

January, 1971

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

Vol. VIII, No. 1

## PROGRAM FOR JANUARY:

Our annual dinner and election of new officers will be held at 6:30 p.m., January 18, at the Garden Center. Food arrangements for the dinner are under the supervision of Peggy Acord and Mary Griffith who will contact each of you shortly concerning what needs to be brought for the covered-dish servings. The program will be presented by Miss Barbara Lund, park naturalist with the National Park Service at the Sanford Recreation Area, Lake Meredith. We are looking forward to this presentation and urge all members who can to attend, bringing your guests with you.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:

Members of the TPAS participated in seven Christmas Bird Counts in our area this year, held annually under the auspices of the National Audubon Society and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The results of four of them are given below and the other three will be run in next month's Newsletter if the information can be secured.

ARNETT, OKLAHOMA: 36° 03' N, 99° 48' W (all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center 2 miles west and 5½ miles south of Arnett, to include Lake Vincent and bend of Canadian River; cottonwood-willow bottomlands 35%, mixed grass prairie 30%; cultivated fields 25%, roadside thickets 5%, shelterbelts 3%, lake 1%, town 1%). - Dec. 26; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Four observers in three parties. Pied-billed Grebe (8); Mallard (41); Gadwall (9); Green-winged Teal (1); American Widgeon (1); Shoveler (1); Redhead (1); Ring-necked Duck (76); Canvasback (4); Lesser Scaup (4); Common Goldeneye (1); Ruddy Duck (4); Hooded Merganser (1); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (14); Harlan's Hawk (1); Ferruginous Hawk (1); Marsh Hawk (14); Sparrow Hawk (9); Lesser Prairie Chicken (10 - all-time low); Bobwhite (90); Turkey (149); American Coot (180); Killdeer (3); Common Snipe (4); Mourning Dove (364); Roadrunner (2); Great Horned Owl (7); Long-eared Owl (1); Belted Kingfisher (1); Yellow-shafted Flicker (4); Red-shafted Flicker (13); Red-bellied Woodpecker (7); Hairy Woodpecker (2); Downy Woodpecker (8); Horned Lark (47); Blue Jay (1); Common Crow (49); Carolina Chickadee (61); Brown Creeper (2); Bewick's Wren (17); Long-billed Marsh Wren (3); Robin (17); Eastern Bluebird (18); Loggerhead Shrike (17); Starling (279); House Sparrow (213); Western Meadowlark (153); Red-winged Blackbird (1018); Brewer's Blackbird (1777); Brown-headed Cowbird (25); Cardinal (36); American Goldfinch (60); Rufous-sided Towhee (1); Slate-colored Junco (18); Oregon Junco (41); Tree Sparrow (118); Field Sparrow (53); Harris' Sparrow (56); White-crowned Sparrow (17); Swamp Sparrow (2); Song Sparrow (24); Lapland Longspur (1). Total: 63 species; about 5161 individuals....W. Marvin Davis, Leo A. Galloway (compiler), Barbara Lund, Kenneth Seyffert.

Probably the highlight of this count was the witnessing of 141 Turkeys going to roost at dusk. All four observers were shivering as they watched but it isn't known whether it was from the cold, from the sight of the big birds alighting in the tops of the large cottonwood trees, or from the sounds of the

two coyotes singing nearby. The 10 Lesser Prairie Chickens recorded were an all-time low, and these were seen only fleetingly by Leo Galloway as they went sailing over a distant field. Range conditions were extremely dry this year and the production of maize crops was small. Local ranchers and farmers reported a bad year for the "chickens" and stated the hunting season had been very poor.

