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SOME RECENT FINDINGS CONCERNING
THE AVIFAUNA OF ARKANSAS

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Baerg's 1951 edition of "Birds of Arkansas" (1951. Univ. Ark., Agric. Exp. Sta., Bull. no. 258) is the most recent statewide appraisal of bird distribution. In 1953, Meanley and Neff (1953. Wilson Bull., 65:200-201) supplemented this with new data from the Grand Prairie region. The records which follow are some important findings since 1953, plus a few unpublished ones which preceded that date. The annotations that refer to previous status were based primarily on Baerg, supplemented by Wheeler (1924. The Birds of Arkansas. Ark. Bur. Mines. Manufactures and Agriculture) and Howell (1911. U. S. Dept. Agric., Biol. Sur., Bull. no. 38).

The specimen catalogue numbers refer to the University of Arkansas zoology collection (U.A.Z.). Recently, the important sight records have been described in writing on a standardized form distributed by the Arkansas Audubon Society. These documents (A.A.S.) are numbered serially and filed with the Society. Whether so documented or not all the sight records are followed by the names of the observers. The terminology and sequence follows the fifth edition of "The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds."

The collection and organization of the data used in this study was made possible by funds for research from the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas, by the sponsorship of the Arkansas Audubon Society, and by assistance from Frances C. James. Beginning in 1955, all the Arkansas records have been catalogued in the files of bird abundance and distribution maintained by the Arkansas Audubon Society.

Gavia immer. Common Loon. Only three previous records existed, but it is now regular, though uncommon, at Fayetteville from March 21 to May 10, and from October 25 to November 16 (James, B. W. Beall), and has been observed at Conway on November 18, 1956 (V. B. Scarlett). A specimen taken at Lonoke on April 10, 1956, is in the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission collection and was pictured in the Arkansas Gazette newspaper on April 15, 1956.

Podiceps caspicus. Eared Grebe. Up to nine occurred at Conway from April 6 to 27, 1956 (W. M. Shepherd). This followed an eastward movement of wintering populations into Louisiana (Newman. 1956. Audubon Field Notes, 10:256-260). Another was seen (AAS 35) at Lonoke on December 26, 1959 by T. H. Johnston. There were two previous records.

Plegadis. Ibis. The first Arkansas record of this genus occurred at Lonoke on September 16, 1956, and was collected (UAZ 381)

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there the 21st. The species of this immature bird could not be determined (Belknap. Observations on the white-faced ibis in Louisiana. La. State Univ., Master's Thesis, p. 73).

Olor columbianus. Whistling Swan. The first specimen and third state record was an immature bird obtained at Gillett on January 23, 1959. The skin is at the Little Rock Natural History Museum. The sternum and trachea are in the University collection (UAZ 368). A flock of six swans occurred at the Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge near Russellville from February 2 to March 18 in 1960 (J. M. Dale).

Anser albifrons. White-fronted Goose. Prior to 1955, this species was known only from an Audubon record, and from unpublished observations of 500 on October 13, and 800 on the 14th in 1937, at the Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Manila (S. Crossley), and two at Stuttgart on November 19, 1950 (F. T. Carney). From December 28, 1955, to January 27, 1956, an immature bird was seen at the White River National Wildlife Refuge near St. Charles (P. J. Van Huisen). Single birds were seen at Prairie Grove (James) and Conway (W. M. Shepherd) on November 17, 1956. An Adult photographed (UAZ 378) nine miles north of Fort Smith remained there from mid-October 1956, to April 21, 1957 (J. W. Price, J. S. Mulhollan). A flock of thirty-four occurred at the Big Lake Refuge on March 28, 1958 (W. H. Julian). Thirty-nine occurred at the Holla Bend Refuge from March 25 to April 7, 1958, and a flock of eight occurred there from February 27, 1960 to March 18, 1960 (J. M. Dale). A flock of 265 occurred at Fort Smith on March 18, 1960 (R. D. Fox).

Callipepla squamata pallida. Scaled Quail. One was collected (UAZ 353) by Rollie Rich five miles east of Griffithville on January 31, 1958, and identified by T. D. Burleigh of the U. S. National Museum. Since this sedentary bird was some five hundred miles east of its normal range, it probably was introduced even though it showed no external signs of a captive existence.

Porphyryla martinica. Purple Gallinule. A female with mature follicles was collected (UAZ 328) in a marshy reservoir four miles north of Grady on May 27, 1955, and another was seen at the same place on May 31. This species previously was known only from Lonoke.

Charadrius melodus. Piping Plover. Baerg listed one record. In 1956, one occurred at Lonoke on April 15 and September 21 (James), and three were observed at Fort Smith on August 21 (B. W. Beall, J. W. Price). Also at Fort Smith, one was seen on August 8, and two on September 5, in 1959 (B. W. Beall, J. W. Price).

Arenaria interpres. Ruddy Turnstone. Single birds were seen at Lonoke five times from September 10 to 21, 1956 (AAS 43; James, W. M. Shepherd, V. B. Scarlett, V. G. Springer et al.). Plumage variation indicated that at least two birds were present. The only previous record was from the last century.

