

GENERAL NOTES

Birds new for the Río Grande delta area.—A bird picked up dead near the jetty on Brazos Island by Terry Gill, and brought by him to Harlingen, Texas, on January 28, 1947, I identified as an Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*).

A census team composed of William S. Jennings and Luther Goldman, while working on the Harlingen Christmas Bird Census on December 23, 1950, listed "a strange dove of reddish-brown color." The next day Jennings and I went back to the same area and found the bird—quite obviously a Ruddy Ground Dove (*Columbigallina talpacoti*)—with a flock of Inca Doves (*Scardafella inca*). A few days later I accompanied Goldman and Jennings to the Axtla River, in eastern San Luis Potosí, México, where we saw a number of Ruddy Ground Doves. Both men readily agreed that the bird they had seen near Harlingen was in every way identical with those they were seeing in the tropics.

Maurine and Terry Gill showed me a drawing and careful description of a flycatcher which they had observed for some time in a prairie area east of Río Hondo on November 19, 1946. Since it was with a flock of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Muscivora forficata*), and since there were also Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*) nearby, the Gills were able to make an appraisal of the bird's exact size. From the data supplied me I readily identified it as a Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora tyrannus*). This possibility had not occurred to the Gills because the bird had lost so much of its tail that when it flew only one (or what appeared to be one) long streamer trailed out behind. I recall that the first Fork-tailed Flycatcher I ever saw (on the coastal prairie in central Veracruz) had had a similar mishap.

A visitor from New York, Arthur Aranoff, reported a Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) on the Resaca del Rancho Viejo near the village of Olmito, Cameron County, Texas, in December, 1947. Later I found the bird and kept watch over it for several months. It disappeared in the spring of 1948 and, so far as I have been able to determine, it has not returned since.—L. IRBY DAVIS, Box 988, Harlingen, Texas.

Mexican Cormorant in Oklahoma.—Visitors to Lake Texoma (on the Oklahoma-Texas border, south of Marshall, Love and Bryan Counties, Oklahoma) have, since its impoundment in 1945, occasionally seen cormorants there, most of them Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) presumably, that being the only species listed by Nice (1931. "The Birds of Oklahoma," Revised Edition. *Publ. Univ. Oklahoma Biol. Surv.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 54) for the state.

In the summer of 1950, I saw cormorants almost daily near the University of Oklahoma Biological Station, some 14 miles south of Madill, Marshall County. Actually, there may have been very few birds, but they flew past so often, or spent so much of their time resting on stubs within plain view, that they seemed to be common. On August 18, I noted groups of four or five repeatedly, and wondered if they might be gathering for migration. The strong south wind made the water rough. The temperature (estimated) at about noon was 90°F.

That day Barbara Wells and I went by motorboat to islands some miles from the Station. Soon after leaving the Station we saw five cormorants perched together on floating logs. About two and one-half miles southeast of the Station, we came upon two more perched on a stub about a hundred yards out from shore. They resembled each other in size. One of them I managed to collect.

The specimen proved to be an extremely fat adult female (ovary distinct, but the ova small). A band of white bordered the gular pouch and there was a sprinkling of fine white feathers on the head and neck. The eyes were green. The skin I placed in the Station's collection.

George M. Sutton, who was on the Station staff in the summer of 1951, called our atten-

tion to the bird's smallness and expressed his belief that it was a Mexican Cormorant (*P. olivaceus*). After comparing it recently with several female *auritus* and *olivaceus* he has identified it as the latter. Its bill measures only 45 mm. (base of culmen across to tip); its tail, 161. Only seven of its rectrices are of full length, but otherwise it seems to be in full breeding plumage. Since the bird I saw with this female appeared to be of about the same size, I think it must have been a Mexican Cormorant too. The species has not heretofore been reported from Oklahoma.—KENNETH J. STARKS, *Department of Zoological Science, University of Oklahoma, Norman*.

Great Blue Heron killed by Bobcat.—While ascending the Colorado River in an outboard motor boat, at Devil's Elbow in Havasu Lake National Wildlife Refuge on January 8, 1951, Leo K. Couch and I saw a Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) catch a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). At about five o'clock in the afternoon, when the canyon was already in shadow, the heron flushed from the Arizona side and flew across to the California side. It began struggling as it alighted on the rocky bank, as if its foot had been caught in a trap. At this juncture, the motor ran out of fuel and the boat stopped, so we looked at the bird with our binoculars. To our surprise, we saw that a large Bobcat had grasped it by its under side at the lower end of the neck. The cat turned its head to regard us for a few seconds, then began dragging its prey up the bank. It had some difficulty in doing this, as it stepped on the outstretched wings. In less than a minute it reached the top of the bank and disappeared behind a ledge. We deduced that it had been in a small cave-like hideout along the bank and that it had sprung as the heron, wholly unaware of its presence, had attempted to alight. As far as I know, the capture of the Great Blue Heron by the Bobcat has not hitherto been reported.—GALE MONSON, *Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1717, Parker, Arizona*.

Feeding behavior of young American Bitterns.—In the spring of 1950 not far from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan, I found the nest of an American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) in a small marsh. There were four eggs. The bird at the nest, presumably the female, refused to leave, so I caught and banded her (Biological Survey No. 35541942). Then I set up a blind seven inches from the nest. During the period of my observations from this blind (June 10 to 25 inclusive) the banded bittern was the only adult to appear at the nest. She swelled out her feathers and growled like a broody hen when I approached or left the blind, and pecked with such speed and finesse that she brought the blood repeatedly while I was counting the eggs under her. As long as I stayed in the blind, however, she paid little attention to me.

The first chick hatched shortly before 6:30 a.m. on June 11. The second had hatched by 2:50 p.m. that same day. The third hatched on June 13. One egg did not hatch. The feeding behavior differed in some respects from that reported by Gabrielson (1914. *Wilson Bulletin*, 26: 64), who described the feeding of several-day-old bitterns large enough to swallow fish, frogs, mice, etc., as they were regurgitated whole by the parent.

When twenty-four hours to eight days old, the chicks I observed jumped at the parent's bill and attempted to seize it in the manner described by Mr. Gabrielson; but they could seldom cope with the large chunks of food which fell into their bills, so this food often dropped to the nest. After the parent had regurgitated her store of food animals, she re-swallowed those which the young would not manage to get down, and presented this food later when partial digestion had made it more acceptable. The period of waiting varied from twelve to forty-five minutes—depending on the eagerness of the chicks as well as on the size of the food items. On two occasions the hungry chicks squeaked and jumped at the parent's bill so persistently that she regurgitated food before it was 'done' and she had to swallow it again.

Table 1 lists all of the food I saw the parent bittern bring to the young during their first seven days. I could not spend much time in the blind, so what I saw the parent bring was