

Nesting ecology and habits of the Dickcissel on the Arkansas Grand Prairie.—The Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*), a typical prairie bird, is the second most common breeding bird on the Arkansas Grand Prairie. Only the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) is more abundant. Observations reported here were made from 1950 to 1955 and during a brief period in May 1962.

Dickcissels are principally summer residents on the Arkansas prairie, although a few birds are found every winter. First spring arrivals usually appear by the second or third week in April. In 1952, first males were recorded on 10 and 11 April; in 1951, on 19 April. By 27 April 1951, many females had arrived. In central Illinois, Gross (1921. *Auk*, 38:11) observed the first males about the last week in April or the first week in May. The females usually arrived about a week later.

The earliest records of nest building on the Arkansas Grand Prairie were on 5 May 1962. By 15 May 1962, at least four nests contained complete clutches of eggs. In central Illinois, Gross (Ibid.:167) found first nests during the last week of May. The latest nesting date at Stuttgart, Arkansas, was 22 July 1952, when a nest was found containing young nearly ready to fledge. Clutch size in 13 nests ranged from 3 to 5 eggs (1 clutch of 3 eggs; 9 of 4; 3 of 5). Nests were from 3 inches to 4 feet from the ground, with an average height of approximately 3 feet for 20 nests. Overmire (1962. *Auk*, 79:115) reported the mean height of 94 Oklahoma nests to be 4 feet. Ten of the Arkansas nests were in briar (*Rubus* sp.), four in haw (*Crataegus* sp.), three in buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), and one each in an undetermined grass (Gramineae), plum (*Prunus* sp.), and dogwood (*Cornus* sp.).

On the basis of nest site preference, the Dickcissel is essentially a bird of the briar patch. An optimum nesting habitat on the Arkansas Grand Prairie consists of briar patches along roadsides bordering maturing oat fields. At the time of Gross's study in Illinois (*Auk*, Ibid.) Dickcissels nested mostly in meadows. Nesting densities in Arkansas were considerably higher along brushy roadside borders than in open fields. This was determined by censusing territorial male Dickcissels in 80 randomly selected plots. There were 40 10-acre field plots and 40 roadside strips, each ½ mile long and 150 yards wide. The average density along brushy roadside borders was approximately one territorial male (or pair) per 7 acres, compared with one male (or pair) per 20 acres out in open fields.

Flocking begins soon after the nesting season, and feeding is concentrated mostly in cultivated rice fields. A flock numbering 30 birds was observed as early as 24 July 1952. The largest flock recorded contained over 500 birds, which were feeding in a rice field on 6 September 1954. Gross (*Auk*, Ibid.:12) observed a roost of at least 485 Dickcissels in Illinois on 10 August 1918.

Virtually all winter records at Stuttgart were of individual birds seen about barnyards, where they were associated with House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). Several dates of occurrence were as follows: 29 November 1951, 13 January 1952, 14 February 1952, and 11 March 1952.—BROOKE MEANLEY, *Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland, 18 December 1962.*

Prairie Warbler nests on a 0.6-acre island.—On 12 July 1960, a Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*) was incubating four eggs on a small island approximately 300 yards from the mainland in Lake Lanier, Georgia. The nest was approximately 3 feet from the ground in a small deciduous tree. Vegetation on the island consisted of a sparse growth of broom-sedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), occasional forbs, and several deciduous trees about 5 feet high. Originally the island was part of a farm which was abandoned when