LAKE MEREDITH, TEXAS: 35° 41' N, 101° 36' W (all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center on Lake Meredith opposite Blue Creek, to include Sanford, Fritch, Sanford Dam, Lake Meredith west to South Turkey Creek, and adjacent ranch lands; wooded canyons 45%, mesquite grasslands 33%, lakes and ponds 20%, towns 2%). - Dec. 30; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Partly cloudy; temp. 24 to 57°; wind NW 8-40 m.p.h.; all water open, dust storm 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. reducing visibility to under 5 miles. Nine observers in 5 parties. Total party-hours 28½ (13½ on foot, 15 by car); total party-miles, 169 (13 on foot, 156 by car). Pied-billed Grebe (4); Great Blue Heron (1); Canada Goose (150); Mallard (24,062); Gadwall (45); Pintail (4,250); Green-winged Teal (1,593); American Widgeon (162); Redhead (1); Common Goldeneye (1); Bufflehead (1); Common Merganser (1,515); Red-tailed Hawk (2); Rough-legged Hawk (1); Golden Eagle (1); Bald Eagle (5); Marsh Hawk (8); Sparrow Hawk (5); Bobwhite (30); Scaled Quail (124); Turkey (1); American Coot (59); Common Snipe (2); Greater Yellowlegs (1); Ring-billed Gull (172); Roadrunner (9); Great Horned Owl (1); Belted Kingfisher (5); Yellow-shafted Flicker (6); Red-shafted Flicker (9); Ladder-backed Woodpecker (4); Horned Lark (16); Blue Jay (1); Common Crow (1); Bewick's Wren (2); Long-billed Marsh Wren (6); Townsend's Solitaire (1); Loggerhead Shrike (4); Starling (2,303); House Sparrow (30); Western Meadowlark (73); Red-winged Blackbird (1,000,000); Brewer's Blackbird (2,018); Brown-headed Cowbird (3); House Finch (1); Pine Siskin (8); American Goldfinch (42); Rufous-sided Towhee (1); Slate-colored Junco (7); Oregon Junco (43); Rufous-crowned Sparrow (4); Tree Sparrow (12); White-crowned Sparrow (2); Song Sparrow (7). Total: 54 species; about 1,036,810 individuals. (Seen in area count period but not on count day: Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Killdeer, Bonaparte's Gull, Rock Wren, Mockingbird....Greg Arledge, Fern F. Cain, John Crow, Ronald J. Ice, Barbara A. Lund (compiler), Marie Mayfield, Frank Stowers, Jack Williams, Wayne Williams.

LAKE MEREDITH (WEST), TEXAS: 35° 30' N, 101° 47' W (all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center north of Canadian River about 2½ miles SW of McBride Canyon, to include west end of Lake Meredith at Plum Creek and Bates Canyon, Canadian River to U.S. Highway 287, and adjacent ranch lands; mesquite-grasslands 40%, wooded canyons 30%, lakes and ponds 20%, ranch yards 10%). Dec. 31; 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Clear a.m., partly cloudy p.m.; temp. 22-48°; wind W, 1-10 m.p.h.; all water open. Pied-billed Grebe (3); Great Blue Heron (4); Canada Goose (75); Snow Goose (8); Mallard (29); Gadwall (10); Pintail (2); Green-winged Teal (10); American Widgeon (1); Canvasback (5); Common Goldeneye (10); Bufflehead (4); Hooded Merganser (8); Common Merganser (12); Red-tailed

Hawk (11); Golden Eagle (2); Marsh Hawk (6); Sparrow Hawk (3); Bobwhite (40); Scaled Quail (133); Turkey (101); American Coot (143); Killdeer (3); Common Snipe (3); Ring-billed Gull (205); Bonaparte's Gull (9); Mourning Dove (31); Roadrunner (6); Belted Kingfisher (1); Yellow-shafted Flicker (4); Red-shafted Flicker (13); Red-bellied Woodpecker (1); Downy Woodpecker (1); Ladder-backed Woodpecker (8); Blue Jay (1); Scrub Jay (1); Common Crow (5); Carolina Chickadee (7); Bewick's Wren (8); Long-billed Marsh Wren (1); Mockingbird (1); Brown Thrasher (1); Curve-billed Thrasher (3); Robin (409); Eastern Bluebird (6); Western Bluebird (1); Mountain Bluebird (4); Townsend's Solitaire (8); Golden-crowned Kinglet (3); Loggerhead Shrike (15); Starling (37); House Sparrow (51); Western Meadowlark (92); Red-winged Blackbird (150); Rusty Blackbird (12); Brown-headed Cowbird (3); Cardinal (16); House Finch (2); Pine Siskin (1); American Goldfinch (15); Rufous-sided Towhee (1); Rufous-crowned Sparrow (6); Slate-colored Junco (22); Oregon Junco (139); Tree Sparrow (7); White-crowned Sparrow (7); Song Sparrow (7). Total: 67 species; about 1,947 individuals. (Seen in area count period, but not on count day: Redhead, Cooper's Hawk, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Lesser Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow,)...Peggy Acord, Greg Arledge, Fern F. Cain, Barbara A. Lund (compiler), Frank Stowers, Jack Williams, Wayne Williams.

