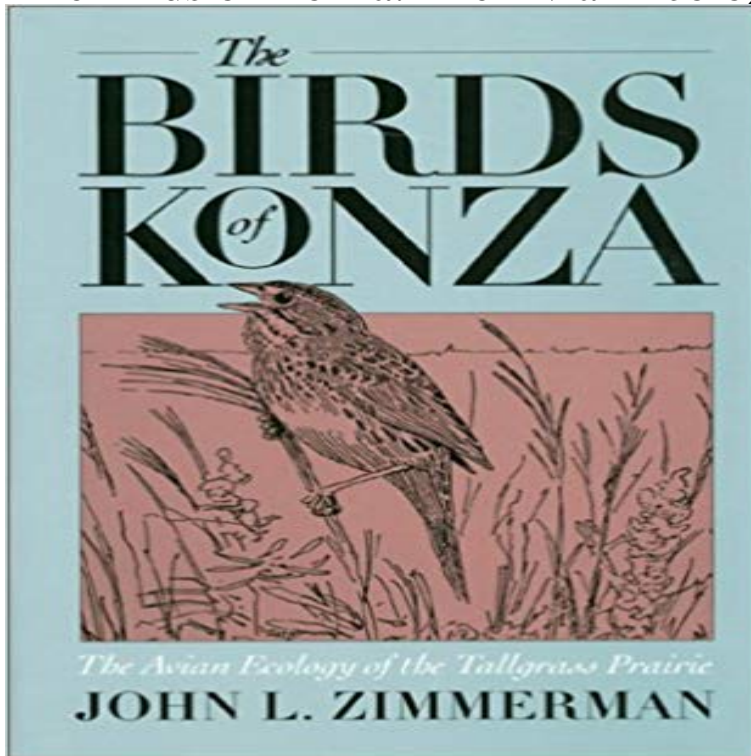


The Birds of Konza: The Avian Ecology of the Tallgrass Prairie



Renowned for its tall grasses, the Konza Prairie in east-central Kansas provides shelter for a variety of birds, from the mourning dove to the wild turkey. Yet many birds come to the Prairie for other reasons--the Virginian rail prefers the seasonal marshy swales, the northern rough-winged swallow searches the clay banks of active streams for its nest sites, the common poorwill nests in the sparsely vegetated rocky outcrop, while the yellow-rumped warbler favors a broad range of woody habitats, from clumps of dogwood in the upland prairies to the denser interior of the gallery forest. Just passing over in search of wetter spots, the Great Blue Heron occasionally alights on a pond or a creek, while, living up to its name, the chimney swift resides only in the chimney of the stone house at the Konza Prairie headquarters. Konza Prairie, an 8,600-acre ocean of tallgrass cut by occasional stands of forests along streams and creeks, is a stomping ground or permanent home to more than 200 species of birds. Owned by The Nature Conservancy and administered by the Division of Biology at Kansas State University, the Prairies is located in the middle of the Flint Hills, which are covered by the last major remnants of virgin tallgrass prairie that once stretched from the eastern Dakotas to Oklahoma and east through Iowa and Illinois to Indiana and Ohio. Featuring a current synopsis of the seasonal occurrence, habitat preference, breeding status, and abundance for all 208 species that have been recorded on the site, *The Birds of Konza* provides a basis for comparisons to other habitats and geographic areas as well as the benchmark for continuing studies in the tallgrass prairie. It is the only long-term, comprehensive analysis of bird populations in both grassland and forested habitats in the region. This book is a distillation of the information gained from twenty years of

experience observing in one tallgrass prairie site. It is particularly strong in describing the relations of bird populations to the vegetative communities and to such physical phenomena as fire and seasonal change. It also contains a large amount of useful natural history information about prairie birds and will enhance an understanding and appreciation of our natural prairie heritage in Kansas.-Dwight Platt, Bethel College.

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