

SUMMER GATHERING:

On Sunday morning, July 14th, at 7:30 a.m. members of the TPAS will gather at the gate to the Palo Duro Club from whence they will proceed to breakfast at the house of the Waddills. This will be followed by a hike to observe the birds, wildflowers, bugs, trees, grass, sky, water, animals, rocks, sunshine or rain, to be found in this lovely setting.

SUMMER DOINGS OF OUR MEMBERS:

Rena Ross, Thelma Fox, Vera Deason, and Esther Waddill recently returned from a trip to the Ross's cabin near Chama, N. M. Birding on the lakes in the area, as well as on the Jicarilla-Apache Indian Reservation and Cumbres Pass, produced sizable numbers of Cinnamon Teal, Gray Jays, Warbling Vireos, W. Tanagers and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. They reported seeing, also, Sage Sparrows, Common Loons, Lewis's Woodpeckers, and Williamson's Sapsuckers.

Rena Ross's trip to Point Pelee in Canada during the middle of May produced large numbers of a wide variety of birds, for which the place is famous, including a great many warblers which were singing, and 3 lifers for her - the Glaucous Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, and Henslow's Sparrow. The latter she correctly identified without having previously seen one, and the identification was nailed down by some Canadian gentlemen who were familiar with the species.

Peggy Acord reports a very interesting trip to the boot heel section of southern Missouri during the first week in June. She noted a considerable clearing of the land along the highway north of Conway, Ark., with extensive rice cultivation taking place and, as a result, swampy ditches along the road. Whatever adverse effects this clearing may have had on other forms of life, the Prothonotary Warbler has established itself in great numbers in such a habitat. In the town of Dexter, Mo. itself, she found it gratifying to listen to her old familiar eastern friends who were singing in great numbers - the Wood Thrushes, Robins, House and Carolina Wrens, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Indigo Buntings. The latter was watched at twilight as it performed its song flight which, she stated, resembles very much that of the Lark Bunting. In Big Oak Tree State Park she reported hearing Parula, Kentucky, Prothonotary and Yellow-throated Warblers, the Yellowthroat, and the American Redstart. Slogging over wet trails and peering through a haze of mosquitoes, 4 Pileated Woodpeckers were her reward. An interesting observation she made was that though she saw very few egrets on the trip, and then only along the Arkansas River in Oklahoma, she saw more adult Little Blue Herons than she had ever seen before.

TWO MORE MEMBERS MIGRATE:

As of this month, the TPAS has two less resident birders. We regret the departure of Ken and Kathryn Whipple, and Barbara, who have moved to Denver. We feel sure their warm presence will be luring some of our birders northward.

COOPERATIVE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY OF NORTH AMERICA, 1968:

Two counts were made in Texas by members of the TPAS in the second annual Breeding Bird Survey, sponsored by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife. On June 8, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pedersen, accompanied by Kenneth Seyffert, made the first survey of the Clarendon route which lies east and north of the town and which parallels U.S. 287, being between it and the Salt Fork of the Red River. Starting a half-hour before sunrise and making 50 three-minute stops on a 25-mile route, they recorded 45 species and 543 individuals. In order of abundance, the ten most numerous species seen and heard were: Bobwhite (94), Mockingbird (59), Cassin's Sparrow (51), Mourning Dove (47), Common Crow (43), Mississippi Kite (27), Lark Sparrow (24), House Sparrow (23), W. Kingbird (16), and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (16). Though only 60 to 80 miles from Amarillo, some typical eastern birds were found which are rarely seen in our immediate area during the summer, namely, the Great Crested Flycatcher, Carolina Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, Dickcissel, Field Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Thrasher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Downy Woodpecker.

On the following morning, Kenneth Seyffert made his second survey in the Channing area. This count begins north of Channing and continues to a point a few miles south of the Canadian River bridge, near Boys' Town. He recorded 43 species and 759 individuals, compared to last year's 35 and 646. The ten most numerous species were: W. Meadowlark (197), Cliff Swallow (80), Cassin's Sparrow (74), Horned Lark (60), Mourning Dove (54), Mockingbird (43), Lark Sparrow (36), Scaled Quail (35), House Sparrow (20), and Bobwhite (17). The most unusual bird he saw was a male Lazuli Bunting singing from the top of a tree within Channing itself, although he saw and heard the same species the preceding and succeeding weekends in the Palo Duro Canyon.

