

"What but the wolf's tooth whittled so fine in Brownsville, Texas, Nov. 28 through 30.
The fleet limbs of the antelope? This promises to be a big affair with two
What but fear winged the birds, and hunger days of field trips in that wonderful birding
Jewelled with such eyes the great gos- area, and the guest speaker for Friday night's
hawk's head?" banquet will be Dr. Clarence Cottam of the
Welder Wildlife Foundation.

-Robinson Jeffers -

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP:

On Oct. 13 nine people met in Vega for a field trip to the Tom Green ranch north of there. These included Peggy and Bruce Acord, Mrs. Alvin Fiedler and her son, Steve, along with two of his guests, and Mr. & Mrs. Forbus from Borger, as well as Ken Seyffert. It was a searingly hot afternoon which deterred them all from doing much hiking. The group lost its way, which isn't too hard to do on an uncharted ranch 37 miles square in size. Well, they didn't exactly lose their way, they just couldn't find their way to the place they wanted to go to. As always, however, when our group gets together in the outdoors they have an enjoyable time seeing whatever can be seen whether it is birds, plants, animals, insects or what. Birders that get out quite often have a tendency to become indifferent to some of the more common birds and even refer to them as "junk", which is a terrible thing to call anything except junk itself, and certainly doesn't include any bird living. On these field trips it is always refreshing to have some people who are just beginning their obsession with birds and can take delight in seeing for the first time Oregon Juncos, Clay-colored, Vesper, and Song Sparrows, and can pin down for certain their identification of some of the hawks, such as Marsh and Red-tailed. There were alot of "cotton tops" around and a road-runner will bring a car to a stop every time.

NOTICE ON PARKING:

Beginning with our meeting this month, please park your car on the lower parking lot in the rear of the Garden Center building. The lower entrance door will be used as our meeting place will be on that level of the building.

BIRD NOTES:

Nuthatches - 2 Red-breasted and 1 White-breasted in the Grady Fox's yard 10/23.
Northern Phalarope - 2 at Buffalo Lake 10/19 (KS).
Smith's Longspur - seen near Panhandle during latter part of October by Thelma Fox.
Golden Plover - 1 at Buffalo Lake 10/27 by Charles & Sharon Pedersen, & KS.
Double-crested Cormorant - 2 at Buffalo Lake 10/27 by same party as above.
Common Loon - 1 at Buffalo Lake 10/27 by same party as above.
Wood Thrush - 1 in the Palo Duro Canyon 10/31 by Peggy Acord and Rena Ross.
Winter Wren - 1 in the Palo Duro Canyon 11/3 by KS.
Northern Shrike - 1 at Buffalo Lake 11/3 by KS. A good and prolonged study of an immature bird from 15' distance. Bird quite fearless and all points checked out.

THE T.O.S. GOES TO THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY:

The annual Fall meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society will be held this year

THE VICISSITUDES OF ABRONIA HUNTING: OR RUTH AND THE BULL MOOSE:

In the Feb., 1967 issue of The Prairie Horned Lark there appeared an article by Anonymous entitled "I'm a Slave to a Bird Lister". The identity of the author has never been revealed but by putting two and two together I have always strongly suspected that Ruth Galloway was behind it. I based this conclusion on two things. One was personal observation of similar incidents the authoress described in her article. For instance, I can remember a journey I made to Florida one winter with her and her husband wherein I saw first hand the excellent training she had undergone in learning to spot every flying bird passed along the road. "There goes a buzzard" she would quietly say, and instantly her bird listing friends would scan the skies, the fence rows, the tree tops, the road itself, and I don't believe we ever missed seeing the object she was referring to. Of course, sometimes the object was a Red-tailed Hawk, or a Crow, or a Scissor-tail (?), and occasionally a Turkey or a Black Vulture, but I am firmly convinced she pointed out to her dull companions every single flying bird between Amarillo and Flamingo, Florida.

The other thing on which I based my conclusion was the inimitable style in which the article was written; it was undoubtedly the most delightful, witty and grammatically correct one that has ever appeared in these pages.

I bring up all of this because of a letter I received recently from Leo Galloway wherein he recorded his wife's expanded interest in wildlife. I have had many misgivings on Leo's and Ruth's future as bird listers ever since Leo told me of his intention to get his doctorate in Plant Taxonomy, which is certainly a cut or two above bird listing, and I knew that wherever Leo went Ruth would go. My fears were well founded, as witness the following excerpt from Leo's letter:

"The last 2 weeks of August we went out through Central New Mexico to the south rim of the Grand Canyon, around the east and north side of the canyon to Kanab, Utah, to Zion National Park, around SW Utah into SE Nevada, then we swung around the inside borders of Nevada, up to Idaho Falls, Idaho, to Yellowstone National Park down to Green River, Wy., then to NW Nebraska, central Nebraska, and finally home. We collected 17 specimens of the plants I'm working with. Also collected a number of seeds and potted one from Wyoming. Not far north of Jackson, Wy. a VW camper pulled out behind us and flashed its lights. We saw that it was a Texas car and finally, after 5 miles of light flashing and waving, we realized it was Jim Jokerst and family. Of course, I wasn't expecting them in a VW. We had a real nice visit over coffee in Jackson.

