

November, 1972

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

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## FIELD TRIPS:

Nine people turned out for our field trip to the Buffalo Lake NWR on Oct. 16. Peggy Acord, Fern Cain, Ginger Essary, Mary Griffith, Bill Holliday, Rena Ross, Ken Seyffert, and the Charles Smiths gathered at the refuge on a fine fall afternoon and were able to see 53 species of birds before the day ended. Highlights of the day were a White Pelican, Western Grebe (present for about a month), Barn Owl, 2 Double-crested Cormorants, and a flock of 45 Sandhill Cranes that lit on the shore opposite to the party. Our novice birder, Ginger Essary, drew the group's attention to a bird circling overhead that turned out to be a Cooper's Hawk.

Our group was the guest of the Armon Mays on Nov. 5 as we journeyed to the RO ranch north-east of Clarendon in Donley County. The day was mild, sunny, and a bit windy and some 30 species of birds were found. About 40 Turkeys were observed near the ranch house and 2 Golden Eagles stooping and davoring overhead provided a fitting end to a pleasant day. We all extend our thanks to the Mays for letting us explore an interesting habitat. Those present were Peggy Acord, Chip and Elizabeth Elliott, Lucile Fiedler, Lou Kincaid, Mr. & Mrs. Armon Mays, Mary Moyer, Thelma Puntch, George and Rena Ross, C. G. Schaffler, Ken Seyffert, and the Charles Smiths.

## BIRD NOTES:

Birding in this fall season has turned out to be one of the most interesting ones in recent years with sightings of unusual and rare species coming in from several parts of the Panhandle. It seems everyone is seeing Scrub Jays and in unusually high numbers at that. Steller's Jays can also be found with relative ease in Amarillo. Several come in regularly to feeders at the Armon Mays (2000 block on south Travis), the George Ross' (2800 block on south Travis), and the Grady Fox's (2800 block on south Hayden). Driving around the area on Nov. 5, Ken Seyffert readily found 2 on the 2800 block of south Ong. On Oct. 8 Fern & Norman Cain found 4 in Memorial Cemetery. So if you have never seen a Steller's Jay in Texas the time is now good for doing so. To complete our reportage of jays, 21 Pinon Jays were seen by Peggy Acord on Oct. 17 as she was leaving Penney's in Sunset Center.

One of the rarer sightings was that of a Clark Nutcracker seen by Chip and Elizabeth Elliott between Canadian and Lake Marvin in Hemphill County on Oct. 29. This represents the fourth record for the Texas Panhandle. Within the period Oct. 20/29 Lucile Fiedler reported Evening Grosbeaks in the 1500 block of south Van Buren, and on Oct. 30 Rena Ross had one at her feeder at home. Red Crossbills have also turned up. On Oct. 22 Ken Seyffert saw 3 at Buffalo Lake, during early October Carolyn Stallwitz took a picture of a female bird found near Dumas in Moore County, and most unusual, Bill Cope reports a young male in Brownfield, Terry County. This bird was found on the ground and was apparently uninjured for after being released in his backyard it fed on some grain and then flew off. This species is neither on the Lubbock County nor the Muleshoe NWR checklists.

On Sept. 18 a report came in from a State game man that 3 Whooping Cranes had been found on a playa between Panhandle and Berger

in Carson County. Several of our members attempted to locate the birds but were unsuccessful. The last sighting of whoopers in our area was on Nov. 16, 1965, when 3 were found in Carson County and that were seen by many of our birders. Do the birds regularly traverse our area in their fall migration? Perhaps a few do and either evade notice or are not recognized for what they are. It is also possible that the state and federal people are reluctant to advertise their presence when they are found.

Oct. 22 proved to be an eventful day at Buffalo Lake for Ken Seyffert. On that date he found, besides the Red Crossbills, a Bonaparte's Gull, 2 White-fronted Geese, and best of all, a female Surf Scoter. This bird was at the dam end of the lake and was observed at length and carefully through a zoomscope. This represents the second Randall County record. The White-fronted Goose continued to be seen by refuge personnel with up to 10 being seen at one time.

