

January, 1973

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

Vol. X, No. 1

## JANUARY MEETING:

The annual dinner of the TPAS will be at the Garden Center at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 15. Mrs. W. E. Harrison of 1015 Kansas will be hostess of the covered-dish affair, assisted by Vera Deason and Rita Kenney in making the arrangements. Esther Waddill has arranged for an interesting program on Yucatan, Mexico, to be presented by John V. Denko. Those of us who have seen previous presentations of Dr. Denko's look forward to seeing his color slides of the lost Mayan cities of that area. Members and guests are urged to attend.

## BIRD NOTES:

December means Christmas bird counts and our area ones produced their usual rare and unexpected species. We all like to try and beat the previous high for the number of different species seen and each of us wonders who will come up with that special bird that no one was expecting!

We started off this year with the Amarillo (Palo Duro Canyon) count which produced a creditable 76 species, only 3 off from our record high of 79. Undoubtedly, the outstanding species of the day was the Evening Grosbeak, 8 of which were seen by Chip and Elizabeth Elliott and the E. E. Elliotts. Other species new for the count were the Bufflehead, and the Yellow-headed Blackbird. The eagle count was gratifying. 7 Goldens and 4 Balds were recorded and those who witnessed it considered themselves fortunate when at sunset 3 Bald Eagles were observed coasting the canyon rim below Lake Tanglewood and one was seen as it settled to roost in the trees on the lake itself. It is also interesting to note what was not seen. This year we failed to get the Rough-legged Hawk and Ferruginous Hawk, as well as the Prairie Falcon. Record high numbers were set for the Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Sparrow Hawk, Rock Wren, Mockingbird, Baird's Sparrow, Slate-colored Junco, and Lapland Longspur, while lows were tallied on the House Sparrow and Oregon Junco. You will note on the attached tally sheet that the Slate-coloreds outnumbered the Oregons by about 3 to 1, a situation that is usually just the reverse but one that appeared on two other of the area counts.

The Arnett, Oklahoma, count was a disappointment. Muddy roads made driving difficult and too much time had to be spent in negotiating them that should have been devoted to birding. Lake Vincent was inaccessible, but from a distance it was seen to be entirely frozen, anyway. A record low of 47 species was tallied but, fortunately, 104 Lesser Prairie Chickens were seen, 90 in one flock. A new species for the count was the Townsend's Solitaire, east of its normal range. Because of adverse birding conditions, it is almost meaningless to point out highs and lows or the absence of some usually seen species.

The Buffalo Lake NWR count is an awe inspiring and breathtaking one when it comes to recording numbers of ducks and geese: 150,000 is no mean number and can literally make one cross-eyed if looked at individually with the hope of turning up rare and unusual species. Milt Suthers is a practised goose observer and turned up the uncommon Blue Goose

and 2 quite rare Ross' Geese. Also, he recorded the Rusty Blackbird and Fox Sparrow. Ken Seyffert settled for 3 Long-eared Owls.

Two counts were made simultaneously at Lake Meredith on Dec. 29th. Lake Meredith (east) turned up a respectable 60 species. The two outstanding species for the count were the Double-crested Cormorant and the Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher seen by Jack Williams, species one would not expect to see in the Panhandle in mid-winter but for which one or two previous records exist for each. Both observations were supported by good field notes. New species for the count were the Canvasback, Sora, Scrub Jay, Field Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow.

The 40 species recorded on the Lake Meredith (west) count was down over previous years. For the second year in a row the quite uncommon Red-bellied Woodpecker was found, this year by the Cain party. Another good bird was the Red-breasted Nuthatch, observed by the Acord/Bailey party.

Aside from the Christmas counts, other unusual observations have been made in the area. From Brownfield, the Bill Copes report Clark's Nutcrackers in town since at least Nov. 2. The same species has been coming in to the feeders at the Foxs and Ross's regularly as well as Red Crossbills, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Carolina Chickadees, and at the Ross's, a Yellow-headed Blackbird. Steller's Jays can be found easily in that same area of town, and on Dec. 24 Rena Ross observed a Williamson's Sapsucker at 28th and Ong.

While Lapland Longspurs are often present in high numbers, it is unusual to see them at feeders. Rita Kenney reports them at her feeder in Rolling Hills with great frequency, which is the optimal manner in which to get a good luck of a free flying longspur! Can you imagine seeing 10 Bald Eagles at one time in the Panhandle? Peggy Acord and her daughter Margarite saw just that on Dec. 24 at Lake Tanglewood. 6 immatures and 4 adults were in view at one time and one can only wonder how many of the people in the many homes surrounding the lake were aware of the presence, almost literally in their front yards, of this magnificent and much talked about endangered species.

New Year's day started off with a bang (birds and snow both)! In town, Ken Seyffert had the Clark's Nutcracker, Steller's Jay, Hairy Woodpecker and Gray-headed Junco, and at Buffalo Lake a female Hooded Merganser. The most unusual observation of all, however, was that of a female Western Tanager seen by Peggy Acord at her parent's home at Lake Tanglewood. This observation is without precedence and one that will be long remembered.

## CALENDAR:

- Jan. 15 - Annual Dinner at the Garden Center, 6:30 p.m.  
Program: "The Lost Mayan City of Yucatan, Speaker: Dr. John Denko.
- Feb. 18 - Audubon Wildlife Film at the Garden Center, 2:30 p.m.  
Program: "Treasure of East Africa" Speaker: Bower E. Rudrud.
- Feb. 19 - Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center.

AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

	Palo Duro Canyon Dec. 17	Arnett, Okla. Dec. 20	Buffalo Lake NWR Dec. 23	Lake Meredith (east) Dec. 29	Lake Mere- dith (west) Dec. 29
Pied-billed Grebe	x			14	
White Pelican			x		
Double-crested Cormorant				1	
Great Blue Heron	1		1	2	
Canada Goose	91		50,000		
Snow Goose			100		
Blue Goose			1		
Ross' Goose			2		
Mallard	2,000	9	68,000	77	1
Godwall		5		107	2
Pintail	100	1	25,000		
Green-winged Teal	30		2,000	689	
American Widgeon	20		5,000	16	
Shoveler		3	1	5	
Redhead	1		4	3	
Canvasback			18	1	
Lesser Scaup	2		8		
Common Goldeneye	6		x		1
Pufflehead	3		1	2	
Hooded Merganser			x		
Common Merganser	100		40	2	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	1		
Cooper's Hawk	1			1	
Red-tailed Hawk	1	7	6	8	7
Rough-legged Hawk	x		4	3	
Ferruginous Hawk		2	x	1	1
Golden Eagle	7		1		4
Bald Eagle	4		5	5	1
Marsh Hawk	12	11	20	12	6
Prairie Falcon			3		
Sparrow Hawk	22	19	3	14	6
Lesser Prairie Chicken		104			
Bobwhite	7	54	28	37	
Scaled Quail	13		x	28	
Turkey	35				2
Sandhill Crane			x		
Virginia Rail				8	
Sora				1	
American Coot	7			38	1
Killdeer		1			2
Common Snipe				2	
Herring Gull			3		
Ring-billed Gull	6		75	92	
Mourning Dove	7	65			
Roadrunner	2		1	7	2
Great Horned Owl	x	3	4	3	
Long-eared Owl			3		
Belted Kingfisher	3	1		1	
Yellow-shafted Flicker	3	7	3	7	
Red-shafted Flicker	21	2	18	17	6
Red-bellied Woodpecker		5			
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	37				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1				
Hairy Woodpecker		4			
Downy Woodpecker		8			
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	8		6	4	3
Horned Lark	300	21	13	32	10
Scrub Jay	6		2	15	9
Common Crow	6	70			
Carolina Chickadee		14			2
Black-crested Titmouse	5				
Verdin	x				
Common Bushtit	19				
Red-breasted Nuthatch					2
Brown Creeper	2	1			1
Bewick's Wren	19	4	3	8	
Long-billed Marsh Wren	2			17	
Canon Wren	2				
Rock Wren	8			4	1
Mockingbird	51		1		

	Palo Duro Canyon	Arnett, Okla.	Buffalo Lake NWR	Lake Meredith (east)	Lake Meredith (west)
Brown Thrasher	1		1		
Curve-billed Thrasher	2				
Robin	153	19	7		1
Hermit Thrush	x				
Eastern Bluebird	12	29			10
Mountain Bluebird	200		11		17
Townsend's Solitaire	8	1	1		2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				1	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	8				4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1				
Loggerhead Shrike	2	22	4	23	14
Starling	31	185	1	1426	
Myrtle Warbler	3				
House Sparrow	5	307	300	16	16
Eastern Meadowlark		1			
Western Meadowlark	33	1	41	46	18
meadowlark sp.		154			
Yellow-headed Blackbird	4				
Red-winged Blackbird	248	10,040	40	100,000	50
Rusty Blackbird			4		
Brewer's Blackbird		332	350	150	
Common Grackle				5	
Brown-headed Cowbird		164	30	50	
Western Tanager	x				
Cardinal	35	6		1	5
Evening Grosbeak	8				
House Finch	5		8	1	
Pine Siskin	24	5	16	27	50
American Goldfinch	26	281	22	49	
Rufous-sided Towhee	25	1	2		
Brown Towhee	1				
Baird's Sparrow	2				
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	25			9	3
Slate-colored Junco	222	17	12	73	6
Oregon Junco	75	4	63	28	6
Tree Sparrow	56	248	19	68	21
Field Sparrow	4	2	4	4	47
Harris' Sparrow	2	21		6	
White-crowned Sparrow	162		49	76	21
White-throated Sparrow	1				
Fox Sparrow			1		
Lincoln's Sparrow	3			1	
Swamp Sparrow				1	
Song Sparrow	83	44	14	27	4
Lapland Longspur	200	40			
Total Species	76	47	59	60	40
Total Individuals	4,557	10,829	151,378	103,322	366
Total Observers	13	2	3	5	6

Participants: Peggy Acord, Mary Griffith, Rita Kenney, Mary Moyer, Rena Ross, and Ken Seyffert from Amarillo; Fern Cain, Mary Forbus, and Maurine Forbus from Borger; Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Elliott, Ginger Esserley, Bill Holliday, and Jim Jokerst from Canyon; Margarite Bailey from Ft. Worth; Jack Williams and Gerald Sanders from Pampa; Chip and Elizabeth from Plainview; Billy Besett, Richard Byrns, and Sandi Eads from Sanford; Milt Suthers from Umbarger.

x - seen in count area during count period but not on count day.