

GENERAL NOTES

Baird's Sparrow in Oklahoma.—The paucity of migration records of Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) east of New Mexico and Colorado has long been a matter of interest to ornithologists of the mid-west. Nice (1924. *Birds of Oklahoma*:113) stated that Cooke had looked for this species at Caddo, Oklahoma, in 1883. Dr. Alexander Wetmore (1920. *Auk*, 37:457-458) made a thorough but unsuccessful search for Baird's Sparrows in eastern Kansas. Cartright, Shortt, and Harris (1937. *Trans. Royal Canadian Inst.*, 21:155) pointed out that migration records of this species are few, and that it seems largely to escape notice in migration. In their very useful paper they list migration records in sequence in order to show the passage of the birds from south to north. From this list it is clear that Baird's Sparrows pass through the region of New Mexico and Colorado in late April and early May.

In view of the above facts we considered it worthwhile to make a concerted effort to find Baird's Sparrows in central Oklahoma during the spring migration of 1953. Beginning our searches in mid-March, we regularly visited various types of habitat, but concentrated on upland grasslands and weedy fields. We made field trips from one to three times a week for the express purpose of finding this species.

Our search was rewarded on April 23 (1953) when R. Graber collected one of three Baird's Sparrows which he saw in a field three and one-half miles northeast of Norman. The field was of interest because of the variety of cover which it offered, with patches of various grasses and forbs, bare eroded areas and a few scattered clumps of wild plum (*Prunus* sp.). A short list of some of the common plants will help show the nature of the vegetation: grasses; *Aristida*, *Andropogon scoparius*, *Bromus*, *Festuca octoflora*: forbs; *Melilotus officinalis*, *Ambrosia psilostachya*, *Plantago virginica*, *Liatris*, and *Oenothera laciniata*.

In the same field were singing Grasshopper Sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*) and a few Savannah Sparrows (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). Like these sparrows, the Baird's Sparrows were reluctant to fly, preferring to run away through the grass, though they seemed less skillful in keeping themselves concealed than the first two species.

The specimen was a male, testes little enlarged, in somewhat worn plumage (the tail and upper tail coverts were badly worn). It weighed 18.2 grams, was moderately fat, and was molting on the head, neck, and upper breast.

Though we continued to look for Baird's Sparrows in succeeding weeks, we failed to find the species again. Cartright, Shortt, and Harris (*loc. cit.*) thought that the spring migration of this species is very rapid, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the birds did pass through our study area in just a few days and that we encountered them only when the migration was at its peak.

Nice (*loc. cit.*) included Baird's Sparrow in a list of birds unreported but to be expected in Oklahoma. Force (1929. *Okla. Acad. Sci.*, 9:68), in a list of birds of Tulsa County, Oklahoma and vicinity included *Ammodramus bairdii*, but indicated its status there as uncertain, there being no specimen. In view of the secretive nature of Baird's Sparrows in migration and the possibility of confusing it with other migrants, Oklahoma records should generally be based on collected birds.

Our specimen is now in the University of Oklahoma Museum of Zoology (UOMZ 625). We wish to thank Dr. George J. Goodman for identifying several plant specimens.—RICHARD GRABER AND JEAN GRABER, *Museum of Zoology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, May 18, 1953.*