

May, 1972

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

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PROGRAM FOR MAY:

Mrs. Clifford (Betty) Drake of Phillips will present a program on "Wildflowers of the Panhandle at the May 15 meeting of the TPAS. Mrs. Drake is an excellent amateur botanist and has slides for the entire blooming season of the Panhandle.

BIG DAY COUNT:

The annual Big Day Count of the TPAS will be held on May 14 and will last from sunup to sundown. It is a count similar to the Christmas Bird Count except that it covers all of Potter and Randall counties. If you want to participate, please contact Peggy Acord for area assignments.

BIRD NOTES:

From Barbara Lund: A Brown Thrasher singing for two days (May 2,3) in Fritch. A Willet at the Stallwitz ranch near Dumas for over a week in April. As reported in the Amarillo newspaper, a Great Horned Owl attacked and hit two persons near its nest at Cedar Canyon, Lake Meredith. The young in the nest are readily visible from nearby. A 30' view of a Common Loon in good breeding plumage at Sanford-Yake April 27 (Hutchinson Co.). A Horned Grebe very near loon on same day (6' view). With Fern Cain at Buffalo Lake on April 22 -- 2 Horned Grebes, 1 Forster Tern, 12 Ring-billed Gulls, 10 Franklin Gulls, 1 Snowy Plover, plus about 40 other species. On the same day, TPASers who attended the birdwalk on the Emeny ranch near Bushland saw a Violet-green Swallow, a very rare bird for our area.

Ken Seyffert reports Water Pipits common at Tradewinds Playa during early April. A Black-bellied Plover at same place on April 9. 25 Buffleheads at the dam end of Buffalo Lake on April 16. Of 72 warblers seen at Buffalo Lake on April 25, 30 were Audubons and 33 were Myrtles. This is unusual in that generally the former species outnumbers the latter by at least two to one. A Long-eared Owl at BL on April 16. On the same date and also on the 23rd, an American Bittern at BL. A male Summer Tanager calling in the Palo Duro on April 24 and a male Western Tanager singing at the same place on May 4. Would you like to see Black-throated Sparrows and Verdins? Check the area west of the Sad Monkey Railroad Station in the Palo Duro Canyon, working your way up-canyon to the point where it narrows to form Timbercreek.

A good place for shorebirds right now is Tradewinds Playa. This playa is located just south of the Tradewinds Airport and on May 5 held 5 White-faced Ibis, 50 Long-billed Dowitchers, 35 Stilt Sandpipers, plus Wilson's Phalaropes, Baird's, Semi-palmated and Least Sandpipers, American Avocets, plus numerous species of ducks.

And in case you haven't noticed, there are Lark Buntings all over the place.

TOS MEETING IN THE BIG BEND:

Norman and Fern Cain, and Ken Seyffert attended the Spring meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society April 26 thru 30. The first two days of the meeting were held in the Big Bend Nat'l. Park and then the activities shifted to the Davis Mountains for the last two days. Leaving immediately after the meeting, the Cains and George and Esther

Waddill joined about 70 other TOS members for a week's birding at Topolobampo, Mexico. From 130 to 150 birders from all over the state gathered for 4 days of exciting birding during which field trips were made to Boot Springs in the Chisos, Santa Elena Canyon, and Rio Grande Village in the Big Bend, and Limpia Creek and the "loop" drive in the Davis Mountains. These meetings are held in the spring and fall at different points within the state and are an excellent means by which to meet birders from all over the country. Field trips are led by local experts who can direct you to the places where those hard-to-find birds can be observed. Would you like to join a very congenial group of people? Contact the Editor for membership forms.

EDITOR'S REPLY:

As promised in the last Newsletter, here is the Friends of the Earth editor's reply to the reader who had made a plea for one or two conservation organizations as against the present proliferation of them:

There are good and bad reasons for the multiplicity of conservation organizations. The bad reasons are fairly obvious - for example, personal ambitions, jealousies, and egotisms. Some of the good reasons may not be quite as apparent. For example, how much attention would conservation issues of crucial importance locally receive from a national super-organization? Precious little, necessarily. Yet these local issues comprise, in aggregate, a national conservation issue of paramount importance. They cannot, as a rule, be handled effectively by national organizations. Only an ad hoc local group can mobilize effectively to stave off unwise development and save the marshes, meadows, ponds, and woodlots, or city parks, and greenbelts, that contribute so much to the quality of life in your community.

A second good reason for a multiplicity of organizations is specialization. Organizations with broad purposes may be vitally interested in wildlife, for instance, but they cannot expect to accomplish as much in this field as "specialist" organizations like the Defenders of Wildlife and World Wildlife Fund. Such organizations attract the dedicated support of people who care passionately about a single key issue - people who, in many cases, would not be attracted to an "umbrella" organization....

Adversaries could concentrate all their fire on a single super-organization, and when they defeated it on an issue like the SST, for instance, they'd dispose of all conservationist opposition at a single stroke. A super-organization would also be vulnerable to subversion - and don't for a moment think that well-heeled adversaries are too pure to bore from within! There is safety in numbers. A conservation movement consisting of many organizations is a much more difficult target to catch in a cross-fire, and because less can be gained by it, there is less temptation for opponents to bore from within. Subversion of an individual organization would leave today's conservation movement substantially intact, whereas subversion of a super-organization would leave the movement in a shambles.

