

Glenn Ranch Field Trip:

Thirteen people turned out for our field trip to the Glenn Ranch on Feb. 11. This ranch overlooks the Palo Duro Canyon and contains some attractive side canyons that lead into the Big One. While a careful count produced only six species of birds, some of those were particularly welcomed and enjoyed. This was so in the case of our out-of-town visitor, Don Gage of Childress, who added the Golden Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Canyon Wren to his life list. Two Golden Eagles soared leisurely above the Canyon and allowed everyone an extensive look at them, while a Sharp-shinned Hawk swooped rapidly up the canyon wall and veered off at the last minute before a wide-eyed group who were startled by its rapid presence. Before the group gathered, Don had observed a Scrub Jay, another lifer for him, in back of Six Gun City. When told of this, your Editor, who wanted the bird for his year's list, started out looking for it but was chased off the premises by a real totter of a real six gun. There may yet be a draw-down in Six Gun!

(out of the north). Anyone who has birded at Buffalo Lake knows that when the wind is blowing it is twice as cold there as anywhere else. We regret to say that only two birders showed up, Peggy Acord and Ken Seyffert, for the day was productive in birds that many would have liked to have seen. Some 40 or more species were there, including 3 immature Bald Eagles, 20 Snow Geese, a pair of Great Horned Owls, 2 Rough-legged Hawks, and 2 Red-tailed Hawks, one group of 75 or more Common Mergansers engaged in cooperative fishing tactics, the largest flocks of Tree Sparrows seen there in a long time, the first 5 "peeps" of the year (unidentified), and a sky full of returning ducks. Also, a coyote was seen as it trotted across the mud flats.

A BIRD FEEDER FOR THE CITY:

A few years ago Miss Altalee Sifford kindly donated \$500 to our society with the request that the funds be used for the erection and maintenance of a bird feeder in Ellwood Park. At last this request has been fulfilled, thanks to the energetic and resourceful Peggy Acord.

On Friday, March 8, 1968, a feeder was erected at Elwood Park in honor of Miss Altalee Sifford. Present on the occasion were Mrs. Grady Fox and Mrs. I. D. Acord of the TPAS, and Mr. Strickland Watkins of the City Park and Recreation Department. The feeder, a two foot long redwood hopper type, was built by Mr. Ralph Goodin. Pictures of the installation were sent to Miss Sifford, and the feeder itself carries a metal plaque which honors her.

PROGRAM FOR MARCH MEETING:

Jim Jokerst will present the program for our monthly meeting on March 18 and the subject will be The Lesser Prairie Chicken. We are looking forward to hearing the presentation for this species is one of particular interest to birders in this area. Within easy driving distance of us are most of the Lesser Prairie Chickens that one is likely to find in the world. It is also apt as plans have been made for this Society to go looking for them in Roger Mills County, Okla. on April 20-21. These plans will be the main point of business at our March meeting. For those who would like to extend and enlarge their reading on this species a recent Quarterly Progress Report of the Oklahoma Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit has been issued which reports on the effect of brush removal in western Oklahoma on Lesser Prairie Chickens and other studies on Oklahoma birds. This publication may be received from John A. Morrison, 408 Life Sciences Building, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Okla., 74074.

BIRDING DURING THE DOLDRUMS:

Birding locally has been slow, as it always is during this time of the year. At Lake Tanglewood on 3/3 Peggy Acord reported a Hermit Thrush and a melanistic Ferruginous Hawk, while very large flocks of Cedar Waxwings continue to be seen in town in the Bivin's area.

Moving out of town, George and Rena Ross reported on their recent trip to Houston, Galveston and Rockport. At Galveston, the Cattle Egrets were absent but a larger than usual number of Little Blue Herons made up for the lack. A large flock of terns, mostly Forster's, was nice as were the numbers of Golden Plover and snipe. Puddle ducks were common all along the coast. Pied-billed Grebes were common. Less common but interesting were cormorants, American Bitterns, Long-billed Curlew, Whimbrels, Clapper Rails and 1 Pileated Woodpecker. In with large flocks of vultures was a flock of migratory hawks.

Aransas Refuge held a few wintering flycatchers and Myrtle and Orange-crowned Warblers. One Whooping Crane on Jones' Pond (George said it was either a crane or a stork) was a welcome addition to the list. The only life bird (a real goodie) was the Masked Duck at Aransas Refuge.

The Cattle Egrets finally showed up at Rockport. The only peeps seen were in the Rockport area. Purple Martins were in and a soft pink carpet of spring beauties delighted the eye. Rockport produced a European Widgeon and Rattlesnake Point came

SPRING MEETING OF THE TOS:

As reported by the Bulletin of the Texas Ornithological Society, their spring meeting will be at McKittrick Canyon in the newly formed Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and Carlsbad Caverns, May 4 and 5. The point of gathering will be White City, N. M. and details will be furnished later. You can register in advance by writing Mrs. Cleve Bachman, 2120 Thomas Road, Beaumont, Tex.

SOMETHING TO BE LOOKING FOR:

Make sure you read the April issue of the Horned Lark wherein an account of the Grady Fox's trip to Jamaica will appear.

