

October, 1971

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

Vol. VIII, No. 7

## PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER:

Mary Tom Rascoe will show her color film on "Brazil" at the October meeting. This film places particular emphasis on the ecology and customs of the country and should prove interesting to all.

## FIELD TRIP:

A field trip is scheduled for Sunday afternoon, Oct. 17, at Buffalo Lake. Meet at the refuge entrance at 2:30. Our field trip leader will be Peggy Acord.

## NEW MEMBERS:

We wish to welcome the following new members to the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society:

Michael H. Beach, 917 Gardenia, Amarillo  
Fern F. Cain, 406 W. Grand, Borger  
D. A. Caldwell, 2208 Aspen, ~~Amarillo~~ Pampa  
Maston Courtney & Family, 3515 Paramount, Amarillo

Hugh Currie, 2204 S. Lipscomb, Amarillo  
Mary E. Davidson, 2514 5th Ave., Canyon  
Gladys Davis, Box 7326, Amarillo  
Joseph Findley, Box 217, Canyon  
Geraldine Green, Box 17, Canyon  
J. H. Harrison, 904 Western, Amarillo  
Michael Lamkin, 3815 NE 11th, Amarillo  
L. B. Paul, 3728 Adams, Big Spring  
Robert P. Rinehart, Box 41, Haugan, Mont.  
Hollis T. Russel, 3708 Fountain Tr., Ama.  
J. R. Stroble, 4211 Erik, Amarillo  
L. O'Brien Thompson, 2900 S. Polk, Ama.  
L. M. Tyler, 1511 Virginia, Amarillo  
Helen W. Webb, 2070 Ludlow Lane, Winston-Salem, N. C.

## AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS:

Sunday, Nov. 7th, at 2:30 p.m., the film, entitled "British Columbia: Mountains to the Sea" will be presented at the Amarillo Garden Center by Wilfred E. Gray. Born and reared in England, Mr. Gray now makes his home in British Columbia and his film reflects his love for this land that extends from the mountains to the sea.

## BIRD NOTES:

To make this not only a more interesting column but also to enlarge its scope to include the observations of more people covering other Panhandle counties than Potter and Randall, we appeal to all of our members, as well as fellow birders who are not members, to send in your observations to the Editor on a regular and monthly basis. Observations that were of interest to you will probably be of interest to the rest of us. What unusual birds for this area have you seen during the past month? Have you observed an uncommonly high or low number of a species? Have you noticed an increase or decrease in nesting of a species? Is a species nesting in your area that hasn't done so heretofore? Is one wintering in your area that usually goes south? Have you noticed any peculiarity in behavior of a species? There are any number of observations that would be of interest and if you would mail these observations to the Editor, wither in a letter or by postcard, so that they would be received by the second Saturday of each month, they would be greatly appreciated. The address is:

Kenneth D. Scyffort  
2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo 79103

On 9/19 KDS got a good look at what he concluded was a Common Tern. It was an adult bird that had gone into winter plumage for the only remaining black on its head was on the nape extending around to the eyes and leaving the top of the head and the forehead white. Its bill appeared to be all black. This bird lit on the shore before him and was observed through a scope set at 30X. On 9/26 he saw 30 Northern Phalaropes at the same location, and on 10/4 10 more. In both instances they were the only phalaropes seen on the lake. This species of phalarope winters primarily at sea off both the east and west coasts but continuing observations of it over the years at numerous localities is showing that there is a regular, though thin, trickle of them moving inland, usually in their fall migrations. An early sighting of a Townsend's Solitaire was made by KDS at Buffalo Lake on 10/2, along with a Great Crested Flycatcher, Long-eared Owl, and Western Tanager. On 10/4 he spotted what has become in our area a rare migrant, a Red-eyed Vireo, and what is possibly an early date for the Golden-crowned Kinglet. Both were seen at Buffalo Lake. On 10/5 he saw a Solitary Vireo and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the Palo Duro Canyon. In late September Peggy Acord and Barbara Lund reported seeing 3 more White-faced Ibis at Buffalo Lake and that seldom seen but welcomed bird, the Osprey. They reported a pair of Prairie Falcons there that were keeping all the shorebirds stirred up.

A CONSERVATION MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT STAHR:  
...."There has grown up lately a saying that there are four stages in the approach of an industry to an environmental problem in which it is involved: Stage One is to assert that there is no real problem; Stage Two is to acknowledge that there may be some problem, but its seriousness is being grossly exaggerated; Stage Three is to say that the problem has been pretty serious, sure enough, but the industry is doing some things to take care of it and it isn't fair of conservationists to keep pointing at it; Stage Four is to quit being defensive, to look squarely at the real nature and gravity of the problem, and to assign the corporate priorities necessary to command the talent and resources necessary to solve it!

"At any given time, one may find several industries, and several different companies within the same industry, in each and every one of the four stages just described. So let's not knock industry in general; indeed, let's not knock anybody recklessly. Not only are more and more companies moving into Stage Four, but one can also find, at any given time, many professors, many politicians, and large segments of the public, including many young people, also in each and every one of those four stages, across a wide spectrum of environmental issues. That surely doesn't mean we should attack all professors, all politicians, all the general public or all young people.