The two Lake Meredith counts were new ones for Texas. Barbara Lund is to be congratulated for her initiative and energy in starting them and acting as their compiler. Next year it is to be hoped that more of our members can assist her.

**AMARILLO, TEXAS:** 34° 59' N, 101° 42' W (all points within a 15-mile diameter circle, center entrance to Palo Duro Canyon State Park; adjoining ranch lands available by automobile and the dam area of Lake Tanglewood; mesquite-grassland 23%; rangeland and cultivated fields 25%; streambeds 30%; canyon walls and juniper 17%; playa lakes 5%). Jan. 3; 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Cloudy; temp. 20-24° (chill factor -20°); wind N, gusting to 45 m.p.h. Blowing snow. Abominable conditions. 4 observers in 3 parties. Total party-hours, 24 (15 on foot, 9 by car); total party-miles, 171 (15 on foot, 156 by car). Pied-billed Grebe (4); Mallard (177); Pintail (104); Gadwall (60); American Widgeon (33); Green-winged Teal (44); Ring-necked Duck (15); Common Merganser (24); Marsh Hawk (3); Rough-legged Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (1); Golden Eagle (2); Bald Eagle (2); Sparrow Hawk (7); Scaled Quail (71); Bobwhite (7); American Coot (10); Killdeer (2); Ring-billed Gull (6); Mourning Dove (3); Roadrunner (2); Screech Owl (1); Belted Kingfisher (2); Red-shafted Flicker (18); Yellow-shafted Flicker (1); Golden-fronted Woodpecker (12); Ladder-backed Woodpecker (16); Horned Lark (329); Common Crow (2); Black-crested Titmouse (6); Common Bush-tit (4); Bewick's Wren (3); Canyon Wren (3); Mockingbird (25); Brown Thrasher (2); Robin (1,255); Townsend's Solitaire (6); Eastern Bluebird (8); Western Bluebird (8); Mountain Bluebird (93); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2); Golden-crowned Kinglet (1); Cedar Waxwing (64); Northern Shrike (1); Starling (147); House Sparrow (13); Western Meadowlark (28); Red-winged Blackbird (700); Brewer's Blackbird (39); Cardinal (18); House Finch (6);

Pine Siskin (6); American Goldfinch (3); Rufous-sided Towhee (6); Slate-colored Junco (9); Oregon Junco (136); Rufous-crowned Sparrow (5); Tree Sparrow (2); White-crowned Sparrow (34); Song Sparrow (10); Lapland Longspur (85); Chestnut-collared Longspur (2). Total: 62 species; about 3,296 individuals. (Seen in area count period, but not on count day: Great Blue Heron; Canada Goose; Cooper's Hawk; Prairie Falcon; Rock Wren; Curve-billed Thrasher; Loggerhead Shrike; McCown's Longspur). ...Peggy Acord (compiler), Rita Kenney, Barbara Lund, Kenneth Seyffert.