If we grant for the sake of argument that a unified movement would be ideal, is there any reason to suppose that conservationists could achieve this ideal? The peace movement is not unified, nor are the denominations that call themselves "Christian". If unity could be achieved, it would surely be temporary. A unified conservation movement would immediately begin fragmenting again, not only because of human cussedness, but also because of the perfectly sincere and plausible belief by separatists that the super-organization was handling one issue after another less effectively than would more sharply focused individual organizations. If plurality didn't exist, we'd have to invent it.

We suspect that one law of ecology is also a law of organizational life - that diversity is essential to the health and stability of an ecosystem.... That's why conservation organizations are increasingly often pooling their strength in coalitions....

Coalitions achieve unity within diversity - e pluribus ~~un~~ unum - and wield greater power than, working separately, their member organizations could....

BIRD RECORDINGS:

Two new bird recordings have just been released by Dover Publications that are of unusual interest. Recorded by Donald J. Borror of Ohio State University and selling for \$3.00 each, they are both of high quality and well worth the investment. "Songs of Western Birds" records songs of 60 of the most common birds of the western United States, and happily gives examples for each species' song in sufficient length that it is more readily impressed upon the memory. You are in for a treat when you listen to "Bird Song and Bird Behavior". The author gives examples of bird sounds under the headings of Making Recordings; A Classification of Bird Sounds; Nonvocal Sounds; The Analysis of Bird Sounds; The Singing Habits of Passerine Birds; Types of Songs of Passerine Birds; Song Development in a Passerine Bird; Intra-specific Variation in Passerine Advertising Songs; Geographic Variation in Songs; Unusual Songs; Dual Singing; Song Similarity and Taxonomic Affinity; Calls. Some of the songs are reduced by 1/4 or 1/8 normal speed which allows an analysis to be made of the components of the song and produces some eerily beautiful and unexpected sounds. Each record is accompanied by a booklet.

FOR TRAVELLING BIRDERS:

"Traveler's List and Checklist for Birds of North America" by James A. Tucker and Roland H. Wauer. A complete list of species which regularly occur in North America north of the Mexican border. It has twelve columns for checking each species (12 days, 12 different areas, etc.) It has a section to write down the species that you see on a trip in the order that you see them, and there is an index for those who are not familiar with the A. O. U. Checklist order. The size of the booklet is 4 x 7 inches and it fits snugly inside the cover of your field guide - a rubber band will hold it there for the duration of your trip. 40 pages. Price: 50¢ each. Orders for 50 or more carry a 40% discount. Order from: Roland Wauer, Publications Chairman, American Birding Association, P. O. Box 67, Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834.

A STATE PARK FOR ARMAND BAYOU:

A unique wilderness-nature study oriented State park is being proposed by conservationist and divic leaders along Armand- (Middle) Bayou, a tributary of Clear Lake in southeast Harris County. Armand Bayou is one of the few coastal bayous still in its virtually natural state. It is rich in a wide variety of wildlife and vegetation because 3 habitats - the southern evergreen forest, the coastal prairie, and the salt marshes coexist there.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Gov. Smith consider Armand Bayou an ideal site for a state park because it is a beautiful natural area within easy reach of a large number of people. Senators John Tower and Lloyd Bentsen, and local Congressman Bob Casey, Bill Archer, and Bob Eckhardt support the project. Federal officials from both Department of Interior and Housing and Urban Development feel that it qualifies for their matching funds programs. During the next special session of the legislature a bill to create a state park on Armand Bayou and appropriate funds for its acquisition is to be introduced.

However, public funds - state, local and federal - will not be enough to secure the 3½ thousand acres needed to purchase this part of the Texas natural heritage before it is used for a real estate development planned by the Friendswood Development Co, a subsidiary of Humble Oil.

Rev. Ben Skyles, Chairman of the Armand Bayou Preservation Committee, appointed by the Mayor of Pasadena within whose jurisdiction the bayou lies, has issued a statewide appeal for private donations. "This is one of the few bayous virtually untouched by man," he said. "It could become a haven for nature lovers, hikers, canoeists, artists, conservationists and school children to observe a part of God's world unspoiled. Money contributed to save Armand Bayou will go to buy land and will not be used for any other purpose."

Individuals and groups who would like to help save Armand Bayou should send their tax-exempt contributions to SAVE ARMAND BAYOU FUND, Box 2000, Pasadena, Texas 77501.

A NEW BIRDING RECORD:

So you think you saw alot of birds last year? In 1971 young Ted Parker, III, a high-school student from Pennsylvania, saw 626 species of birds in the A.O.U. Checklist area. Of the total, 621 species were seen in the forty-eight contiguous states. The other five species were seen in southern Canada. He did not vist Alaska, Baja California or Greenland.

CALENDAR:

- May 14 : BIG DAY COUNT - Potter and Randall counties - dawn to dusk.
- May 15 - Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 p. m.
Speaker - Mrs. Clifford Drake
Topic - "Wildflowers of the Texas Panhandle"
- Sept. 18: Monthly society meeting.