For the first time, the Survey this year covered the entire N. A. continent and Kenneth Seyffert volunteered to make the count near Greenville, N. M. He journeyed to there on June 16 and recorded 33 species and 671 individuals. The ten most numerous species were: W. Meadowlark (254), Horned Lark (159), Cassin's Sparrow (72), Common Nighthawk (23), Mockingbird (23), Cliff Swallow (19), Lark Sparrow (18), Mourning Dove (15), W. Kingbird (13), and House Sparrow (13). For the first time in his experience, he caught several of the Nighthawks in their "booming" flights. Some unexpected birds he found in that area were the Grasshopper and Clay-colored Sparrows, and the Brown Thrasher, while the Mountain Plover he knew to be there but was skeptical of seeing. This far north and west he also encountered the Long-billed Curlew, Say's Phoebe, Cassin's Kingbird, Brown Towhee, and Black-billed Magpie. More study and familiarity with the songs of the western birds should increase the species count in this rather remote and uninhabited area.

WORD FROM MEMBERS:

A letter was received from Carroll Littlefield dated June 18, Churchill, Manitoba, Canada. Carroll is there doing work on the Canada Goose and reports that since his arrival on May 18 he has picked up 23 life birds. As an aside, he reports picking up 28 lifers on the way up, having travelled by way of the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in south Texas? Only a birder would travel so far south to get so far north in the hopes of seeing something new. On the day of writing he reported the temperature to be 33 degrees F. He was leaving for Cape Churchill, "which is 40 miles east. I expect to freeze to death while there." Some of the nesting birds he reports having seen are the Hudsonian Godwit, Willow Ptarmigan, Short-billed Dowitcher, Arctic and Red-throated Loons, Oldsquaw, and Common Eider!

A letter full of enthusiasm was received from Don Gage in Childress where he reports dozens of Martin houses as having been erected and many of them occupied by Purple Martins. We suspect much of this good work was inspired by Don himself for a newspaper clipping from the Childress Index, written by him, was enclosed with his letter and it gave a very good account of the species and of how the people of Childress could attract it to their town and keep it as a summer resident. Such actions as this are in the front line of the conservation effort and are direct, workable, and effective.

BENT SERIES COMPLETED:

With the recent publication of the "Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows and Allies", the Bent series on the North American birds has been completed. This three-volume work can be purchased for \$8.25 from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

ON WASHINGTON STREET PLAYA, ^{SOUTH} NORTH OF TOWN:

When Peggy Acord reported the presence of several species of waterfowl on this playa, Kenneth Seyffert spent some time there on the morning of 7/7 to see if he could find any of them nesting. His count turned up 6 pairs of Redheads, 10 of Blue-winged Teal, 2 of Mallards, 1 of Pintail, and 1 of Cinnamon Teal. No nests were found but one female Blue-Winged Teal

had seven ducklings with her and another one had six, while the Pintail had ten little ones with her. There were 6 American Coots present, a pair of harassing American Avocets, about 50 Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and 11 Lesser Yellowlegs. Although none were seen this day, Peggy had previously seen a pair of Eared Grebes on the playa. They could have easily remained in hiding.

DID YOU KNOW?

Field studies of larks by Meinertzhagen have shown a striking correlation between soil color and plumage color. Blackish subspecies of larks lived on black volcanic soil, reddish subspecies on red soil, and pale sand-colored subspecies on pale sandy soil. Not only did the color of the birds match the soil, but also their color pattern. "The birds will have a smooth, even coloration if they live on a fine-grained, dusty, or sandy soil. If, on the other hand, they live on a pebble desert, they will have a coarse, disruptive pattern of coloration." Most remarkable of all, when he attempted to chase reddish larks living on reddish soils to light lime soils only a few yards away, he was unsuccessful. Nor could he force the whitish larks living on light soil to descend on the non-matching red soils. The birds always alighted on soil matching their plumage, as though they were "conscious of the color of the soil that corresponds to their own coloration."