

stretched limb. The limb snapped close, and quickly recovering itself, the bird sailed away with the branch.

March 4 I found another nest along Black Bayou in Cameron Parish. It was in a small cypress standing almost isolated in the marsh, a very conspicuous nesting site. One baby, only a few days old, and an egg pipped but with the young dead were in the nest at this late date. This nest was the most easily accessible of any found, but the region itself was far from the ordinary path of man. Several duck wings as well as fish (horned pout and shad) littered the nest, and the little fellow huddled off in one corner was almost lost among the debris.

Eagles are not molested as a rule. The stockmen claim the old birds kill young sheep and pigs, but the trappers and sportsmen consider them as friends, for when flying low over the marshlands, they keep the game moving, and many birds are brought to bag that otherwise would have escaped.

Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.

THE GRAY KINGBIRD IN WAKULLA COUNTY, FLORIDA.

BY JOHN WILLIAMS.

These birds occur here along the shores of the Gulf in all congenial situations. They seem to be extremely particular as to a locality for nesting, and as such sites are not numerous within the limits of our county the birds cannot be called abundant summer residents.

They are to be found, for the greater part of their stay with us, where there are a few scattered trees—Live Oaks usually—contiguous to or at least but a short distance back from the open waters of the Gulf or on the shores of an extended bay. Broad salt-water marshes usually stretch along shore on either side of these home sites, in which abound Florida Clapper Rails (*Rallus crepitans scotti*),

Scotts Seaside Sparrow (*Passerherbulus maritimus peninsulae*), and Marion's Marsh Wren (*Telmatodites palustris marianae*).

Along the nearby beach and on the sandflats interspersed over the marshes the Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) finds almost countless numbers of kindred assembled when they came on weary wing from across the broad waters after a winter's distant sojourn.

Here are Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus*) already mating, and numerous Wilson's Plover (*Ochthodromus wilsonius*), on nimble feet. The mass of the great flock is made up of Red-backed Sandpipers (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*), Least Sandpipers (*Pisobia minutilla*), Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Ereunetes pusillus*), and Dowitchers (*Macrorhamphus griseus griseus*), with others in lesser numbers; Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres morinella*), Black-bellied Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*), Hudsonian Curlew (*Neumenius hudsonicus*), Black Skimmers (*Rynchops nigra*), Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), Yellow-legs (*Iliornis flavipes*), and doubtless scattered rarities.

Thither they repair on their arrival, which is in early April; the 14th of that month last past (1919) being the earliest I have recorded, but from a lack of frequent opportunities for observations at that season it is probable they come a few days earlier.

Compared with the Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) they are somewhat more tardy in reaching our shores as the more common species arrives for the most part in late March—3-30, 14, 3-25, 16, 3-29, 17, 3-24, 18, and 3-28, 19, being dates when I have first seen them here.

The feeding grounds of the Gray Kingbird extend over the open marsh and the flats close back from the beach and good gleaning is found about the bushes that frequently line the shores just above ordinary high tide. Occasional small stunted Live Oaks and scattered Pines afford vant-

age points on which the birds mount guard and whence they sally forth on numerous forays.

They are far less pugnacious than are their next of kin, the Kingbirds, and seldom ever are they seen attacking other species. Both these species of *Tyrannidæ* are usually found closely associated in the localities already indicated, but while the Kingbird extends its summer domicile widely throughout the inland sections and are one of our most numerous breeding species, the Gray Kingbird rarely nests out of sight of the Gulf and all exceptions under my notice have been on the banks of our larger rivers or extensive bays, and then but a few miles back from the coast.

The few nests of this species which I have examined were invariably built in small Live Oak trees that survive with a stunted growth in the sandy soil and buffeted by the storms that not infrequently rage from the tropics to beat out against our shores.

In appearance the nests of this bird are quite dissimilar to those of the Kingbird and so far as noted were placed low down in the thicker, denser portions of the tree—eight to twelve feet up and well out towards the extremity of the limbs. One of these structures carefully examined was made up of twigs and small rootlets and stems and lined with a finer assortment of the same materials. The external diameter was about five and one-half inches and about two and one-half inches in external depth. The nest cavity was large in proportion to the bulk of the nest; in general, not unlike a substantial nest of the Cardinal (*C. c. cardinalis*). Three eggs almost fresh were taken May 22, 1913, and on the following day the birds were already commencing the building of another nest in a nearby tree. A nest found June 6, 1915, contained three young almost ready to fly. When the nest is approached the old birds, while solicitous and keeping close about, are not inclined to be pugnacious, but either show a nervous strain by frequent short flights close at hand or maintain a prolonged

perch, frequently uttering a few rather low-pitched weak notes like "Quit-eat," pronounced and repeated rapidly and several times successively. At times their strain was translated into "Quit eat it."

After the young are grown and awing they are inclined to remain with the parent birds, or at least it is usual to find groups of four or five of these birds associated in the late summer, and at that time they are more inclined to wander farther from the open waters, although with my limited opportunities I have not found them even then removed from the immediate proximity to a river bank or bay shore, and never beyond the limits of a tidal marsh. As they come to us a little later in the spring than the bolder, more strenuous Kingbird, so in the autumn they depart a few days earlier, September 26, 1917, being the latest date I have seen them here, on which day five were in company near our lighthouse; while the latest noted dates for the Kingbird were September 29, 1914, September 26, 1915, October 4, 1918.

While in general appearance and flight they resemble *T. tyrannus* they may be readily distinguished from that species at a considerable distance, even when the paler coloring and lack of white tail-tip are observed, by a more sluggish flight and dash for prey and to a greater degree by the heavier appearance of the head due to the longer, stouter bill, which gives to the bird a rather top-heavy appearance.

St. Marks, Fla.