THE PRAIRIE HORNED LARK
May 1966 2213 Bonham, Amarillo, Texas 79109 Vol. III, No. 5

BIG DAY

6,839 individual birds of 107 species were seen by nine observers in Potter and Randall Counties on the second annual Big Day, May 8. The day's "prize" was the Scarlet Tanager seen in a draw adjacent to Buffalo Lake by Peggy Acord's party. Those participating were Mrs. I. D. Acord, Mike Allender, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Galloway, Kenneth Seyffert, Mrs. George Waddill, and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Whipple and Barbara. For a complete list of birds, see Page 2.

BIRD FUN AT BLACK RIVER VILLAGE, NEW MEXICO

Take some eager youngsters at summer camp, add plenty of activity along with sharp eyes, and you are about to have an interesting experience.

A couple of summers ago we were conducting a class in bird study. One of our requirements was to find and identify five nests. No sooner had I read over the requirements, than one bright-eyed youngster looked up into the mulberry tree under which we were sitting and said, "What kind of nest is that?" Upon closer inspection with the glasses, we could see the female on the nest, and we discovered that it was a Blue Grosbeak. No sooner had we identified this, than another pupil said, "There's a nest up there, too!" We followed his sharp-eyed gaze and to our pleasant surprise we saw a Black-chinned Hummingbird's felt cuplet. And, that wasn't all! This very same tree on this very same day revealed a Mourning Dove's nest!

While going over the book work of our class, we could see flying by our study spot such birds as the friendly Vermilion Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole, Orchard Oriole, Western Kingbird, Mockingbird, Say's Phoebe, Black Phoebe, the brilliant Summer Tanager, Barn Swallow, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Lesser Goldfinch, and House Finch. And, venturing out in a mile radius of our camp in this oasis in the desert, we spotted the Painted Bunting, Black-throated Sparrow, Great Horned Owl, Roadrunner, Verdins and their interesting nests, Wied's Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and even a Maryland Yellowthroat, among other species.

I never dreamed when we chose to study under that mulberry tree that it would start us on so many interesting bird discoveries--so many colorful, easy-to-see, friendly species. -- Mrs. Alvin Fiedler.

YELLOW BIRDS

Birders on the Big Day had the experience of suddenly seeing many "yellow birds" feeding in the willows at Buffalo Lake that just were not in the book. It was noted that one of the brilliant yellow birds had the long forked tail, head stripe, and cheek patches of a Clay-colored Sparrow. It also had a sparrow-like beak -- but whoever heard of a yellow Clay-colored Sparrow?

Investigation revealed that pollen of the staminate willow flowers was being shed, and as these birds fed among the flowers, they were becoming covered with slightly sticky pollen. Other "yellow birds" were golden Pine Siskins, Chipping Sparrows, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. This is a fine example of the role of birds in pollination.

MAY MEETING

A sound and color film on reptiles is scheduled for the May 16 meeting, 7:30 in the Garden Center.

Peggy Acord, TPAS Recorder, requests that members check their bird notes from late March to the present and bring to the meeting a list showing the first date each bird was recorded this spring.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, May 21, meet at 8:00 at the north gate of Llano Cemetery for a field trip to be led by Leo Galloway.

The April 24 bird walk in Ellwood Park yielded no unusual species to the five cool, damp birders.

Nine reservations have been sent in by Amarillo birders for the Black Mesa meeting of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society, May 13-15.

BIRD NOTES

This year's shorebird habitat is scarce, as many of the playa lakes are dry and the water in Buffalo Lake is high, with very few exposed mud flats. Consequently, the number of shorebirds present is low, but by diligent searching, most of the shorebird species that are normally recorded have been found; however, their numbers are small.

Best birds of the month were Rona Ross's Worm-eating Warbler, seen at her place on May 1, and Kenneth Seyffert's distinctly marked male Hooded Warbler, May 7, at Buffalo Lake. Although no one could be reached in time to confirm either find, both birders are very reliable observers. Other outstanding birds were Kenneth's Blackpoll and Blackburnian Warblers, Peggy Acord's Northern Waterthrush, and Leo Galloway's Peregrine Falcon. Following are the month's "finds" in order of date seen:

Black-throated Gray Warbler, April 17, Buffalo Lake, Leo Galloway and Kenneth Seyffert; Yellow-throated Vireo, Solitary Sandpiper, and Parula Warbler, April 24, Buffalo Lake, Kenneth Seyffert; Peregrine Falcon, April 27, Buffalo Lake, Leo Galloway; Worm-eating Warbler, May 1, in yard, Rona Ross; Common Egret, May 2, Palo Duro-Club, Esther Waddill, Peggy Acord, and Rona Ross; Pine Siskins feeding baby birds, May 3, in yard, Rona Ross; Indigo Bunting, May 4, Buffalo Lake, Leo Galloway; Black-headed Grosbeak and Northern Waterthrush at the Ross residence and Stilt Sandpiper at a playa lake, May 5, Peggy Acord; Black-necked Stilt, May 6, playa lake, Peggy Acord; and Blackpoll, Blackburnian, and Hooded Warblers, May 7, Buffalo Lake, Kenneth Seyffert.

The birds in Vera Deason's yard were highly disturbed by a Mississippi Kite perched in a tree in a neighbor's back yard May 5.

