

DIRECTOR OF AUDUBON BRANCH SERVICE VISITS

Ralph T. Jones, Director of Audubon Branch Service from National Audubon Society headquarters, New York City, spent Wednesday evening, March 2, with chairman of the board Mrs. Vera Deason and president Leo Galloway, discussing activities and possible membership increase of the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society, a branch of the National Society.

BIRD NOTES

The March 6 field trip to Buffalo Lake yielded Goshawk, Long-eared Owl, and Water Pipit to the three observers.

Between Lake Stockton and Amarillo on Tuesday, February 22, Mrs. I. D. Acord saw 15 hawks of four species: Marsh Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and Sparrow Hawk. Peggy also reported five immature Bald Eagles, February 26, and Harris' Sparrow, February 27, all at Lake Stockton, and Say's Phoebe and a flock of Common Bushtits, March 10, at Palo Duro Canyon.

Birding at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma, March 1, Mrs. George Ross and Mrs. Grady Fox recorded four species of geese, as well as Goshawk and Franklin's Gull.

Leo Galloway and one of his students saw three Scrub Jays in Palo Duro Canyon on March 11. Greater Yellowlegs on the Tee Anchor Lakes March 12 were reported by Kenneth Seyffert, and on March 13, Kenneth and Leo found the Common Snipe and Long-billed Dowitcher at Buffalo Lake.

Blue-winged Teal were sighted at Buffalo Lake on March 6 by Kenneth Seyffert, and Cinnamon Teal near Lake Stockton, March 14, by Peggy Acord.

HISTORY

Those who weren't at the February meeting missed a presentation of outstanding photography of beautiful wild flowers of the Rocky Mountain Region by Dr. George Waddill, with Mrs. Waddill narrating.

GARDEN CENTER

Pledges and contributions for the new Garden Center have passed the \$100,000 mark. We hope the roll of givers will include all of the Audubon Society members, a number of whom have already contributed either as members of the TPAS or through their Garden Clubs. \$2,200 for this project was raised at the White Elephant sale; however, there are some expenses connected with the sale that must be deducted from this amount.

MARCH MEETING

A sound film on the Black-bellied Tree Duck is scheduled for showing at the March 21 meeting, 7:30 o'clock, in the Garden Center. Prospective members and other visitors are cordially invited to attend.

FIELD TRIPS

A field trip is planned for Saturday, March 26, to look for early migrants in local cemeteries and for lingering ducks on a playa lake near Memorial Park Cemetery, where Water Pipts should be seen. Meet at 8:00 at the north entrance to Llano Cemetery.

On Saturday, April 2, meet at 7:30 at the first water crossing in Palo Duro Canyon. By beating the picnickers, we hope to see some Turkeys. These birds were seen and were heard calling throughout the canyon on March 13 by Kenneth Seyffert.

Both of these field trips will be led by Leo Galloway. See the "Calendar" for coming field trips and special days scheduled by Peggy Acord, Recorder.

NESTING TIME AGAIN

Again this year, we will be participating in the North American Nesting Survey. Nesting record cards, already on order, will be distributed to Society members as soon as they arrive. Meanwhile, keep careful notes on any nests you may observe. A summary of the 1965 Survey is available through the president.

UNUSUAL LOCATION FOR A MOCKINGBIRD NEST

In the early summer of 1937 I had occasion to visit an oil-producing lease in Wheeler County, Texas, on which a number of wells were being pumped. The wells having been drilled with cable tools, the operator had found it to be convenient and economical to retain some of the drilling equipment, including the walking beams, to serve as part of the pumping machinery after the drilling was completed. The walking beam is a huge timber, pivoted in the center, which transmits the up-and-down motion of the crank on the engine to the pump rods in the well.

At one of the wells a loop of soft rope, about two inches thick, had been left hanging from one end of the walking beam, and a pair of mockingbirds had found this to be the choice location for a nest. At the time of my visit the female was incubating, although the well was pumping daily. The nest was cradled in the loop of rope, about 15 inches beneath the end of the (continued next page)

MOCKINGBIRD NEST (continued)

beam, and the bird casually surveyed the landscape from its carnival-style swing as the nesting site marked its metronomic arcs through the air with monotonous regularity. As I recall the operation, the length of the stroke was about three feet, and thus the incubating bird must have travelled a cumulative distance of some three or four miles a day without spreading a wing or leaving the site.