FIELD TRIP TO BUFFALO LAKE:

As always in the past, the first field trip to Buffalo Lake was held on March 3, the first Sunday after the refuge is reopened to the public following its closing the previous Nov. 1. This day dawned cloudy (clearing by noon), cold (22 degrees F.), and windy

forth with lovely pink Roseate Spoonbills, Fulvous Tree Ducks and a few Marbled Godwits were fun to see. A notable gap on the list was the Black Skimmer entirely missed and much missed since it is truly one of the loveliest birds on the coast.

SOME RESULTS OF STUDIES IN THE PDC:

On April 1, 1967, Ken Seyffert began a Breeding Bird Census in the Palo Duro Canyon which extended through July 30, and followed it up with a Wintering Population Study that began on Dec. 3 and ended Feb. 18, 1968. The area covered is a thirty acre tract at the first water crossing bounded on the north by the campground, on the east by the park road, on the south by a dry draw, and on the west by bluffs. A condensation of the results follows:

Breeding Bird Census: The 20 species whose nesting territories were wholly or partially contained within the area were (in order of abundance), Mourning Dove, Mockingbird, Bullock's Oriole, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Painted Bunting, Cardinal, Mississippi Kite, Bobwhite, Blue Jay, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Blue Grosbeak, Scaled Quail, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Black-crested Titmouse, Screech Owl, Belted Kingfisher, and Common Bushtit. Thus there were 60.5 territorial males present which projects to 200 males per 100 acres. In addition, the Brown-headed Cowbird, including females, was persistently observed. 46 other species of birds were observed on the census area but these were either transients, migrants, or lingering winter residents.

Wintering Population Census: The 44 species seen on the census area were (in order of abundance), Oregon Junco, Slate-colored Junco, Mountain Bluebird, Bobwhite, Robin, Song Sparrow, Scaled Quail, Common Bushtit, Cedar Waxwing, Cardinal, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, American Goldfinch, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Red-shafted Flicker, Bewick's Wren, Mockingbird, Townsend's Solitaire, Rufous-sided Towhee, Brown Towhee, Sparrow Hawk, Killdeer, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Mallard, Golden Eagle, Marsh Hawk, Mourning Dove, Roadrunner, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Black-crested Titmouse, Vardian, Curve-billed Thrasher, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, House Sparrow, W. Meadowlark, House Finch, Pine Siskin, Gray-headed Junco, and Tree Sparrow. The average total seen on the area was 117 which projects to a density of 390 per 100 acres. On the nine trips made to the area 9 species were recorded on every trip, 3 on 8 trips, 2 on 7 trips, 1 on 6 trips, 3 on 5 trips, 5 on 4 trips, 3 on 3 trips, 9 on 2 trips, and 9 on 1 trip only.

MERIDIAN STATE PARK (from the Lone Star Sierran):

"Some additional pieces of information have surfaced in the story of the proposed golf course at Meridian State Park. The outlines of this giveaway of state lands have been discussed in earlier issues of this newsletter. Unfortunately, continued investigation shows the situation to be even worse.

As you remember, not only have Senator

Word and his associates been granted their land from the State, but they have applied for a loan from the Farmers Home Administration, an agency of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. According to the administrator of this agency, the request for a loan was submitted in July of 1967. This antedates by over two months their request to the State Parks and Wildlife Department for the lease, which was submitted on Sept. 25, 1967. The confidence exhibited by the golfers in applying for a loan to develop the land some two months in advance of an application for a lease on the land was justified in light of subsequent action of the Parks and Wildlife Commission. But, is this any way to administer the public lands of the State of Texas?

In his reply to a query in behalf of the chapter, J. R. Singleton, Executive Director of the Parks and Wildlife Department, admitted that the terms of the lease to the golfing group left the length and size of lease up to administrative decisions of the staff of the department. In addition, his answer to a direct question seems to indicate that the lease is such that the state will not share in any earnings from the golf course.

What can be done? If the Parks and Wildlife Commission have the support of the governor, the federal government and the candidates for state office seems to be our best bet. Write your Congressmen and protest this use of funds, and keep this issue alive during this election year."

"The bird watchers - there's a laugh.
Their idea of having fun,
Sitting on a hillside under the sky,
Sensing the trees and feeling the sun,
Watching the birds who nest and fly,
Watching the flowers, watching the bee,
When they could be sitting at home with
a beer,
Watching T.V."

.....Malvina Reynolds

DID YOU KNOW?:

One might expect that adult birds of a given species taken at a given time of year would have a rather stable number of feathers. This was shown not to be the case in Wetmore's study of the number of vanned feathers in birds. For example, two female Song Sparrows on March 5 had 2208 and 2093 feathers respectively; two female Fox Sparrows on March 26 had 2648 and 2482.

Body size is the factor responsible for the greatest variation in feather number. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird had 940 feathers (June) and a Whistling Swan had 25,216 (November). Actually, the hummingbird possesses more feathers per gram of body weight than the swan, which is to be expected since small bodies have relatively more heat-losing surface per unit of weight than large bodies.

CALENDAR:

- March 18: Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 p.m.
- April 15: Monthly society meeting.
- April 20-21: Prairie Chicken field trip.