Oh! If words could only describe that day! It would take a Ruth Galloway to do it justice. The wind got up to 45 m.p.h. and the chill factor dropped to -20°. We are happy to say that all participants were fully clothed and adequately prepared for extreme weather, only some of us forgot to provide cover for our faces and consequently had them frozen. KS arrived on the scene at 7 a.m. in the hopes of hearing a Great Horned Owl calling, but all he heard was the wind blowing. Barbara Lund drove over icy roads from Fritch, arriving shortly after 8 a.m. She volunteered to cover the streambed areas from the first water crossing to the end of the road at the loop. We all wondered why she wanted to walk so far but we soon realized that it was only by keeping moving that one survived. Peggy and Rita covered the upstream and downstream areas from the first water crossing, plus part of South Brushy Draw and the Sad Monkey Railroad area. KS went upstream from the riding stable and then worked back by way of the eas canyon wall. He never thought he would welcome the chance of going up that wall but it was only this exertion that kept him from freezing solid. Arriving at the rendezvous point at 12:30 noon he found a roaring fire going and he said a little prayer: "Thank God for the Girl Scouts!" In fact, it was such a well-built fire that we almost didn't get it put out. Did you ever try putting out a roaring log fire by dashing water on it from coffee cups? We did spend a rather long time at it when we should have been birding but it forced us to survive another hour. What was the best bird seen? One would think it would be the immature Northern Shrike recorded by Peggy and Rita, but all agreed it was, instead, the Screech Owl found by our novice birder, Rita Kenney. Not only did she spot the owl where it perched in a juniper, she was doing the driving when she saw it! Rita: "Oh, look. There's a little owl!" Peggy: "Can't be. Drive on." Rita: "Didn't you understand what I said? There was an owl back there." Peggy: "Your brain is frozen". Rita: "Do you really think so? I've had my hat on all day." Peggy: "Absolutely. No one sees little owls in broad daylight, particularly when the wind is blowing 45 m.p.h. and the temperature is 20° below zero --- not even me." Rita: "###@)@". So they turned around and went back and, Lord help us all, there sat the daintiest little old gray-phase Screech Owl you ever saw in your life. The moral of this tale is that novice birders must not get discouraged. You may not know the name of the bird but you can't name it until you see it.

#### CALENDAR:

- Jan. 18: Annual dinner of the TPAS, 6:30 p.m. at the Garden Center.
- Jan. 31: Audubon Wildlife Film, 2:00 p.m. at the Garden Center.

TEXAS PANHANDLE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Annual Report  
January 18, 1971

OFFICERS:

President - Rev. Charles Pedersen  
Vice-President - Mr. Jim Jokerst  
Secretary - Mrs. Alvin Fiedler  
Treasurer - Mr. Arnon Hays  
Recorder - Mrs. I. D. Acord

BOARD MEMBERS:

Term Expires 1971: Mrs. Joe Deason  
Mr. Bob Rinehart  
Term Expires 1972: Mrs. George Waddill  
Mrs. Grady Fox  
Term Expires 1973: Mrs. George Ross  
Mr. Kenneth Seyffert

MEMBERSHIP: 73

MEETINGS:

The Society has met monthly January through May, and September through December. Programs have included a color slide showing of the Wildlife of the Texas Panhandle with narrative by Peggy Acord, the setting up of a Vicuna Refuge in Peru by Stan Taft, the problems of implementing and enforcing the air pollution laws by Charles Barden of the Texas Air Control Board, and the showing of several films on various aspects of wildlife by Jim Jokerst.

CONSERVATION:

Talks before various groups by several members.  
Individual letters to senators and representatives urging support of various conservation measures before legislatures, or in protest to proposals detrimental to the cause of conservation. Contributed support to the conservationist side in the Meridian State Park controversy. Played a behind-the-scenes role in the opposition mounted against the spraying of toxaphene in northeastern New Mexico. Held an open meeting wherein the public was able to question directly the executive director of the Texas Air Control Board concerning the problems of air pollution. Printed and distributed the 2-page Audubon Guide to Pesticide Do's and Don'ts.

FIELD ACTIVITIES:

260 species of birds sighted in Potter and Randall Counties. Recorded for the first time in the two-county area: Chuck-wills-Widow, and Cerulean Warbler.

BIG DAY: 11 participants, 145 species.

Amarillo Christmas Count: 4 participants, 62 species.

Other Christmas counts participated in: Friona, Buffalo Lake, and 2 Lake Meredith counts; Arnett and Black Mesa, Oklahoma counts.

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF THE AMARILLO COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS:

Audubon Wildlife Screen Tour  
Festival of Trees  
White Elephant Sale

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES:

Participation in North American Nest Record Card Program for sixth consecutive year.  
Participation in three routes of the Cooperative Breeding Bird Survey of North America.  
Conducted a Wintering Bird Population Study for publication in the Audubon Field Notes.  
Volume VII of the Prairie Horned Lark printed, consisting of ten issues.