From Berger, Maurine Forbus reports a rarely seen species, the Wood Thrush, in her backyard. It was observed for several hours. She reports that backyard birding has been especially good this fall with 23 identified species having passed through so far.

A couple of interesting hawk reports have come in. On Oct. 25/26 Jim Kokerst had a Goshawk at his place south of town. At Buffalo Lake on Oct. 1 Ken Seyffert found 2 Broad-winged Hawks, an adult and an immature.

A Carolina Chickadee continues to frequent the feeder at the George Ross'. This species has rarely been reported from within the city but can be easily found in McBride Canyon in the northwestern part of Potter County. Has it spread out from the Canadian River breaks? Perhaps we should keep an eye out for it this coming summer on the chance of discovering it nesting in Amarillo.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:

The annual Christmas Bird Count of the TPAS will be held on Sunday, Dec. 17 in the Palo Duro Canyon and surrounding area. Our all-time high for this count is 78 species, a respectable figure but one we feel sure can be beaten. To do this, however, will require a good turnout of enthusiastic birders who will be willing to spend the day afield covering an extensive area. A high bird count is the result of good organization. If you think you will be able to participate please contact Peggy Acord. With sufficient advance information, groups can be formed and areas of coverage assigned. Even if you can only take part for half a day, let us know.

Dates for the other area counts have not as yet been set. In the past, two counts have been made at Lake Meredith, one at Arnett, Okla., and one at Black Mesa, Okla. In addition, refuge personnel conduct one at Buffalo Lake. If you are interested in going on one of these counts, please contact us. Last year 963 counts were made across the North American continent. Because of the time consuming editorial job entailed in publishing the results of such a large number of counts, there is a strong possibility that future ones will require a minimum of ten participants before they will be recognized as worthy of publication. Very often we do not have that many who participate in our counts; therefore, we need your support!

## SOUTHWEST REGIONAL WORKSHOP:

The First Southwest Regional Workshop of the National Audubon Society was held Oct. 21/22 at the Sea Gun Inn in Rockport, Texas.

Getting mutually concerned people together is always a good idea. This meeting was no exception. Though many of the projects and works done by the large city societies offer little help to the smaller societies, it was good to hear that strides are being made in many crucial areas in youth education and involvement.

Hotlines for top priority issues are being established in some area of the country. A new sanctuary of the NAS is being established near Brownsville to protect an area of native palms and rare species of many small creatures. Financial help is being asked to meet the needs of this new venture.

The Sunday morning session on legal questions held by George Porter, Controller of NAS, was very informative. Discussions on income taxes, forming a corporation (deemed very advisable) and taking out public liability insurance (also deemed very advisable) were discussed and clarified at length.

Charles Callison, Executive Vice-President of NAS, led a very stimulating discussion on top priority issues to be followed by the NAS. Here again, the area lived in was very important. Pesticides were discussed at length and the NAS position stressed that chemical control of pests was a total failure and new ways must be found and used.

People on the coast timberlands worry about mono-culture; people in New Mexico worry about clear cutting; people in the east know the necessity of a mass transit system; people in Houston think it unnecessary. Good discussions and a few good laughs made this a most satisfying experience.

A few ways we might be able to encourage conservation awareness used by other organizations were - booth at the fair; gather carousel of slides on local birds and animals with tape to be on loan to school groups, etc. a science fair award for conservation to be made by the Audubon Society.

The field trips to Aransas Refuge and up the intra-coastal canal on the diesel-powered Whooping Crane were very pleasant. 15 cranes, including 2 of the year's 4 young birds, were sighted. They pay no attention to the big pink and white vessel so you can see them closely and at leisure. The bird of the day for me was my first Frigate Bird.

John Spinks, our Regional Representative, did a fine job of planning the meeting. The men from the national staff were intelligent, capable and dedicated. Dr. Stahr was a fine speaker, and the experience very pleasant, indeed.

....Peggy Acord....

## AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM:

The second in the current series of wildlife films will be shown at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 26, at the Garden Center. "Bermuda - Land and Sea" will be brought by Janet Jahoda who assisted her father, Dr. Wm. Jahoda, when this film was made. The film's emphasis is on the coral world of the islands' surrounding area but also gives the audience an intimate look at the land that is Bermuda. This film is the result of three year's work.