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Totanus flavipes. Lesser Yellowlegs. Winter occurrences of this common transient species were unknown previously. Three were seen at Horseshoe Lake near Bruins on February 10 and 24, 1952 (R. D. Smith, Jr.), and at Lonoke one was seen on January 1, 1954 (R. D. Smith, Jr.), two were seen on November 24, 1955 (B. B. Coffey, Jr., L. Coffey, James, F. C. James), and two were seen on December 24, 1955 (G. Payton).

Erolia alpina. Dunlin. Several were seen at Stuttgart on May 27, 1951 (B. Meanley), and one of two birds was collected (UAZ 342) three miles southwest of Rogers on November 15, 1957. These were the third and fourth occurrences in the state.

Limnodromus. Dowitcher. Baerg listed only one record of this form, but recently it has been a regular but uncommon autumn transient at Lonoke. There have been seven records since 1950, between August 20 and October 18. Spring records are from Morrilton, Conway, Lonoke, and Brinkley. It has occurred at Lonoke in three winters: Twelve on November 28, 1954 (B. B. Coffey, Jr.); and in 1955, six on January 1 (R. D. Smith, Jr., H. Landis, Jr., H. H. Wilcox); five on January 30 (B. B. Coffey, Jr.); two on December 24 (R. D. Smith, Jr.); and six on December 26, 1959 (AAS 38; James W. M. Shepherd, V. B. Scarlett). These last were called scolopaceus because their beaks were longer than the beaks of nearby Common Snipe (Capella gallinago). Otherwise, the species was not designated until a specimen (UAZ 358) was taken by W. P. Scarlett on August 30, 1958, at Lonoke, and another (UAZ 359) was collected there by myself on September 6, 1958. Both were griseus. Three specimens (UAZ 364, 365, 366) from a flock of fifty-nine near England on October 12, 1958, were scolopaceus. The rest of this flock emitted the "keek" sound of the long-billed form.

Limosa fedoa. Marbled Godwit. One at Lonoke on September 13, 16, 18, and 21, 1956 (James, V. B. Scarlett, V. G. Springer et al.) was the first state record.

Limosa haemastica. Hudsonian Godwit. Two occurred at Opelo on April 29, 1956 (AAS 1). This was the first state record.

Recurvirostra americana. American Avocet. Baerg listed three records since 1930, one erroneously (Coffey, 1951. Migrant, 22: 50-52). Three were seen at Stuttgart on October 13, 1950 (B. Meanley); nineteen occurred at Fayetteville on October 14, 1954, and nine were observed there October 13, 1955 (B. W. Beall); one was collected (UAZ 361) at Lonoke on September 6, 1958; and two were seen near England on October 12, 1958 (James, R. D. Fox).

Lobipes lobatus. Northern Phalarope. One at Fort Smith on September 14, 1958 (AAS 19; B. W. Beall) was the first state record.

Sterna albifrons. Least Tern. It long has been speculated that this species nested in Arkansas, but direct proof was lacking. On June 8, 1958, B. W. Beall and R. D. Fox found a colony of six nests on the sand bars of the Arkansas River downstream from the Fort

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Smith-Van Buren bridge. Three eggs were laid before the colony was inundated after June 21. In 1959, young hatched and probably were fledged in the same colony.

Geococcyx californianus. Roadrunner. Baerg found that this species entered the state from the Southwest in the mid-30's, and had spread through the western tier of counties north to Crawford County by 1950. Since then it has occupied Washington and Benton Counties to the north, and has moved eastward to Chidester in the southern part of the state, and Little Rock in central Arkansas. The Arkansas River Valley seems to have been a main route of eastward dispersal.

Crotophaga sulcirostris. Groove-billed Ani. Meanley and Neff (1953. Wilson Bull., 65:200-201) secured the first record in 1952. Subsequently, one was killed by a cat (UAZ 329) at Nashville in late November, 1955, and three were seen (AAS 32) at Fort Smith on November 17, 1959, by J. Keller.

Nyctea scandiaca. Snowy Owl. A mounted specimen in Matthews hardware store at Pine Bluff was collected near Moscow around 1946 by the late Charles Hunter. Another one was collected one mile east of Guy in mid-November, 1954, by James H. Maudlin of Quitman. I have seen both of these specimens. In the same winter of Maudlin's record still another was seen by Ruth Thomas at Morrilton on January 4, 1955. The only previous record was one reported by Audubon.

Aegolius acadicus. Saw-whet Owl. One was found dead by T. H. Holder on a road near Reydel on November 11, 1959. The only other record was an old one which Howell believed was invalid.

Colaptes cafer. Red-shafted Flicker. In autumn, winter and spring of 1956-57, single birds were seen in northwestern Arkansas at Fayetteville on October 6, and March 15 (B. W. Beall), at Lowell on February 21, and at Prairie Grove on the 24th (James, H. H. Daniel). T. G. Hoffman saw one at Texarkana on January 8, 1959 (AAS 25). The only previous record was dated 1911.

