

May, 1971

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

Vol. VIII, No. 5

BIG DAY COUNT:

Six persons turned out for the annual Big Day Count in Potter/Randa ll Counties. Peggy Acord, Fern Cain, Barbara Lund, Rena Ross, Ken Seyffert, and Esther Waddill observed 134 species of birds in the two county area, a respectable total though well short of our all-time high of 145. The principal areas covered were the city of Amarillo (primarily its cemeteries), Elysian Fields, Lake Tanglewood, the Palo Duro Club, Buffalo Lake, and Palo Duro Canyon. This year, in addition, Bates Canyon, McBride Canyon, Chicken Creek, Bonita Creek, Canadian River, and Plum Creek were included in the count. Attached is a list of the species seen.

A CORRECTION:

This Newsletter is in need of a good proof-reader. Contrary to what was reported last month, the rails heard calling below the dam at Lake Meredith were Virginia Rails, not Yellow Rails. Your Editor was having visions while typing.

BIRD NOTES:

Spring migration is in full swing and this year has its own peculiarities, as each year does. One noticeable difference, thus far, is the lack of variety in warblers. Myrtles and Audubons have been moving through in good numbers, with a fair showing of Wilson's and Orange-crowns, while the numbers of Nashvilles appear to be more than usual. Esther Waddill spotted the first Black & White Warbler at the Palo Duro Club on 4/18 and on the same date Mr. & Mrs. Chip Elliott reported the first Parula in Llano cemetery. Both species were seen later by other birders including the Black & White at Buffalo Lake on 4/24 by Thelma Puntch and Marguerite Empie. The Parula was seen by Peggy Acord in Memorial Park cemetery on 5/2 and at Buffalo Lake by KS on 5/6. The most outstanding warbler seen has been the Prothonotary at the Palo Duro Club on 4/29 by Esther Waddill. She reported seeing at least 2, and possibly 4 were present. The Palo Duro Club has been productive of other good birds. On 4/19 Esther Waddill, Rena Ross and Peggy Acord found an Osprey and a Western Grebe there, both species of birds remaining in the area for several days. While the Western Wood Pewees and the Empidonax flycatchers have been extremely scarce, this cannot be said of the Yellow-headed Blackbirds. 200+ assembled at Memorial Park cemetery and were seen by Rena Ross and Vera Deason on 4/22, and on 5/2 Peggy Acord and Fern Cain estimated 4-5000 at Elysian Fields. Also at Elysian Fields Peggy Acord, Rena Ross and Esther Waddill saw an Hooded Merganser and an Horned Grebe on 5/3, while Peggy and Fern saw a Bonaparte's Gull and 50+ Eared Grebes there on 5/2. On 5/2 Barbara Lund turned up 89 species of birds in the Potter County portion of the Sanford Recreation Area, including such good finds as 5 White Pelicans, 1 White-faced Ibis, 1 Solitary Sandpiper, 2 Bonaparte's Gulls, 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker, and 3 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. KS matched the grosbeaks by seeing 3 males at Buffalo Lake on 5/7. The 12 birders who showed up for our birdwalk in Llano cemetery on 4/25 were rewarded by seeing a Poor Will and a Black-crowned Night Heron. 2 Poor Wills were seen at Buffalo Lake

on 5/6 by KS along with 5 Green-tailed Towhees and, on 5/7, 2 Catbirds. If you go to the far southwestern end of Buffalo Lake keep your eyes peeled for a male Baltimore Oriole. It has more Baltimore characteristics than it does Bullock's although it sings very much like the latter and is, no doubt, a hybrid of the two.

TOS/OOS Annual MEETING:

The first joint meeting of the Texas and Oklahoma Ornithological Societies was held April 22-25 at the Tanglewood Hills Country Club on Lake Texoma near Pottsboro, Texas. The Texoma Outdoor Nature Club was the host group, led by the capable Rodney A. Rylander.

Field trips to Hagerman Wildlife Refuge, Red River Hills and Tanglewood Hills, were led by such fine birders as Roland Wauer, Chandler Robbins, Peter Alden and other fine birders from Oklahoma and Texas.

On Saturday afternoon both societies had their business meetings. The TOS board voted to reinstate two issues of the Bulletin. Conservation problems were discussed. Chandler Robbins was the guest speaker at the dinner meeting. His film on the Leeward Islands was beautiful. The fascinating sea birds made everyone want to board the first Coast Guard cruiser for Midway and vicinity.

