

April 1966

A HOME FOR HELPLESS SPARROW HAWKS

A few years back on Memorial Day, when George and I were walking around our pond looking at the trees after a rainstorm, we found two partly feathered nestling sparrow hawks, half dead and lying at the base of some large willows at one end of the pond. We soon found two others in hiding.

We put them in a box, and I rushed to the store for hamburger meat and began to poke the food in them. The next day I hurried to check the sparrow hawks, fully expecting the two weakest ones to have died. But instead they were eagerly awaiting breakfast. They continued to thrive on a diet of hamburger and, later, liver and had to be put in a larger box.

After they were well feathered, we turned them out in a large store house so they could learn to fly. They began to fly and to greet us with loud cries when we came to feed them. We decided that they should begin to learn to fend for themselves, so we would get live grasshoppers and turn them loose in the store house so they could practice catching them. They soon became fairly good at this, and at last we decided it was time to turn them out. We opened the door, and the birds rather wondrously peeped out into the big world. Then one by one they took off to the trees.

All went well until about night. Then from the tops of the trees by the house we heard the pitiful cries of hunger, and the hawks looked down at us as if to say, "Why don't you bring us food?" Since we could not go to them, hunger finally caused them to fly back down to us, and, one at a time, they went back into their "bird house" to stay for two more weeks. When we then released them, they were able to take care of themselves.

For several years after that when I saw a sparrow hawk at our pond, I wondered, "Is that one of 'ours'?" and am still especially delighted to see them there. -- Rena Ross

PAST MONTH'S FIELD TRIPS

Eight birders visited local cemeteries March 26. Nothing unusual was seen by the chilly birders. Mrs. Lorraine Wells, Creede, Colorado, attended with Mrs. Vera Deason.

April 2, seven observers were "blown out" of Palo Duro Canyon. Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Pedersen and children were welcome additions to the birding party.

NESTING SURVEY

The nesting survey is underway, with Leo Galloway reporting the first activity, a Mourning Dove nest, March 23. Leo and Kenneth Seyffert found a Rock Wren nest and another Dove nest April 3 at Buffalo Lake. Record cards are available through the president.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Mrs. I. D. Acord talked to approximately 120 school-age children on nature and conservation recently.

In a close vote, plans for the Sospe Creek Project were defeated March 15 by the voters of Ventura County, California. The proposed project involves two dams, one on the edge of the Condor nesting sanctuary. If carried through, this could very well be the death warrant of the Condor, which will normally abandon its nest if disturbed at all by human beings.

APRIL MEETING

Tentatively planned for the April 18 meeting is an illustrated talk on the national grassland program. Jim Jokerst, program chairman, has contacted the Panhandle National Grassland office, and they expect to be able to supply a speaker. The meeting will be at 7:30 in the Garden Center.

BIG DAY

This year's "Big Day" is Sunday, May 8. Those who wish to bird in town, meet Peggy Acord at the east end of Ellwood Park at 6:30. Those who wish to work Palo Duro Canyon, meet Leo Galloway at 7:00 at the Sad Monkey Railroad station. If you would like to join us for the afternoon, we will all meet at 1:00 for a picnic lunch in the grove on the north side of Buffalo Lake between the dam and the concession house. Last year we had 17 participants and saw 1789 birds of 112 species. Let's beat this record!

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, April 24, Mrs. I. D. Acord will lead a field trip in Ellwood Park. Meet at the east end of the park at 6:30 a.m.

The Oklahoma Ornithological Society's annual spring meeting at Black Mesa State Park in the Oklahoma panhandle, May 13-15, will offer interesting field trips. Lodging is available in Boise City, or reservations may be made ahead of time to stay at the nearby Youth Camp. More information should be available at the April TPAS meeting, or through Peggy Acord or Leo Galloway.

BIRD NOTES

Best records for the past month, according to Peggy Acord, recorder, were the Vermillion Flycatcher, Winter Wren, and Louisiana Water Thrush. The Vermillion Flycatcher, seen at Buffalo Lake March 19 by Kenneth Seyffert, has remained in the vicinity since. On March 24 Thelma Fox and Elaine Ross Robinson recorded the flycatcher, as well as Say's Phoebe, Horned Owl, and Bald Eagle there. The next day Esther Waddill and Thelma Fox recorded Louisiana Waterthrush (an early date), Winter Wren, and three Audubon's Warblers at the Palo Duro Club.

March 19 Grady Fox sighted the first Avocet of the season on a playa lake, and Jim Jokerst saw the first Turkey Vulture on March 27 near his place. On Saturday, March 26, Kenneth Seyffert listed Chipping Sparrow, Cassin's Sparrow, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Buffalo Lake. On the 29th, Peggy Acord and Esther Waddill added the Hermit Thrush at Palo Duro Club, and on the 30th, Peggy recorded Rough-winged Swallow.

April 1, Jim Jokerst saw about 30 Long-billed Curlews over his place, and on the 2nd, Leo Galloway reported Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Phoebe at Palo Duro Canyon. The White Pelican and Double-crested Cormorant were noted at Buffalo Lake on April 5 by Rena Ross, Esther Waddill, and Peggy Acord. Leo Galloway was called to the 4000 block on Parker April 5 to identify a Black-crowned Night Heron which had perched in a tree just behind a house all day.

CALENDAR

Apr. 18 - Monthly Society Meeting
 April 24 - Field Trip, Ellwood Park, 6:30
 May 8 - Big Day
 May 13-15 - Black Mesa with Okla. Ornith. Soc.
 May 16 - Monthly Society Meeting