Pyrocephalus rubinus. Vermillion Flycatcher. The three previous records were from scattered localities in southern Arkansas. Recently, one or two birds have occurred nearly every winter at Calion.

Salpinctes obsoletus. Rock Wren. One seen (AAS 17) six miles north of Murfreesboro on May 31, 1958 (B. B. Coffey) was the first state record.

Anthus spragueii. Sprague's Pipit. This species apparently is a newcomer to Arkansas occurring in the short sparse grasslands, primarily airports, which have been produced by man. They have been reported from Benton, Farmington, Fort Smith, Hot Springs, Pine Bluff, Jonesboro, Wynne, West Helena, Hope, Texarkana, Conway, Lonoke, Carlisle, Stuttgart, Monroe County, Crittenden County, and occurred regularly at some of these places. Two specimens have

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been collected; one at Farmington (UAZ 336) on December 25, 1956, and one by B. B. Coffey, Jr., at Carlisle on April 3, 1955. Howell was justified in questioning the validity of the only previous record. The behavior and numbers of the birds referred to by Dr. Coues definitely describes spinoletta, and not the secretive solitude-seeking spragueii. Hunt's speculations on spragueii (1921. Auk, 38:370-381) were invalid for the same reason, plus the unsuitability of the habitat.

Vireo griseus. White-eyed Vireo. One was seen (AAS 7) by Dr. and Mrs. H. N. Marvin at Little Rock on December 29, 1957. This is the only winter record.

Vireo solitarius. Solitary Vireo. One was collected by A. J. Hoiberg at El Dorado on December 31, 1955. This is the only winter record.

Vermivora celata. Orange-crowned Warbler. Single birds were seen at Little Rock on December 28, 1957, by W. M. Shepherd (AAS 10), at El Dorado on December 31, 1955 (James) and throughout December in 1959 (AAS 34), including one specimen collected there by P. M. Mattocks, Jr. These are the only winter records.

Geothlypis trichas. Yellowthroat. One occurred at Stuttgart on February 23, 1954 (B. Meanley). At Lonoke one was seen on January 1, 1955 (R. D. Smith, Jr.), two on January 30, 1955 (James, B. B. Coffey, Jr.), and one on December 26, 1959 (AAS 39; W. M. Shepherd). These are the only winter records.

Sturnella neglecta. Western Meadowlark. The status of this species has been clarified and it no longer is considered unusual. It regularly occurs in winter in small numbers in the northwestern and east-central parts of the state.

Pheucticus melanocephalus. Black-headed Grosbeak. The first records in Arkansas coincided with a marked eastward movement of this species in the winter of 1956-57 (Pettingill, 1957. Audubon Field Notes, 11:244-246). Three birds were seen at Little Rock on December 28, 1956, by V. G. Springer (AAS 6), and another occurred throughout March, 1957, at El Dorado (AAS 8; A. J. Hoiberg et al.). One was trapped at El Dorado on February 11, 1959, by P. M. Mattocks, Jr., and subsequently was photographed (UAZ 369).

Acanthis flammea. Common Redpoll. A male and two females observed (AAS 28) by V. G. Springer ten miles north of Stuttgart on November 2, 1959, was the first state record.

Pipilo erythrophthalmus. Rufous-sided Towhee. Western forms recognized by their "spotted" plumage have been seen at Lowell, Fort Smith, Clarksville, Morrilton, and Little Rock. One was photographed at Little Rock in March 1955 (UAZ 377). There were no previous records of this form.

Passerherbulus caudacutus. Le Conte's Sparrow. This species is not as rare as previous records indicated. Recent records suggest that it is common in winter in tall-grass old fields. The Lonoke

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Christmas count often leads the nation in the number of this species. Specimens have been collected (UAZ 330, 331) at Calion and Petit Jean Mountain.

Junco oreganus. Oregon Junco. Previously there was only one record. Recently one was collected (UAZ 367) at Fayetteville on January 22, 1959. In the winter of 1960, this species was reported from Fayetteville, Little Rock (AAS 41), and Crittenden County.

Calcarius pictus. Smith's Longspur. Like the Sprague's Pipit, this species has followed man's artificial short-grass "prairies" eastward. It now occurs regularly in winter on airports and the like in the Arkansas River Valley and east-central region of the state. Also, it has been found in other regions. One was collected at Jonesboro on February 26, 1955 (B. B. Coffey, Jr.). Baerg listed only one record.

Calcarius ornatus. Chestnut-collared Longspur. Six observed at Fort Smith on December 25, 1953, by E. J. Wilhelm, Jr., was the first Arkansas record. One was collected there by myself (UAZ 337) from a flock of twenty on December 29, 1956, and three were seen at Lonoke on January 26, 1957, by W. M. Shepherd, L. Coffey, and B. B. Coffey, Jr.

Plectrophenax nivalis. Snow Bunting. A specimen (UAZ 372) collected at Calion by H. H. Shugart and A. P. Parker on November 6, 1959, was the first state record.