NOTICE

This is the last scheduled issue of the Prairie Horned Lark until September, as the TPAS does not meet during the summer months.

CALENDAR

May 16 - Monthly Society Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
May 21 - Field trip, cemeteries, 8:00 a.m.

CONSERVATION NEWS

- Kenneth Seyffert, Conservation Chmn.

H.R. 14176 was introduced into the House March 31 by Rep. John P. Saylor (Pa.) to enlarge the Grand Canyon National Park so that the entire Canyon would be protected. This offers an alternative to the Bureau of Reclamation's plans to build the Marble Gorge and Bridge Canyon dams, as the enlargement of the Park will include both of the proposed sites.

All Texans, conservationists, and those interested in preserving a unique section of this country should get behind Sen. Ralph Yarborough's bill to create a Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The bill cleared the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs without any provision to preserve mineral rights in the state. This is the main stumbling block to the park's establishment, for similar bills, introduced into the House by Texas Representatives Joe Pool and Richard White, support the Texas Land Commission's stand that 45,000 acres of the 75,000 acres in the proposed park be left open to mineral development. Since the National Park Service does not permit mineral development in the national parks, we are confronted with the choice of a national park or mineral rights.

This letter has been received from Mrs. George W. Bickler, president of the Travis Audubon Society in Austin:

"Travis Audubon Society has been advised that the Uvalde Big-toothed Maples (Acer grandidentatum) in Sabinal Canyon can no longer be viewed by the public, as the road which runs through the canyon is being closed. A new highway under construction from Vanderpool and connecting with a road from Kerrville will bypass the interior of the canyon.

"This canyon is a unique area, and contains the largest grove of Uvalde Big-toothed Maples to be found anywhere. It also supports an excellent representation of Edwards Plateau plants and a varied wildlife population, including the rare Golden-cheeked Warbler, Zone-tailed Hawk, and Black-capped Vireo.

"If you are interested in helping preserve this area, possibly as a state park with limited use, your wishes should be made known to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, Austin, Texas. Mr. Will Odom is Chairman of this Commission.

"Sincerely yours, (signed) Mrs. George W. Bickler, President, Travis Audubon Society."

During the past month, Mrs. I. D. Acord has spoken to approximately 50 people, including Cub Scouts, Girl Scout leaders, and women's club members, on conservation.

BIRDS SEEN ON BIG DAY, MAY 8, 1966

Black-crowned Night Heron	7
Mallard	4
Pintail	1
Blue-winged Teal	14
Shoveler	10
Turkey Vulture	9
Mississippi Kite	4
Red-tailed Hawk	1
Swainson's Hawk	4
Sparrow Hawk	3
Bobwhite	15
Scaled Quail	10
Pheasant	1
Turkey	1
Coot	4
Semipalmated Plover	1
Killdeer	50
Black-bellied Plover	1
Spotted Sandpiper	2
Baird's Sandpiper	15
Least Sandpiper	6
Long-billed Dowitcher	24
Stilt Sandpiper	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper	16
Western Sandpiper	1
Marbled Godwit	1
Avocet	30
Wilson's Phalarope	30
Mourning Dove	268
Roadrunner	3
Horned Owl	1
Burrowing Owl	1
Common Nighthawk	1
Chimney Swift	5
Belted Kingfisher	1
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	12
Red-headed Woodpecker	3
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	3
Eastern Kingbird	1
Western Kingbird	75
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	14
Great Crested Flycatcher	2
Ash-throated Flycatcher	2
Empidonax Flycatcher	2
Western Wood Pewee	1
Olive-sided Flycatcher	2
Horned Lark	85
Bank Swallow	2
Rough-winged Swallow	4
Barn Swallow	3
Cliff Swallow	43
Blue Jay	16
Black-crested Titmouse	3
Common Bushtit	2
House Wren	2
Bewick's Wren	11
Canyon Wren	5
Rock Wren	6
Mockingbird	43
Brown Thrasher	1
Robin	7
Hermit Thrush	5
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9
Cedar Waxwing	28
Starling	37
Black and White Warbler	3
Orange-crowned Warbler	16
Nashville Warbler	4
Yellow Warbler	7
Myrtle Warbler	2
Audubon's Warbler	17
Blackpoll Warbler	1
Ovenbird	1
Northern Waterthrush	2
MacGillivray's Warbler	3
Yellowthroat	2
Wilson's Warbler	3
American Redstart	1
House Sparrow	110
Western Meadowlark	125
Redwinged Blackbird	270
Orchard Oriole	1
Bullock's Oriole	19
Boat-tailed Grackle	1
Common Grackle	2
Brown-headed Cowbird	14
Scarlet Tanager	1
Cardinal	9
Blue Grosbeak	7
Lazuli Bunting	2
Indigo Bunting	1
Painted Bunting	2
House Finch	55
Pine Siskin	1500
American Goldfinch	1000
Lark Bunting	1000
Vesper Sparrow	1
Lark Sparrow	92
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	3
Cassin's Sparrow	3
Black-throated Sparrow	1
Chipping Sparrow	461
Clay-colored Sparrow	1200
Harris' Sparrow	1
White-crowned Sparrow	17
Lincoln's Sparrow	1

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