## MORE INFORMATION CULLED FROM TPAS RECORDS:

The following species of birds are on record as having nested in Potter/Randall Counties

or for which there have been observations of adults with newly fledged young or other clear indications of nesting:

- (1. Eared Grebe; (2. Pied-billed Grebe; (3. Great Blue Heron; (4. Black-crowned Night Heron; (5. Mallard; (6. Gadwall; (7. Pintail; (8. Blue-winged Teal; (9. Wood Duck; (10. Turkey Vulture; (11. Mississippi Kite; (12. Swainson's Hawk; (13. Ferruginous Hawk; (14. Golden Eagle; (15. Marsh Hawk; (16. Sparrow Hawk; (17. Bobwhite; (18. Scaled Quail; (19. Ring-necked Pheasant; (20. Turkey; (21. American Coot; (22. Snowy Plover; (23. Killdeer; (24. Spotted Sandpiper; (25. American Avocet; (26. Rock Dove; (27. Mourning Dove; (28. Ringed Turtle Dove; (29. Yellow-billed Duckoo; (30. Roadrunner; (31. Barn Owl; (32. Screech Owl; (33. Great Horned Owl; (34. Burrowing Owl; (35. Common Nighthawk; (36. Chimney Swift; (37. Belted Kingfisher; (38. Yellow-shafted Flicker; (39. Red-shafted Flicker; (40. Golden-fronted Woodpecker; (41. Red-headed Woodpecker; (42. Ladder-backed Woodpecker; (43. Eastern Kingbird; (44. Western Kingbird; (45. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher; (46. Ash-throated Flycatcher; (47. Eastern Phoebe; (48. Say's Phoebe; (49. Vermilion Flycatcher; (50. Horned Lark; (51. Rough-winged Swallow; (52. Barn Swallow; (53. Cliff Swallow; (54. Blue Jay; (55. Scrub Jay; (56. Common Crow; (57. Black-crested Titmouse; (58. Verdin; (59. Common Bushtit; (60. Bewick's Wren; (61. Canon Wren; (62. Rock Wren; (63. Mockingbird; (64. Curve-billed Thrasher; (65. Robin; (66. Eastern Bluebird; (67. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; (68. Loggerhead Shrike; (69. Starling; (70. House Sparrow; (71. Western Meadowlark; (72. Red-winged Blackbird; (73. Orchard Oriole; (74. Baltimore Oriole; (75. Bullock's Oriole; (76. Boat-tailed Grackle; (77. Brown-headed Cowbird; (78. Cardinal; (79. Blue Grosbeak; (80. Painted Bunting; (81. Dickcissel; (82. House Finch; (83. Pine Siskin; (84. Lesser Goldfinch; (85. Grasshopper Sparrow; (86. Lark Sparrow; (87. Rufous-crowned Sparrow; (88. Cassin's Sparrow; (89. Black-throated Sparrow.

## T.O.S. MEETING:

The Fall meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society will be held at Waco, Texas, Nov. 23 thru 26. Headquarters is at Holiday Inn #2, 201 Interstate 35E. The registration fee will be \$2.50 a person and can be made in advance by remitting to Mrs. Bessie M. Hall, 1615 Ross Ave., Waco, 76706.

6 local field trips are scheduled, including the Bowmer ranch near Killeen. On Friday evening the speaker will be Dr. Frederick Gehlbach whose subject is "The Natural and Unnatural History of the U.S. - Mexican Boundary". Saturday evening the speaker will be Dr. William A. Carter, chairman of the biology department of East Central State College of Oklahoma whose topic will be "The Bachman Sparrow - a study of a species extending its range".

## FLASH! FLASH!

While typing this newsletter word was received from Bill Cope in Brownfield stating that he had observed a Clark's Nutcracker on Nov. 9. The bird was in a flock of about 200 Robins "and seemed to think he was one of them". This is a very good observation.

## CALENDAR:

Nov. 20: Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 p.m.  
Dec 17: Xmas Bird County at Palo Duro Canyon 8:00 a.m. at Park entrance.