The pumper told me that the bird was disturbed and left its nest whenever he started or stopped the engine, but that otherwise it seemed at ease and satisfied with its choice of residence. I did not visit the site again, and have no information about the eventual success or failure of the aerial nesting venture.

- John E. Galley, Midland, Texas
(Note: Mr. and Mrs. Galley were living in Amarillo at the time this unusual observation was made. - Ed.)

AMARILLO VISITOR

Former Amarillo resident Lloyd G. Foster of Newport, Tennessee, called Mrs. I. D. Acord while in town recently on his way to the Grand Canyon for a stay of several months. Mr. Foster, who still maintains TPAS membership, hopes to have time to bird with old friends on his return trip through Amarillo.

THE CASE OF THE STARTLED COWBIRD

Two little girls in Pennsylvania are still talking about the day "Sugar" caught the cowbird. Actually, "Sugar" (Mrs. Grady Fox, grandmother of Karen and Heather Black) was able to catch cowbirds almost at will at the bird feeder in the yard of the Black residence in Pittsburgh, and word of her talent spread quickly. Bird in hand, she visited the children's classes at school and a local community center, where doubters who felt sure the birds were crippled watched open-mouthed as Thelma released the cowbirds to soar overhead and out of sight. Such was her fame that a hardened traffic officer on duty at a busy intersection even stopped cars to let the Bird Woman pass.

"BENT SERIES" VOLUMES TO BE FORTHCOMING

On February 26 the Galloways had the pleasure of birding in the Denver mountain area with Donald Thatcher, who has recently contributed the life history of the Gray-headed Junco to the well-known "Bent Life Histories." The final two volumes of the series are now in the process of publication, the latter still in manuscript form.

CONSERVATION NOTES

- Kenneth D. Seyffert, Conservation Chmn.

A letter was received from the office of the Secretary of the Interior in reply to mine to Secretary Udall protesting the building of Bridge Canyon and Marble Canyon Dams as units on the Lower Colorado River Basin Project. While construction of Bridge Canyon Dam at the headwaters of Lake Mead has been presented to Congress as a possible future development, the Department has gone on record as favoring the construction of Marble Canyon Dam, giving as its main reason for supporting the plan "the solution of critical present and pending water shortages in the Southwest." Though hard to believe, the Department spokesman goes on to say that the construction of this dam "would have no effect on the National Park since the dam and reservoir would be upstream from the park boundary." The Congress presently is considering legislation to authorize the construction of this proposed project in Senate bills S.75 and S.1019, and identical House bills H.R.4671 through H.R.4706, and H.R.9248.

Letters protesting these bills should be sent to our Texas Representatives Walter Rogers and Richard White, who are members of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and to both Senators Tower and Yarborough, who have voiced support of conservation measures in the past.

The bill to establish a Cape Lookout National Seashore in North Carolina has passed both the House and Senate and has been sent to President Johnson for his signature.

"Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the earth." --Albert Schweitzer

Leo Galloway spoke to about 75 adults on "Birds of the Panhandle" at the March 9 Lyceum program at the College Branch of Brown's House of Books. One of the points stressed was the value of hawks in conservation.

FLASH!!! Through March 13, the TPAS composite list of birds seen in Potter and Randall Counties in 1966 stands at 117. Peggy Acord leads with 99, followed closely by several others.

CALENDAR

Mar. 21 - Monthly Society Meeting, 7:30
Mar. 26 - Field Trip, Llano Cemetery, 8:00
Apr. 2 - Field Trip, Palo Duro Canyon, 7:30
Apr. 18 - Monthly Society Meeting
Apr. 24 - Field Trip, Ellwood Park, 6:30
Mrs. I. D. Acord, leader
May 8 - Big Day
May 13-15-With Oklahoma Ornithological Society at Black Mesa, Okla. Details later.

