

REVISORY NOTES ON THE LIST OF THE BIRDS  
OF NEBRASKA.

BY MYRON H. SWENK.

In November, 1914, the writer presented a list of the native birds known to occur or to have occurred within the present limits of the state of Nebraska, and this list was published in the "Nebraska Blue Book" for 1915, early in that year. In this list 418 species and subspecies were recorded for the state. During the four years since the compilation of this list, considerable field work has been carried on by several of the members of the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, and at the same time many of the older records have been critically reviewed. As a result of these activities, it now seems necessary to add fifteen birds to the 1914 list and to drop six birds from it, while the breeding of four birds within the state which were not or not definitely classified as breeders in 1914 has been established. The data on which these changes rest is briefly included in the following notes:

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis* (Lawrence)).—On June 3, 1916, Mr. Cyrus Black found three nests of this grebe at Island Lake, north of Oshkosh, Garden County, Nebraska, one containing three fresh eggs, one four nearly fresh eggs, and one five eggs nearly ready to hatch, with a newly hatched bird near by. The male parent and the young bird, together with the nest with four eggs, were collected and are now in Mr. Black's collection. The next year, 1917, Mr. Black and Mr. A. M. Brooking took a female western grebe and five sets of fresh eggs, with nests, in a small lake in Garden County, on June 19. These are the first records of the breeding of this bird in the state.

Black-throated Loon (*Gavia arctica* (Linnaeus)).—All of the several statements concerning the occurrence of the black-throated loon in Nebraska depend back upon the record published in 1904 (Birds of Nebraska, p. 17) of a specimen taken at Curtis, Frontier County, and now in the Rees Heaton collection at that place. At the request of the Biological Survey this specimen was subjected to a careful study. It is in immature plumage and resembles in size and the broad edgings of the back feathers immature specimens of the black-throated loon, but Dr. H. C. Oberholser pronounced

it to be an immature common loon (*G. immer*) after an examination of the specimen. Accordingly, this species is to be stricken from the Nebraska list, as, in fact, it probably will be from most of the other lists of the United States, for the real winter home of this bird is in Asia and no authentic records of *G. arctica* for this county seem to exist.

Water Turkey (*Anhinga anhinga* (Linnaeus)).—This bird is now definitely to be added to the Nebraska list, as on September 20, 1913, Mr. Oscar Blevins caught one with a fish spear on the Loup river in Buffalo County, on the Josh Woods ranch. It was mounted by the Northwestern School of Taxidermy at Omaha, and it is present in the B. J. Olsen collection at Kearney.

Red-legged Black Duck (*Anas rubripes rubripes* (Brewster)).—The decision that this is a valid subspecies (cf. Oberholser, Auk, XXXIV, pp. 192-194) reinstates it in the Nebraska list on the basis of records already published (cf. Swenk, Auk, XXII, p. 319) as well as several additional unpublished records.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus* (Linnaeus)).—This bird was included in Prof. Bruner's list (1896) and in subsequent lists on the strength of a specimen taken near Omaha, now in the University Museum, and later two specimens in the L. Sessions collection, taken at Norfolk, were also referred to this species. An examination of all three of these specimens shows them to be immature birds, and, as Dr. Oberholser informs me, neither he nor Mr. Ridgway have been able to discover any character by which the immature birds of *P. falcinellus* and *P. guarauna* can be distinguished, and as the latter species has several unquestionable Nebraska records, the propriety of dropping the glossy ibis as a Nebraska bird is evident.

White-faced Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis guarauna* (Linnaeus)).—About the middle of May, 1916, several white-faced glossy ibises appeared at the large lagoon near Inland, Clay County, Nebraska. On June 4, Messrs. A. M. Brooking and Edward Wallace set out to secure a pair of these birds, and, while attempting to approach them, met a farmer who had just driven out into the lagoon in his buggy and who reported that he had flushed an ibis from a nest containing four eggs. The nest was located by Brooking and Wallace and the bird was observed to return to it. The nest and eggs were then collected, and later both the female and male birds were also taken. This is the first record of the breeding of this bird in the state.

