

GEM OF THE FOREST

For the third year, the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society will participate in the Amarillo Council of Garden Clubs' Festival of Trees, December 3-4. Our entry, a natural tree decorated with stained ceramic red and turquoise birds and gem-studded satin balls, set in an antique planter, will be titled "Gem of the Forest."

It is estimated that the cost of the tree and trimmings will be \$25 to \$30. If you would like to contribute a few dollars as your part of this club project, please give your money to the president or the Christmas Tree chairman, Mrs. I. D. Acord. Proceeds from the sale of the tree will go to the Garden Center Building Fund.

LATE SUMMER BIRD NOTES

From our Recorder, Peggy Acord, as of August 25:

The hot humid summer just passing has certainly had no dearth of birds.

At Lake Stockton a succession of Painted Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks, and Lesser Goldfinches kept life interesting.

Ponds have had, since early July, many shorebirds coming back through.

A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers had a nest in a tree on 14th between Tyler and Harrison. After the young birds hatched, a limb was knocked from the tree; a piece of bark fell off, exposing the young, and one young bird fell from the nest. A kindly neighbor put the young bird back in the cavity and nailed a board over a portion of the hole. The young birds all left safely when they were old enough to fly.

Boat-tailed Grackles again nested at Memorial Park Cemetery, with at least two young birds being fledged. Other grackles showed up at Llano Cemetery and in nearby areas, though no nesting data was obtained.

The Avocet nests Leo Galloway was watching were abandoned due to the drought.

Several TPAS'ors have visited the Southeast Amarillo Sewage Plant. In early August hundreds of Avocets, Dowitchers, Stilt and other Sandpipers, many Yellowlegs, Phalaropes, and Killdeer were seen. We challenge the group for a name for this choice birding area. Midland has its Rose Acres; Austin, its Potunia Puddles; and Amarillo -- ???

Hummingbirds are beginning to come in now, along with warblers and flycatchers.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The first fall meeting of the TPAS will be Monday, September 19, at 7:30 in the Garden Center. Proposed changes in the constitution will be discussed during the business meeting.

The program will be a short presentation of summer activities, accompanied by slides. If you have a few 35 mm slides to show, please bring them.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, Sept. 24, 8:30, meet at north entrance of Llano Cemetery.

Saturday, Oct. 8, 8:30, meet at Exit House south of the tracks in Umbarger for a trip to Buffalo Lake, led by Leo Galloway.

Arrangements are being worked out for Sunday afternoon field trips, probably in October, to ranches near Adrian and along the Canadian River.

BIRD NOTES--EARLY FALL

Although no Condors have been sighted recently in the Panhandle, birding the past week or two has been very exciting, with Kenneth Seyffert finding five Northern Phalaropes at the Sewage Plant, and Peggy Acord and Thelma Fox seeing the first pair of Knots recorded on the Amarillo area, September 5. Kenneth also recorded Ovenbird, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat on September 4. Perhaps we will be lucky enough to record the Verdin on our Christmas Count again this year, as Kenneth reported one at Palo Duro Canyon September 5.

Two male Lazuli Buntings, the second fall record for this species, were seen by Peggy Acord September 5.

Rena Ross alerted as many birders as possible to see the Canada Warbler which stayed at her place most of the day Sept. 8.

The city's population of "blackbirds" are roosting nightly at the Ross's, while a Black-crowned Night Heron frequently roosts in a tree at the Grady Fox residence.

In mid-August, Vera Deason had a young Yellow-billed Cuckoo in her yard for most of a week.

CALENDAR

- Sept. 19 - Monthly Society Meeting
- Sept. 24 - Field trip, local cemeteries
- Oct. 8 - Field trip, Buffalo Lake
- Oct. 17 - Monthly Society Meeting

Bird notes (continued)

The George Waddills, the Kenneth Whipplis, and Kenneth Seyffert made up the field trip party searching for Hummingbirds at Ruidoso, New Mexico, August 6-7.

Mrs. Ed Moyer of North Hollywood, California, former active TPAS member and officer, was honored at a "coffee" at Lake Stockton, September 7. Hostess was Peggy Acord.

Mrs. Marjorie Adams of Austin, author of a column "Bird World" which appears in a number of Texas newspapers, birded in Palo Duro Canyon early in August. In a telephone call to Leo Galloway, Mrs. Adams said she was particularly impressed with the large number of Red-headed Woodpeckers she had seen in the area.

George A. Smith of Greensboro, North Carolina, added several birds to his life list when he was shown Palo Duro Canyon early in the summer by Mrs. August Streit and the Leo Galloways.

Pine Siskins had arrived at Lake Stockton September 11, and Lesser Goldfinches were still feeding good-sized young, according to Peggy Acord.

Kenneth Seyffert observed an Osprey at Buffalo Lake this past weekend.

A Bird came down the Walk--
He did not know I saw--
He bit an Anglemorm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass--
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
to let a Beetle pass--

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around--
They looked like frightened Beads,
I thought--
He stirred his Velvet Head

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home--

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam--
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon
Leap, plashless as they swim.

--Emily Dickinson

CONDOR STORY

Sunday afternoon, August 28, was perhaps the most exciting time in the birding lives of the Leo Galloways. After blundering around in the mountains south of Bakorsfield, California, we stopped at a ranger station and inquired where we might be lucky enough to see a California Condor. The last mile to the peak of Mt. Pinos, to which the ranger directed us, all but shattered the camper and the nerves of the driver, but the view alone was well worth it.

No sooner had we unloaded the spotting scope and binoculars than we were approached by a man who asked if we were looking for a Condor. It was Dick Smith, senior author of the book The Condor, and he told us that some of the birds were on a ridge about three-fourths mile east of us. By the time we had walked to the edge of the peak, they had moved to a canyon about one-half mile below and to the north of us, and we were able to count seven birds as they flew up or sat perched in giant pines. We were close enough that we could readily distinguish juveniles from those in adult plumage and could see the head features and collar of feathers at the base of the neck.

Apparently something frightened the birds, and suddenly 11 huge Condors erupted above the tops of the trees. At this time we were joined by Mr. Smith and two men whom he had brought to see the Condors. We all began to count excitedly, and our final tally was 17 birds in the air at one time. Even Mr. Smith seemed excited to see so many Condors in a single concentration. The aggregation can be explained by the fact that deer season was open, and several illegally killed does had been "left for the buzzards."

Even after several hours of watching from above as the Condors wheeled, landed in pines, and launched themselves into the air to wheel again, we could hardly bear to leave this spectacle, which is unlikely to be repeated during our birding days. However, a tight schedule demanded that early the next morning we meet Ruth's brother in Sequoia National Park where, unbeknownst to us, further birding adventures were waiting. -- Leo A. Galloway