The setting was beautiful; the staff of the club very accomodating, and add 200 birders from two states with exciting visitors from all over and mix well - for a truly fine week-end.

....Peggy Acord....

Dr. John Baker of the Sierra Club and Texas Explorers Club told the group of the Guadalupe Mountains National Park and the impending danger to its fragile environment if overused and overdeveloped. He showed slides of the area as he spoke enthusiastically. He said the Guadalupe Mountains are the last remaining virgin forested mountainous wilderness area in Texas. At present, the Master Plan calls for a tramway and possibly a road. However, if enough people don't want a tramway or a road, maybe they won't build them. So we all need to write three letters. (If we do not write, the tramway will be built.) In our letters we can say three things: (1) Ask the parks department to hold a master plan and wilderness hearing on the Guadalupe Mountains and in the near future so the people can express their wishes. (2) Oppose the building of a tramway in this last remaining wilderness of its kind in the state. (3) Indicate your hope that the area will be designated a Wilderness Area and preserved in its untouched condition. Please do not say you belong to any organization or all your letters will be counted as only one from that group. Write to: Sup't. of Carlsbad Caverns Nat'l. Park, Carlsbad, N. M. 88220; Frank Kowski, Southwest Regional Director, National Park Service, Box 728, Santa Fe, N. M. 87501; Master Planning Team, Western Service Center, National Park Service, 450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36025, San Francisco, Calif. 94102.

The flood of letters and phone calls objecting to development of the Chisos Mountains Basin tourist facilities resulted in a call from Frank Kowski to Fred Agnich, member

of the Texas Legislature.

Mr. Kowski assured Mr. Agnich of the following decisions by the Park Service:

(1) Visitor accommodations in the Chisos Basin will not be increased.

(2) Present installations in the basin will be reduced.

(3) Long range planning envisions removal of all installations from the basin.

(4) Fred Agnich will be informed in advance about public hearings concerning Big Bend.

So you see, maybe our letters do pay off!

CONSERVATION NEWS:

In February of this year, Robert Manns, Southeastern Representative of the National Audubon Society, went into the dark recesses of the Santee Swamp in South Carolina and played his tape recording of the mating call of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. For almost five minutes the 8-note amplified call drew a response from the swamp. "It was unbelievable," Mr. Manns said later. "No other bird will return the call in the same way except an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. There was either someone in the swamp who is awfully good at imitating the bird or there's a bird there."

The Santee Swamp is a 25 square mile area about 40 miles northwest of the Four Holes Swamp, 3,800 acres of which were purchased this year by Audubon for 1½ million dollars. It is similar to the wilderness area in the Big Thicket where John Dennis located the Ivory-bills in 1967. Audubon officials said that it can't be considered more than a possibility until experts confirm it, but they were surprised to hear of it and very pleased at the outside possibility.

Agreements had been made for timber cutting in the area, but the South Carolina Public Service Authority, which controls the area, announced a year's postponement of cutting, due to the force of strong public opinion against it, in order to make confirmation of the presence of the Ivory-bill.

The "Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Big Thicket," inspired by Dr. Eisner of Cornell Univ., says that if Repr. Wayne Aspinall, Chairman of the House Committee on Interior Affairs, doesn't get a wiggle on and see that Bob Eckhardt's bill gets to the floor of the House, that steps would be taken to get an injunction to halt timber cutting in the Big Thicket.

It's sad to relate that the Connie Hagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Little Bay in the vicinity of the newly "developed" Harbor Oaks in Rockport will be destroyed by the construction and dredging for a Marina. Important nursery grounds for shrimp and other fish life will also be destroyed. Permission was granted within a few days after a public hearing where important scientists and concerned citizens presented strong testimony against the move. Of course, the Navigation District commissioners had made their minds up before the hearing, so it didn't take them long to make the announcement of their decision. This is reminiscent of the Frondalig Island deal several years back when they granted permission for its destruction for the "development" of Key Allegro.

This Sanctuary was created by an Act of the Legislature, and it would seem that these people have no legal right to destroy it. Rockport is fast being downgraded as a unique bird and wildlife mecca into just another ordinary run-of-the-mill resort area.