Wood Ibis (*Mycteria americana* (Linnaeus)).—There have been several reports of the seeing or shooting of wood ibises in Nebraska, but most of these have been alone insufficient to definitely place the bird on the state list. In April, 1885, Mr. William Townsley shot one of these birds in Hamilton County, Nebraska, on Sec-

tion 19, of Township 9, Range 6. It was a young bird, but Mr. Townsley succeeded in mounting it very satisfactorily, and it is now in the A. M. Brooking collection at Grand Island College. This, together with other undoubted records of the occurrence of this bird where the specimens were unfortunately not preserved, entitles it to inclusion in the Nebraska list.

Ward Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias wardi* (Ridgway)).—A male specimen of this heron, examined and identified by Dr. Oberholser, was collected at Curtis, Frontier County, and is now in the Rees Heaton collection at that place. It presents the following measurements: Wing, 506; culmen, 158; depth of bill at base, 31.5; tarsus, 203. This form of the great blue heron has not previously been recorded from Nebraska.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius* (Linnaeus)).—This bird was included in the 1915 Nebraska list on the basis of the bird supposed to have been shot on a sand bar in the Missouri river below Sioux City in November, 1912, reported by Prof. T. C. Stephens (Antea, XXVI, p. 103). The subsequent discovery that the specimen was collected near McCook lake, above Sioux City in South Dakota, as corrected by Prof. Stephens (Antea, XXVIII, p. 92) makes necessary the elimination of this species from the Nebraska list.

Wilson Snipe (*Gallinago delicata* (Ord)).—In the spring of 1915 Mr. C. A. Black flushed a Wilson snipe from a grass tuft in a bog near Shafer Lake, in Garden County, Nebraska, and shot it. In the grass tuft he found four eggs, just hatching. The bird, nest and fragments of the eggs are in his collection at Kearney at the present time.

Northern Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus occidentalis* (Woodhouse)).—In the August Eiche collection at Lincoln are five long-billed curlews, all from Nebraska, three of which Dr. Oberholser has identified as *N. a. americanus* and two as *N. a. occidentalis*, thus establishing the place of both forms on the Nebraska list. The breeding form is *N. a. americanus*.

Eastern Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura carolinensis* (Linnaeus)).—All of the specimens of the mourning doves from Nebraska seem best referable to the western subspecies, *Z. m. marginella*, so, for the present at least, the eastern form had best be dropped from the state list.

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis* (Wilson)).—The record of the taking of a specimen of this bird in Nebraska has already been published by the late Prof. B. H. Bailey (Antea, XXVII, pp. 407-408).

Western Goshawk (*Astur gentilis striatulus* (Ridgway)).—Of twenty-seven goshawk records for Nebraska (of which nine were

made in the fall and winter of 1916-17), twenty-one are *A. g. atricapillus* and six are best referred to *A. g. striatulus*. Dr. Oberholser has seen and identified some of these birds. Three of the *striatulus* specimens are quite typical. This bird has not previously been definitely included in the Nebraska list.

Northwestern Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus lagophonus* (Oberholser)).—During the winter of 1916-17 a very large and dark horned owl was killed at Lisco, Garden County, Nebraska, and sent to Mr. C. A. Black, of Kearney, for mounting. It was purchased by Mr. Black, and later disposed of to Mr. A. M. Brooking, of Inland, along with a somewhat smaller and less dark specimen killed at Imperial, Chase County, Nebraska, October 28, 1917. Both birds have been studied by Dr. H. C. Oberholser, at Washington, and referred to the above subspecies. The Lisco bird is a female, with a wing of 390 mm., while the wing of the Imperial bird, also a female, is 382 mm. long. This substantiates the inclusion of a fourth subspecies of great horned owl in the Nebraska list, viz., *B. v. virginianus* as a resident bird in eastern Nebraska, *B. v. occidentalis* (= *B. v. pallescens*, in part, of A. O. U. Check-List) as a resident bird in western Nebraska, spreading eastward across the state in the fall and winter, *B. v. subarcticus* as a winter visitor from the north, and *B. v. lagophonus* (= *B. v. saturatus*, in part, of A. O. U. Check-List) as a winter visitor from the northwest. This latter subspecies has not before been authoritatively identified from Nebraska specimens.

California Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis* (Ridgway)).—The birds of western Nebraska previously identified as *C. a. occidentalis* have been examined by Dr. Oberholser and referred to *C. a. americanus*. The California cuckoo is, therefore, to be eliminated from the Nebraska list.

Alpine Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides americanus dorsalis* (Baird)).—This bird is added to the Nebraska list through a male specimen taken seven miles west of Scottsbluff, Scottsbluff County, Nebraska, June 15, 1916, by C. E. Mickel and R. W. Dawson. Identification confirmed by Dr. Oberholser.

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri* (Bourcier & Mulsant)).—In August, 1903, Mr. C. A. Black secured a female of this species at Kearney, Buffalo County, Nebraska. The specimen has been examined and the above identification corroborated by Dr. Oberholser. The mounted specimen is now in the B. J. Olsen collection at Kearney.

Western Wood Pewee (*Horizopus richardsoni richardsoni* (Swainson)).—On June 18, 1916, in company with Messrs. C. E. Mickel and R. W. Dawson, the writer found this bird common in the woods along the North Platte river at Henry, Scottsbluff County, Ne-

braska, and completed nests, however all without eggs, were found, thus placing the bird definitely as a breeder within our borders.

Black-headed Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri annectens* (Baird), and Long-crested Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri diademata* (Bonaparte)).—In April, 1891, Prof. Bruner saw, but did not secure, a jay of the species *Cyanocitta stelleri* on the timber reserve west of Fort Robinson, in Sioux County, Nebraska. This bird he referred to *C. s. annectens* (Notes on Nebr. Birds, 1896, p. 118) on the basis of greatest probability. In October, 1916, Ora Randall and Lester Goldberry shot a jay while it was feeding along the water's edge on the bank of the Tri-state canal near Mitchell, Scottsbluff County, Nebraska. They very generously donated this specimen to the University collection, and Dr. Oberholser has identified it as *C. s. diademata*. This throws a very serious doubt on the correct subspecific identification of the bird seen by Prof. Bruner, and for the present *annectens* had probably best be dropped from the Nebraska list and the Sioux County record referred to *diademata*.

Northern Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius predatorius arctolegus* (Oberholser)).—This recently described race, as yet unrecognized by the A. O. U. Committee, occurs infrequently as a migrant in eastern Nebraska.

Spurred Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus montanus* (Swarth)).—On October 5, 1915, a towhee was brought to Prof. Wilson Tout, Superintendent of Schools, North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, which he recognized as different from the common Arctic towhee (*P. m. arcticus*). The bird was badly decomposed and its feathers were falling out, so that it could not be saved, but Prof. Tout forwarded an outer rectrix and a foot to me for examination. Comparison with a series of the Arctic towhee in the University collection indicated that the bird must have been the spurred towhee, but to make the identification certain the feather and foot were submitted to Dr. H. C. Oberholser, and he, after comparison with the series at Washington, stated that these parts were from *P. m. montanus*. This constitutes the first definite record of the spurred towhee for Nebraska.

Alaska Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva rubiginosa* (Pallas)).—On May 15, 1901, Mr. R. Mullen collected an adult male yellow warbler at Child's Point, near Omaha, in Sharp County, Nebraska. The unusually dark color of the upper parts of this bird caused me to send it to Dr. H. C. Oberholser for accurate identification, and he reported it to belong to the above form. This specimen is now in the University collection. Later, Dr. Oberholser pronounced a mounted adult female bird collected by Mr. A. Eiche at Greenwood, Cass County, on May 13, 1907, and now in his collection, as also

representative of the Alaskan form. A third specimen is in the Rees Heaton collection and presumably was taken at Curtis, Frontier County, Nebraska. Apparently this previously overlooked form of the yellow warbler is not rare as a migrant through Nebraska in middle May.

Desert Bewick Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii eremophilus* (Oberholser)).—On April 21, 1915, Mr. C. A. Black collected a specimen of this wren at Oshkosh, Garden County, Nebraska, thus adding a new bird to the Nebraska list. The identification is by Dr. H. C. Oberholser. This form is regarded by the A. O. U. Committee as not separable from *T. b. bairdi*.

This gives a list of 427 species and subspecies for Nebraska, as the avifauna of this state is at present understood.

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## POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING

On account of the prevalence of the "Spanish" influenza, and also on account of the financial stringency due to the Government bond issue, it has seemed wise to postpone or possibly omit the 1918 annual meeting.