in the Bertrand heronry were down a bit from the 1966 count, according to Paul Heye's census. This year some 3,800 nests made up the heronry as opposed to over 4,000 last year. Little blue herons, as usual, made up the bulk of the colony, but a spectacular increase in the number of cattle egrets occurred. This adaptable species also continues on the increase in the St. Louis levee territory (E.C.), and for the first time in many years was reported at Squaw Creek on June 8th (H.B., et al).

Outside of southeastern Missouri little blue herons seem to be down over the entire state, with a high number of only twelve individuals seen at Squaw Creek on August 13th (F.L.). Common egrets were noted as down by all reporters who mentioned them, and Jim Haw feels that this species has been steadily declining in southeast Missouri for the last few years. Snowy egret reports for the state came from the Squaw Creek area where one was present for about a week after first being recorded on August 6th (J.L.H.), and from St. Louis where one was sighted on August 12th (E.C.). Yellow-

crowned night herons appear to be increasing over the entire area and now are much more numerous than black-crowned night herons. Harold Burgess reports least bitterns throughout the season at Squaw Creek and two white-faced ibises were reported by the same observer between June 18th and 24th.

*Waterfowl*—Out of season duck reports from the Squaw Creek area featured ruddy ducks, lesser scaup and hooded mergansers seen frequently during June (F.L.). Harold Burgess reports no young wood ducks seen, but by late August the number of adult birds had built up to slightly over 300. Waterfowl returning to the Squaw Creek area in late August were composed principally of pintail, mallards and blue-winged teal in that order of frequency.

*Hawks through Terns*—Jim Haw reports a pair of Mississippi kites again frequenting the Big Oak Tree State Park area, but could locate only one other individual north of Charleston, with no immatures seen this year. One other kite was reported July 2nd in the St. Louis area by Jim Ruschill (fide E.C.). The one seen earlier in the St. Joseph area (J.L.H.) did not reappear during the summer months. The only sharp-skinned hawk report for the period was from Johnson County, Kansas, on June 2nd (E.&D.C.). These and all other hawks, except possibly the sparrow hawk, continue in a serious decline throughout Missouri, if our reports are complete. A surprising peregrine falcon sighting was made July 2nd at St. Joseph (J.L.H.). This bird, in brown-phase coloration, was seen flying at considerable height and with characteristic swiftness toward the northeast.

King rail sightings were reported from several areas, including an adult with four black chicks at Squaw Creek seen on August 8th (H.B.). Surprisingly, Virginia rails and soras were recorded as late as the end of August in the same area indicating possible breeding status for these two species (H.B.). Coots in far greater numbers than normal remained at Squaw Creek during the summer with as many as 300 individuals seen on June 18th (F.L.).

The effects of the unusually wet summer were strikingly different in various parts of the state so far as shorebirds were concerned. In northwest Missouri many normally good areas were flooded to the point where waters backed up into grassy and weedy areas, leaving almost no mud flats and correspondingly poor sighting conditions, even when the birds were present. The same wet conditions in the Charleston area resulted in good shorebird habitat, where normally almost none exists in August. Shorebird migration there, perhaps as a consequence, appeared earlier and better than usual. The first semipalmated plover report was from Trimble on July 23rd (J.L.H.), and this species had penetrated to southeastern Missouri by August 6th (J.H.). Killdeer, reported down in the LaGrange area (H.H.), were extremely numerous in other locales with a peak of 500 estimated in the Squaw Creek area from late June through early August (H.B.).

An American golden plover was sighted with approximately 25 pectoral sandpipers at East Prairie in southeastern Missouri on August 5th (J.H.), while the first returning black-bellied plover was recorded from the St. Louis area on August 19th (Kathryn Arhos fide E.C.). Upland plover were reported from several areas near St. Joseph through the summer with a high count of 19 birds on June 4th on a breeding bird survey (F.L.). Our first returning willet was sighted at Squaw Creek on August 6th (F.L., J.L.H.).

Lesser yellowlegs had reached Squaw Creek by July 30th and peaked there at an estimated 500 individuals between August 6th and 12th, in company with roughly equal numbers of pectoral sandpipers. One short-billed dowitcher was reported for Squaw Creek in late August (H.B., J.L.H.). The only uncommon occurrence among the "peep" sandpipers was six westerns sighted at Squaw Creek August 27th in company with some estimated 250 semi-palmated sandpipers (J.L.H.). The only buff-breasted sandpiper report was for the Squaw Creek area again, where seven were sighted in late July (H.B. et al). A lone avocet was observed at Squaw Creek on July 23rd (F.L.). An unusually early Wilson's phalarope was observed in the Trimble area July 23rd (J.L.H.), and a single northern phalarope was seen at Squaw Creek August 31st (H.B.).

*Doves through Crows*—Around the state mourning doves were less numerous than last year and both cuckoos were reported by many observers to be late in arriving and scarce throughout the summer (M.L.M.). An unusual situation prevailed briefly in the St. Joseph area where black-billed cuckoos predominated during the first part of June. Roadrunner reports continued to increase in the Forsyth area and two sightings were made in July at Lake Springfield (I.F.).

Owls, with the exception of great horned owls, appeared to be down in all areas, as were chuck-will's widows and whip-poor-wills, if we are to judge from their calls. Common nighthawks, on the contrary, although late both in arriving and departing, appeared in normal numbers (except in southeastern Missouri) with especially high concentrations sighted in fall migration (J.L.H.).

An interesting chimney swift observation has been reported by Bob Bright, who observed a swift entering a hollow post oak tree on July 11th. Two birds were subsequently observed using the tree until August 2nd, after which it was deserted. The birds appeared to be nesting although this is not certain, the tree having been too large to climb and investigate. Nesting ruby-throated hummingbirds were reported down in numbers by all reporters who mentioned them (although a sizeable migrational movement occurred in late August), as were belted kingfishers.

All resident species of woodpeckers appeared in normal numbers with no surprises, except that red-headed woodpeckers underwent a veritable population explosion in the Charleston area (J.H.). Several interesting developments occurred among the flycatchers, one of these supplying further evidence of the continued range extension of the scissor-tailed flycatcher in a June 9th sighting at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge by James Hanson, fide Paul Heye. This, so far as is known, is the first record for southeastern Missouri. Western kingbirds, conversely, which have been increasing in numbers in the St. Joseph area for years, dropped off sharply this season (F.L.).

Among the swallows, most attention was focused on purple martins. This species apparently had nesting problems in many areas, caused by the unseasonable cold, wet weather of early summer. Flying insects at many times in this period were very scarce and the resultant reduction in numbers of birds was reflected in the St. Louis purple martin roost which developed late and apparently did not peak at as high numbers as previously (D.A.). It goes without saying that the well-publicized purple martin massacre in Jefferson

City August 21st did not help matters any.

*Chickadees through Weaver Finches*—A very surprising early winter arrival was recorded at Horseshoe Lake, Illinois, near Charleston, Missouri, in the form of a brown creeper on August 31st (J.H.). House wrens appeared normal and Bewick's wrens were again sighted in the St. Joseph area after an unusual absence last year (J.L.H., F.L.). All reporters mentioned Carolina wrens as continuing to increase in abundance and short-billed marsh wrens were numerous in the Squaw Creek area during August, having first been heard on August 6th (F.L.).

Many observers felt that robins and eastern bluebirds, although both still fairly numerous, had less successful nestings than normal. Lingering Swainson's thrushes were observed in the Camp Towanyak area on June 1st (M.L.M.), and Dick Anderson recorded singing Swainson's thrushes at his home on June 2nd and 3rd. Cedar waxwings, although not recorded as nesting this season, were seen as late as June 7th at St. Joseph (F.L.).

A number of observers reported vireos down for the period — this being especially true of Bell's vireo. Many warblers, likewise, appeared less common than usual, particularly yellow warbler and yellow-breasted chat. Kentucky warblers conversely appeared to find the wet weather to their liking, as did cerulean warblers, which were observed on several occasions in June in the heavy, partially flooded woods at Honey Creek (F.L., J.L.H.). An unusual summer ovenbird sighting was made in this exact same area on June 18th (J.L.H.).

*Bobolinks through Sparrows*—A rare bobolink breeding record for northern Missouri was recorded near Maryville in late June and early July by Larry Watkins. (See separate article.) Yellow-headed blackbirds bred again this year at Lake Contrary near St. Joseph, and were also seen on a number of occasions at Squaw Creek. Orioles, both orchard and Baltimore, were mentioned by many observers as being less common than usual and the same appeared to be true of scarlet and summer tanagers.

Cardinals apparently encountered extremely variable nesting success, ranging from the Camp Towanyak area, where not a single young cardinal was observed all summer (M.L.M.), to St. Joseph where a late hatch produced numerous young late in the season. Blue grosbeaks, normally considered a southern bird, apparently are extending their range northward and were seen regularly in the St. Joseph area (as well as in many areas to the south) all through the period (F.L.). An adult male painted bunting was reported near Anniston, Missouri, on August 11th (J.H.), and another male was seen at a feeder in northeast Johnson County, Kansas, from June 1st to June 11th (E.&D.C.). Several observers made mention of the fact that both indigo buntings and dickcissels were reduced in numbers as compared to previous years.

D. A. — Dick Anderson

B. B. — Bob Bright

H. B. — Harold Burgess

E. & D. C. — Elizabeth & Dean Cole

E. C. — Earl Comfort

D. E. — Dave Easterla

I. F. — Irvin Fay

J. L. H. — John L. Hamilton

H. H. — Henry Harford

J. H. — Jim Haw

F. L. — Floyd Lawhon

M. L. M. — Mary Louise Myers