"One of my plants was collected near the

mouth of a stream that empties into Yellowstone Lake. The record I had for it was about 1900, I guess, so we went looking. It was raining a bit and was cold as a few snow flakes were falling. To save time, Ruth went one way and I went the other along the sandy beach. Ruth was looking at the ground and once when she looked up here was a huge Bull Moose about 100'150' from her just standing and looking at her. She said there wasn't any Abronia down that way, anyway. She did find it, though, back in my direction. Another interesting thing, I walked right up on a McCown's Longspur that was very reluctant to fly in the rain and wind.

"We didn't really bird at all but got about 110 on the list for the trip."

DECEMBER PROGRAM:

Our most interesting and popular programs are invariably those put on by the members themselves. Witness October's in which Peggy Acord showed color slides (more or less) and provided commentary on The Shorebirds in as fine and absorbing a manner as one could wish. The program for November promises to be equally good. The Waddills will show their color slides of the Great Smokies taken this year in Fall coloring! Plan to be there, and bring guests.

BEFORE YOU PUT UP THAT MARTIN HOUSE:

Quite often, if an assumption is repeated frequently enough it soon become accepted as a fact. A case in point is the oft-repeated statement that a martin consumes 2,000 mosquitoes per day. Undoubtedly, the acceptance of that statement as the gospel truth has led to the erection of many martin house, which is certainly a good thing but good for the wrong reasons.

A recent study by Herbert W. Kale, as reported in the October issue of The Auk, shines a new light on the subject. Basing his findings on a survey of the published literature concerning analyses of stomach contents, and making common sense observations of the martin's feeding habits and mosquito's periods of activity, he concluded the following:

"(1) Mosquitoes appear to be a negligible item in the diet of the Purple Martin.

(2) Behavior patterns of mosquitoes and martins are such that most mosquitoes are not flying in martin feeding areas when martins are active; contact between the two is minimal during daylight hours.

(3) None of the published statements appearing in the popular ornithological literature that attributes a mosquito-feeding habit to the Purple Martin is based on a factual study; the oft-quoted statement "a martin eats 2,000 mosquitoes per day" has no evident means of support.

(4) No evidence exists that any avian species can effectively control a species of insect pest upon which it feeds when that pest is at or near peak abundance.

(5) The Purple Martin is one of our most beautiful and friendly birds. It daily consumes a large number of insects. Its aesthetic qualities alone recommend it highly to man. There is no need to ascribe to the martin abilities greater than those it already possesses in order to encourage its protection and propagation."

"The Plover and the Clover can be told apart with ease,
By paying close attention to the habits of the Bees,
For En-to-molo-gists aver, the Bee can bee in Clover,
While Ety-molo-gists concur, there is no B in Plover."

....R. W. Wood

HOW MANY BIRDS?

The total numbers of birds in different parts of the world can only be very roughly approximated. Peterson (1948) estimates that there are about 7600 million breeding birds in the U. S., and that between 2/3 and 3/4 of them are land birds. For the N. A. continent north of Mexico he estimates that there are between 12,000 and 20,000 million birds. For the entire world, Fisher (1951) estimates that there are in the neighborhood of 100,000 million birds. This number is only 1/3 as many as a single pair of Robins might leave as descendants in 16 years, if we apply the assumption that all offspring live to reproduce 8 young each year!

A REPORT ON PESTICIDES:

A new Agriculture Department report shows that more than 1/4 of the nation's cropland is being treated with weed and insect killers.

About 27% of the nation's 346.3 million acres used for crops in 1966 - not including pastures - was treated with herbicides to kill weeds, and 12% with insecticides.

CALENDAR:

- Nov. 18 - Monthly Society meeting at the Garden Center, 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. - As traditionally, our Christmas Count will be our monthly meeting.
- Dec. 28 - Annual Christmas Bird Count - the Palo Duro Canyon.

ANNUAL PERMITS:

Annual entrance permits to Texas parks can now be purchased from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for \$12.00. These permits run from Aug. 31 to Aug. 31 and cover the vehicle and its occupants. It may well be worthwhile to purchase one of these for those of you who use the Palo Duro Canyon State Park quite often.