"We have another problem. Sometimes the attacks of extremists in our own movement are so wild that they not only virtually assure the success of verbal counterattacks by overstating the argument (there's always somebody waiting to cut off a limb if you climb too

out of it) and thus are counterproductive in persuading the people at large, but they also may stimulate industry or government, as the case may be, not into constructive action but into defensive heel-digging-in.

"What are needed above all are hard facts. Loudness of the voice does not ensure soundness of the argument. What successes we have had have been achieved only with effort and the support of hard facts. There is no easier way to lose the game than to enter it unprepared. Energy and enthusiasm, though highly useful, are not substitutes for reasoned analysis or critical examination of effects and alternatives. These are the keys to sustained effectiveness in almost any area of endeavor.

"If we are to continue to increase our chances of protecting our life support system and of enhancing the quality of our environment and thereby the quality of life on Earth, I think it is vital that we make clear in every way we can what we are talking about and what we are not talking about.

"We're not talking about cosmetics -- making things look prettier by covering them up; we're talking about protecting their natural cleanliness and life processes and thereby letting Nature's own beauty shine forth.

"We're not usually talking about doomsday; we're talking about much more than survival; we are talking about the health and strength of the ecosystem on which the quality of all life, including human life, depends.

"We're not hysterical, or far-out or idealistic or impractical. We are down to earth, way down, completely down, to Earth. We are vitally concerned with soil, and water, and air, and sunlight, and countless thousands of plant and animal organisms, the interactions of all of which make life possible on this little planet.

"We are very conservative, we conservationists. We oppose boondoggles such as the Florida barge canal; we oppose unnecessary waste, solid or otherwise; we oppose reckless change in our natural heritage; we particularly oppose man's making changes in processes or components of the ecosystem before the effects, the consequences, are carefully studied. That's been our posture not only on the Alaska pipeline, and the SST, but on most other issues.

"We do not seek to change in any basic way the political system of this country; we seek to make it more responsive to genuine social needs. And one way we can do that is to take advantage of the fact that we can write our President or our Congressman knowing that he is -- or had better be -- sensitive to what his constituents think. We just need more people to understand our cause and write more letters! Under any other system, that might be either a complete waste of time or downright dangerous.

"We are not unconcerned about economics, as some of the counterattackers allege. We are concerned and determined that ecology be considered along with economics, so that we don't seal the doom of too many of the ecological gooses that lay the economic golden eggs on Planet Earth...."

#### EAGLES NOT GUILTY IN SHEEP KILLING:

The bald eagle may be our national emblem, but among those who raise sheep for a living, the big bird of prey has a bad reputation. Sheep raisers say both bald and golden eagles kill lambs. Scientists disagree. According

to four scientific studies, three of them made in Texas, eagles are not a threat to sheep. In fact the studies show that eagles might be beneficial to the sheep business.

One study, conducted in the Trans-Pecos and Edwards Plateau of Texas in 1963 and 1964, concluded that, first, there were fewer eagles in Texas than most persons thought, and, second, eagles present were feeding chiefly on rabbits and rodents which are competitive with sheep for forage.

A study in the southern Montana foothills found that 80% of the prey species were rabbits. In one area where from 26,000 to 28,000 sheep were grazed and 18,000 lambs produced, not a single sign of sheep was found in 702 prey items.

During another West Texas study a biologist from Colorado State University spent 1130 hours during the lambing seasons of 1967, 1968 and 1969 trying to observe eagles capture prey. During this entire period the biologist did not witness any eagle kills of lambs, although on three occasions apparent eagle kills occurred where his vision was obscured. The biologist concluded that the actual loss of lambs due to eagle predation to be at between one and two percent, or only about five percent of all range mortality.

An even smaller estimate of lamb losses to eagles emerged from a 1968 field study sponsored jointly by the National Audubon Society, the National Wool Growers Association and the U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. In a West Texas area, where 249,000 lambs were reared, researchers estimated the loss to eagle at between .06 percent and .3 percent. This survey, like the others, found rabbits and rodents to be the principal food of golden eagles. Bald eagles, generally found near water, are known to feed chiefly on fish.

Biologists for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department say both species of eagles feed on carrion readily. When sheep die due to overgrazing and mismanagement of the range, eagles feed upon the carrion and the birds get the blame for the kill. Many eagles are killed each year because of the alleged depredation of sheep.

....Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. Newsletter...

#### BOARD MEETING:

At their meeting on Sept. 30 the officers and Board of Directors of the TPAS voted unanimously to contribute \$125 to the Amarillo Council of Garden Clubs to help in defraying the cost of bringing the Audubon Wildlife series of films to Amarillo.

#### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:

Two dates have thus far been set for bird counts in our area. Saturday, Dec. 18th, the Lake Meredith West count will be held (contact Barbara Lund if you can help on it), and Sunday, Dec. 19th the TPAS Palo Duro Canyon count will be held. (contact Peggy Acord if you can help on it).

#### CALENDAR:

- Oct. 18: Monthly Society meeting - 7:30 p.m. at the Garden Center. Topic - "Brazil" Speaker - Mary Tom Rascoe
- Oct. 17: Field trip to the Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge - 2:30 p.m.
- Nov. 7 : Audubon Wildlife Film - 2:30 p.m.