

GENERAL NOTES

BLACK VULTURES IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Since W. E. Clyde Todd, in his "Birds of Western Pennsylvania", lists no record of the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) within his area, and since no subsequent report is on file in the records of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the following observations are evidence of the further northward spread of this species.

On September 17, 1949, while observing hawk migration from the Cross Mountain fire tower in southwestern Franklin County, my attention was drawn to a bird which had just arrived from the east at a height of 150 feet. The conspicuous white wing patches, short square tail, dark head, and characteristic flight identified it immediately as a Black Vulture. It flew to a dead tree one quarter of a mile south of the tower, and alighted. Six minutes later a second Black Vulture arrived from the east, passed 500 feet overhead, then turned south, and losing altitude in 3 wide circles, alighted in the same tree with the first individual. One then flew to a nearby tree, and both remained perched in full sight for nearly 2 hours. During this time Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) were constantly in sight, flying, or perched in trees near the Black Vultures; one rested for more than half an hour in the same tree with one of the latter, showing the distinct difference in size between the two. In the afternoon, when Seth H. Low and I were driving through Blair Valley, just across the state line in Maryland, we saw 1 Black Vulture in a roost of more than 50 Turkey Vultures on the west slope of Rickard Mountain, 3 miles east-southeast of Cross Mountain summit.

On the same day, 8 Black Vultures were seen circling over the south slope of Fairview Mountain, Maryland, 6 miles south of Cross Mountain, by Orville W. Crowder and party. Although members of the Maryland Ornithological Society were observing hawks on 9 other ridges between Hagerstown and Grantsville that day, no other Black Vultures were identified.—CHANDLER S. ROBBINS, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland.

LARK BUNTING IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA IN WINTER

During late January and early February of 1949 a series of severe wind, snow and sleet storms swept across Oklahoma from the west. In the wake of one of these a somber little bird appeared at our banding station on the morning of February 5. Although completely out of its normal winter range (Mexico), it was unmistakably a female Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*). The identification was later verified by Dr. W. P. Taylor, leader of the Wildlife Unit at A. and M. College, and O. S. Pettingill of Carleton College, Minnesota.

To our surprise the bunting repeated the same afternoon, again on February 7, 16, 19, 20, 22, several times a day through March 15, 17, 25, 27, 31, April 1, 2, 3, and was back for the last time on April 9. These dates coincide with the repeat records of a flock of Harris's Sparrows (*Zonotrichia querula*) with which the Lark Bunting was seen several times in the fields west of the station; the flock disappeared about the same date as the bunting's final appearance.

Although very similar to the Harris's Sparrows in coloring, the bunting could always be distinguished from a distance by its characteristic behavior. At our approach to the trap the Harris's Sparrows usually flew *up*, flitting from side to side. The bunting always dove *down* into the farthest corner, and continued to push and flutter in one spot until released.

Weights were taken from time to time with a scale accurate to 1/100th of a gram.

Feb. 5	36.72	Mar. 5	38.35	April 2	38.35
Feb. 19	39.32	Mar. 31	35.75	April 3	37.37
Feb. 23	36.40	April 1	37.37	April 9	42.25

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