PRACTISING CONSERVATION AT HOME:

Encourage Natural Predators: Birds, lizards, wasps, garden snakes, horned toads, frogs, damselflies, dragonflies, ladybird beetles, fireflies, ant lions (doodle bugs), lacewing flies, praying mantis, etc. Ladybugs and praying mantis egg cases are sold by mail order houses. (Barbara Lund says there is no need of buying praying mantis egg cases for she will give you as many as you want.) Only a rash and short-sighted gardener murders his garden friends for a quick-kill of some pest.

If These Fail Use Pyrethrin-based Sprays. Rotenone, pyrethrum, ryania, sulphur, sabadilla and tobacco dust are acceptable insecticides. Spot use is recommended as a protection for beneficial insects.

Fool the Bugs by Companion Planting. Plant beans and potatoes side by side; tomatoes among the potatoes and in asparagus bed. Plant garlic, onions, leeks, shallots or potunias near fruit trees. Plant marigolds among roses and through the garden to repel insects, even nematodes. Interplant fragrant herbs generously. Plant "trap crops" such as radishes to attract caterpillar, etc. from more valuable plants; handgather insects so trapped. Nasturtiums with squash protect from squash bugs.

Set Mosquito Traps. Gallon jars half full of water with 1 tbsp. of borax in the water; set in closets, in shrubbery, under house, sheds, etc.

For Clothing. Do not use dangerous moth crystals or moth balls. Clean, brush, and air woolens and place in poly or paper bags with cedar branches or rosemary.

....Organic Gardeners of Austin....

ON WEATHER:

One trouble with the city is that there is so much bad weather there. Nearly everybody admits that snow is merely an expensive nuisance, and even the early summer rains serve no real purpose where there is nothing to be watered and where sewers have to be built to drain the insipid liquid away. Some day, no doubt, when we have become thoroughly urbanized, whole areas will be roofed over and the ideal amount of ultraviolet supplied by electricity. Children can be taken occasionally to the country to see what the sun looks like as they are taken now to see a hill or a mountain. Probably many of them will not want to go anyway, for the country will be to them only what it was to the London club man: "A damp sort of place where all sorts of birds fly about uncooked." But that will be all right too -- for those who like it.

The good thing about the country is, on the other hand, that we don't have there any bad weather at all -- only a number of different kinds of good. In fact I should be willing to maintain that there, and there only, do we have what has any right to be called weather at all -- as distinguished, I mean, from those mere inclemencies of one kind or another.

....Joseph Wood Krutch....

CALENDAR:

May 16 : Wildflower Field Trip - 2:30 p.m.
Meet at National Parks Service parking lot at Sanford Recreation Area.

May 17 : Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 p.m.

BIG DAY COUNT, POTTER/RANDALL COUNTIES
May 2, 1971

Eared Grebe
Pied-billed Grebe
White Pelican
Black-crowned Night Heron
White-faced Ibis
Mallard
Gadwall
Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Blue-winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal
American Widgeon
Shoveler
Ruddy Duck
Lesser Scaup
Bufflehead
Turkey Vulture
Mississippi Kite
Red-tailed Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Golden Eagle
Marsh Hawk
Sparrow Hawk
Bobwhite
Scaled Quail
Ring-necked Pheasant
Turkey
American Coot
Semi-palmated Plover
Snowy Plover
Killdeer
Upland Plover
Spotted Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Baird's Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Long-billed Dowitcher
Semi-palmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
American Avocet
Wilson's Phalarope
Ring-billed Gull
Franklin's Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Mourning Dove
Roadrunner
Great Horned Owl
Burrowing Owl
Poor-will
Common Nighthawk
Chimney Swift
Broad-tailed Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Yellow-shafted Flicker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Golden-fronted Woodpecker
Red-headed Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Ladder-backed Woodpecker
Eastern Kingbird
Western Kingbird
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Ash-throated Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Say's Phoebe
Horned Lark
Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Blue Jay
Common Crow
Carolina Chickadee
Black-crowned Titmouse
Common Nuthatch
House Wren
Winter Wren
Bewick's Wren
Canyon Wren
Rock Wren
Mockingbird
Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Curve-billed Thrasher
Robin
Hermit Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Cedar Waxwing
Loggerhead Shrike
Starling
Solitary Tanager
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Myrtle Warbler
Audubon's Warbler
MacGillivray's Warbler
Yellow-throat
Wilson's Warbler
American Redstart
House Sparrow
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Red-winged Blackbird
Orchard Oriole
Bullock's Oriole
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Lazuli Bunting
Painted Bunting
House Finch
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch
Green-tailed Towhee
Rufous-sided Towhee
Brown Towhee
Lark Bunting
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Cassin's Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow