

May, 1973

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

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IT'S SPRING AGAIN??

Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Emeny were hosts for a morning nature walk on their Frying Pan Ranch on Sunday, April 29th. Thirteen members and guests took advantage of the gracious hospitality of the Emenys and the beautiful weather. We crossed a pasture, green with grass, and wandered down a draw, skirted the lake, and surrounded the house. 31 species of birds were seen as well as many lovely wildflowers and a few frogs. Who can fail to thrill to the beauty of the warblers and orioles, the yellow masses of monkey flowers and the beautiful song of the Cassin's Sparrows. A morning to remember. We are grateful to the Emenys for their invitation. Peggy Acord....

NESTING BIRDS ALERT:

One of our most neglected areas of bird watching is in the gathering of nest information. The nesting status of many species in the Texas Panhandle needs to be clarified and we solicit your help in gathering this important information. The following is a list of species of particular importance, and to which we draw your attention in the hope that you will share with us any knowledge you may have concerning them. This list is not meant to exclude interest in the other summer species of our area. We urge everyone to participate in the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Nest Record Card Program. Cards, along with instructions on how to fill them out, can be obtained from Kenneth Seyffert, 2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo,

Eared Grebe - we have two records on file: 2 adults and 4 quarter-grown young near Washburn, Aug. 6, 1945, and 1 adult with 1 young at Buffalo Lake NWR, Randall Co., July 30, 1972 (there is evidence a considerable number attempted to nest here last summer before being left high and dry because of receding waters). Our playas and larger lakes should be examined closely and any summer sightings reported.

Double-crested Cormorant - a sighting at any time of the year in the Panhandle is noteworthy. This species is resident in eastern and central Texas, breeding very locally. We have two summer records on file: 2 spent the summer of 1945 on a playa near Washburn, and 1 was seen at Lake Marvin, Hemphill Co., June 7, 1953.

Great Blue Heron - known to breed locally, principally along the Canadian River. Any rookery you know of should be reported immediately. This is thought to be a dwindling species and national attention is being directed toward determining its nesting status throughout the country.

GREEN Heron - probably nests in the eastern Panhandle but no nesting records have been turned in.

Black-crowned Night Heron - know to breed locally, but these records date back to the 1930's. Subsequent summer records, and they are numerous, speak nothing of any evidence of nesting. Like the Great Blue Heron, this species is believed to be dwindling.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron - no nesting records on file. This species nests in southwestern Oklahoma, so nests should be found in the eastern counties of the Panhandle.

American Bittern - not even any summer sight records. With the increase in impoundments, with the consequent formation of swampy areas, it could be found breeding locally.

Ducks - all direct evidence of nesting of any of the summering ducks should be reported. It is known that the Mallard, Pintail and Blue-winged Teal nest regularly, but locally. A few nesting records are on file for the Gadwall and Wood Duck, but their status needs to be clarified, particularly the latter species in the eastern Panhandle. Close attention should be paid to the Ruddy Duck. It is known as an uncommon to common non-breeding summer resident: in 1945 A. S. Hawkins cites 2 broods found but he does not specify the location. Any summer sighting of the Cinnamon Teal should be reported. It is not unusual to see the Green-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Shoveler, and Redhead during the summer, but no one has ever reported any indications of their nesting.

Sharp-shinned Hawk - adults and immatures were seen frequently in the Palo Duro Canyon, Randall Co., in the 1930's, and a few in the mid-50's, but no nests have ever been reported.

Cooper's Hawk - one nesting record on file: Lake Marvin, Hemphill Co., April 25, 1954.

Ferruginous Hawk - three nesting records on file, all in Randall Co. except one and the locality of it was not specified. Numerous summer sightings have been made but we need more nesting records.

Golden Eagle - any record of the nesting of this species is important and should be reported.

Bald Eagle - a nesting species in the Panhandle up to the turn of the century. Not likely to be nesting here now but rumors persist that a few do. If you see one in the summer, holler loud!

Marsh Hawk - one nesting record on file: May 30, 1941, but county not specified. Paired birds have been noted in the eastern Panhandle, so that area should be watched closely.

Prairie Falcon - a few summer sight records (frequently at Buffalo Lake NWR last summer), but no evidence of nesting. Observations of this species are important as its numbers are dwindling.

King Rail - a young male in down plumage taken in Hutchinson Co., July 7, 1950. An Adult male taken two days previously. This and the next species should be looked for carefully when you are around marshy areas. These species are very secretive!

Virginia Rail - a few summer sight records but no nesting records.

Mountain Plover - no nesting records on file. This is a common nesting bird in northeastern New Mexico. It should be found nesting in the

Adjacent northwestern counties of the Panhandle. Watch for it closely and report any summer sightings. It is a particularly wary bird when on the nest and will get up and leave it while you are still a hundred yards away.

Long-billed Curlew - nesting records from Dallam, Hartley and Moore counties. All observations of nesting birds will be welcomed.

Upland Plover - a few nested north of Sunray in Sherman Co. during the summer of 1945, with 8 or 9 young raised to flying size in captivity. Be on the alert for this species.

Spotted Sandpiper - 1 adult with 1 unfledged young in down plumage at Buffalo Lake NWR, Randall Co., July 17, 1966; evidence of a nest in same area the following summer. Report any summer sighting of this one.

Black-necked Stilt - 4 young fledged from nest near Washburn, June 16 thru Aug. 6, 1945. Attention should be paid to the southwestern counties of the Panhandle for possible nesting birds.

Least Tern - no nesting records on file. Adults with fledged young have been observed along the Canadian River in Hemphill Co. during the summer but no nests have been found or reported. We need them! Several summer sight records of adults have been made in other portions of the eastern Panhandle.

Ringed Turtle Dove - 1 adult with 1 young reported in Amarillo, Potter Co., Sept. 14, 1968. Any evidence of nesting in your area should be reported.

Barn Owl - one nesting record from Hartley Co., and one from Randall Co. Seen irregularly in the summer in our area and probably nests more often than we realize.

Barred Owl - probably nests in the eastern Panhandle, but we have no records to support the belief.

Poor Will - 1 heard calling regularly during the summer of 1971 in Randall Co. Any summer sightings (or hearings) should be reported immediately.

Black-chinned Hummingbird - 2 nesting records from Hemphill Co. (1954-55). If you have any summer hummingbirds in your area, please search diligently for possible nesting.

Red-bellied Woodpecker - nests in eastern and northeastern Panhandle. We would welcome reports of possible nesting in other portions.

Hairy Woodpecker - we need more nesting records from any portion of Panhandle.

Down Woodpecker - same as preceding species.

Eastern Kingbird - appears to be spreading westward and we need nesting records from that area.

Cassin's Kingbird - nests in Union Co., northeastern New Mexico. It is possible that it nests in the northwestern Panhandle.

Eastern Phoebe - evidence of nesting in central Panhandle. Please report all summer observations.

Empidonax species - possibly nests in eastern and northeastern Panhandle. Summer sight records for Palo Duro Canyon on file but no evidence of nesting. Be sure and report any summer sighting.

Vermilion Flycatcher - two nesting records for Potter/Randall Cos. Could nest in other portions of Panhandle.

Purple Martin - nests in eastern and northeastern Panhandle. If found nesting in any other portions, please report them.

Scrub Jay - evidence of small nesting colony in Palo Duro Canyon. Report any summer sightings.

White-necked Raven - nesting records scanty. We need more.

Carolina Chickadee - we need nesting records for the central Panhandle. Possibly nests in the west portion along Canadian River.

Verdin - has been found nesting in the Panhandle only since 1966 (Palo Duro Canyon). Any observation of the species at any time of the year should be reported.

Common Bushtit - any evidence of nesting outside of the Palo Duro Canyon should be reported. One nest record for Hemphill Co.

House Wren - summer sightings of singing males in Hemphill Co. have been made, but no nesting records on file.

Carolina Wren - we need nesting records from eastern and northeastern Panhandle. Singing birds heard fairly regularly in summer along Palo Duro Creek from Palo Duro Club to Currie Ranch, but no evidence of nesting.

Cactus Wren - be on alert for possible nesting in southern tier of counties. Report any summer sightings.

Catbird - undoubtedly nests in Panhandle but we have no nesting records!

Curve-billed Thrasher - appears to be spreading northeastward. Report any evidence of nesting from any section.

Sage Thrasher - possibly nests but no records on file. Report any summer observations.

Hermit Thrush - singing birds heard during summers of 1971-72, Potter/Randall Cos. Report any summer sightings.

Eastern Bluebird - nests as far west as Boys' Ranch, Oldham Co. If seen nesting in other portions, please report it.

Warbling Vireo - possibly nests in other areas than eastern and northeastern Panhandle. Report any summer observations from other areas.

Black & White Warbler - singing male observed in Randall Co. summer of 1972. Report any summer sighting.

Yellow Warbler - nests in eastern portions. We need nest records from any portion.

Yellowthroat - same as preceding species.

Yellow-breasted Chat - same as preceding species. The following is a resume of the changes that will be of interest to birdwatchers:

Yellow-headed Blackbird - INNUMERABLE SUMMER SIGHT RECORDS BUT NO EVIDENCE OF NESTING. Be alert for possible nests on this one.

Brewer's Blackbird - Bent reports it nesting near Canyon, Randall Co. No nest records on file or evidence of nesting anywhere in Panhandle. Any summer observations of this one should be reported.

Boat-tailed Grackle - nest records on file for Potter/Randall Cos. Report any nesting observations.

Common Grackle - undoubtedly nests in Panhandle but no nest records on file. We need them!

Summer Tanager - no nest records on file but possibly nests in wooded portions of Panhandle. A singing male observed in Palo Duro Canyon, Randall Co., June 28, 1970.

Indigo Bunting - probably nests in eastern Panhandle. Evidence of nesting in central portion. We need nest records.

Lazuli Bunting - singing males have been observed in the Palo Duro Canyon, Randall Co., in the summer but no nests have been reported. Hybrid Lazuli/Indigo have been seen in the Palo Duro Canyon and along Canadian River in Oldham Co.

Dickcissel - present in summer and young have been observed but we need some actual nest records.

Pine Siskin - two nest records on file, Potter/Randall Cos. Summer observations are important.

American Goldfinch - 1 male seen near McLean, Gray Co., June 25, 1972. Be on the alert for this one and report any summer sightings.

Brown Towhee - a pair observed in the Palo Duro Canyon, Randall Co., July 16, 1972, but no nest found. It nests in the Oklahoma Panhandle, so be on the lookout for it.

Lark Bunting - numerous summer sightings but no nest records on file. We need them!

Grasshopper Sparrow - adults with young observed but no nests reported. We need them!

Black-throated Sparrow - this species is resident in the Palo Duro Canyon and we welcome any nest observations.

A CHANGE OF NAMES:

The 32nd supplement to the American Ornithologist's Union Check-list of North American Birds has now been published setting forth changes in taxonomic status of a number of species with resulting changes in the English words by which they will henceforth be known. The "lumping" outnumbers the "splitting" of species and for old time birdwatchers it is going to be difficult to remember to call old time friends by new names. The genus of many species were changed. The changes represented in the Supplement covers only those the systematists found to be noncontroversial. The final Check-List will set forth other changes that are more controversial. The

Great White Heron - considered to be a white morph of the Great Blue Heron and therefore a subspecies of it.

Blue Goose - a dark morph of the Snow Goose.

Green-winged Teal - considered a subspecies of the Common Teal, but the two will henceforth be called collectively "Green-winged Teal".

Common Scoter - genus changed from Oidemia to Melanitta and English name changed to "Black Scoter".

Harlan's Hawk - now considered to be a subspecies of the Red-tailed Hawk.

Thayer's Gull - a new species. Considered specifically distinct from the Herring Gull.

Yellow-shafted, Red-shafted and Gilded Flickers - now considered conspecific with the enlarged species to be called the "Common Flicker".

Trail's Flycatcher - split into two species. The generally more southern and western bird, of more open country, whose vocalization has been interpreted as 'fitz-bew', will be called "willow Flycatcher"; the generally more northern bird, of the boreal forest, whose vocalization has been interpreted as "fee-bee-o", will be called "Alder Flycatcher".

Black-eared Bushtit - considered a subspecies of the Common Bushtit. The English species name for all forms becomes "Bushtit".

Robin - to be called henceforth the "American Robin".

Parula Warbler - becomes "Northern Parula" to distinguish it from the southern species to be known as the "Tropical Parula".

Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers - considered to be conspecific. The English name for the enlarged species will be "Yellow-rumped Warbler".

Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles - considered to be conspecific. The English name for the enlarged species becomes the "Northern Oriole".

Great-tailed Grackle - a new species. Elevated to specific status to distinguish it from the Boat-tailed Grackle.

Ipswich Sparrow - considered a subspecies of the Savannah Sparrow and henceforth to be called by the latter name.

Dusky Seaside Sparrow and Cape Sable Sparrow - considered subspecies of the Seaside Sparrow and henceforth to be called by the latter name.

White-winged, Oregon, and Guadalupe Juncos - considered conspecific with the Slate-colored Junco. The name for the enlarged species will be "Dark-eyed Junco". The Gray-headed Junco is maintained for the present as a separate species.

Baird's and Mexican Juncos - the former is considered a subspecies of the latter. The name for the enlarged species will be "Yellow-eyed Junco".

CALENDAR:

May 21: Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 pm

SUMMER RECESS

Sept. 17: Monthly society meeting.

AND NOTES: When spring migration begins it becomes difficult to decide what to report and what to leave out. While the birds this year appear to be arriving late, many interesting observations have been turned in. Around town and at Lake Tanglewood the continued presence of large flocks of Evening Grosbeaks is worthy of note. On Big Day, May 6, Peggy Acord, Rita Kenney and Rena Ross observed 100+ in the area. On the same date, the Chip Elliotts reported their Clark's Nutcracker as still present in Plainview. Chip is wondering now if maybe the bird isn't going to stay and nest. Probably not, but if it doesn't get to where it's going soon, it won't get to nest at all. Several observations of the White-faced Ibis have been reported. On April 22 Ken Seyffert saw 1 at Buffalo Lake and on the 28th, 4 more. On the 29th Rena Ross saw several on a playa between White Deer and Amarillo. The Green Heron has showed up again this spring. On April 29 KS saw one in the Palo Duro Canyon and on the same date Peggy Acord reported one seen by the field trip group that went to the Emory's Frying Pan Ranch. There has been one staying on the Currie Ranch and Roberta Currie was able to get pictures of it. The bird stayed for the Big Day Count so that all could see it. The first report of the Black-necked Stilt comes from the Chip Elliotts who saw several at the Hill Feed Yard in Hart, Castro Co., April 28. 2 more were seen by Milt Suthers at Buffalo Lake on May 8. An unusual observation was a partial albino Robin seen in Plainview on April 21 the the Elliotts. Speaking of albinos, the Charles Smiths observed an albino Golden-fronted Woodpecker in Ceta Glen during the first week of May. The bird had been seen previously by KS and he can vouch for its startling beauty. It is always a pleasure to report a Peregrin Falcon observation. The fortunate observers of it were Peggy Acord and Rita Kenney who saw one on Tradewinds Playa on May 3. On the same date they saw a very late Tree Sparrow at Lake Tanglewood, it being our first May sighting on record. Not to omit the Prairie Falcon, Vera Deason reported one at the Garden Center on April 26. On April 29 KS saw a Virginia's Warbler in the Palo Duro Canyon. His Parula Warbler at Buffalo Lake on May 6 was matched by one in town seen by Rita Kenney and Peggy Acord. While he thought 2 male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at Buffalo Lake on that date was grot, much better was the quite unusual male Scarlet Tanager seen in Ellwood Park by Acord/Kenney. Another good record was that of a singing Carolina Wren at the Currie Ranch home, May 6, heard by all. The best find of the year was a Lewis' Woodpecker seen at Osage and East 27th on May 10 by Peggy Acord and Estelle Stevens. This is the third record for the Panhandle.

BIG DAY COUNT, May 6, 1973: (1) Eared Grebe (2) Great Blue Heron (3) Green Heron (4) Mallard (5) Gadwall (6) Pintail (7) Green-winged Teal (8) Blue-winged Teal (9) Cinnamon Teal (10) American Wigeon (11) Shoveler (12) Redhead (13) Canvasback (14) Lesser Scaup (15) Bufflehead (16) Ruddy Duck (17) Turkey Vulture (18) Mississippi Kite (19) Sharp-shinned Hawk (20) Swainson's Hawk (21) Golden Eagle (22) Marsh Hawk (23) Sparrow Hawk (24) Bobwhite (25) Ring-necked Pheasant (26) Turkey (27) American Coot (28) Snowy Plover (29) Killdeer (30) Upland Plover (31) Spotted Sandpiper (32) Greater Yellowlegs (33) Baird's Sandpiper (34) Least Sandpiper (35) Long-billed Dowitcher (36) Stilt Sandpiper (37) American Avocet (38) Wilson's Phalarope (39) Ring-billed Gull (40) Forster's Tern (41) Black Tern (42) Mourning Dove (43) Roadrunner (44) Great Horned Owl (45) Burrowing Owl (46) Common Nighthawk (47) Chimney Swift (48) Black-chinned Hummingbird (49) Belted Kingfisher (50) Flicker sp. (51) Golden-fronted Woodpecker (52) Red-headed Woodpecker (53) Ladder-backed Woodpecker (54) Eastern Kingbird (55) Western Kingbird (56) Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (57) Ash-throated Flycatcher (58) Eastern Phoebe (59) Say's Phoebe (60) Empidonax sp. (61) Western Wood Pewee (62) Horned Lark (63) Tree Swallow (64) Bank Swallow (65) Rough-winged Swallow (66) Barn Swallow (67) Cliff Swallow (68) Blue Jay (69) Scrub Jay (70) Common Crow (71) Black-crowned Titmouse (72) Vordian (73) Common Bush-tit (74) House Wren (75) Bewick's Wren (76) Carolina Wren (77) Canyon Wren (78) Rock Wren (79) Mockingbird (80) Robin (81) Hermit Thrush (82) Field-gray Gnatcatcher (83) Ruby-crowned Kinglet (84) Water Pipit (85) Cedar Waxwing (86) Loggerhead Shrike (87) Starling (88) Solitary Vireo (89) Orange-crowned Warbler (90) Nashville Warbler (91) Parula Warbler (92) Yellow Warbler (93) Myrtle Warbler (94) Audubon's Warbler (95) Yellowthroat (96) Wilson's Warbler (97) House Sparrow (98) Western Meadowlark (99) Yellow-headed Blackbird (100) Red-winged Blackbird (101) Orchard Oriole (102) Bullock's Oriole (103) Brewer's Blackbird (104) Bob-tailed Grackle (105) Common Grackle (106) Brown-headed Cowbird (107) Scarlet Tanager (108) Cardinal (109) Rose-breasted Grosbeak (110) Black-headed Grosbeak (111) Blue Grosbeak (112) Indigo Bunting (113) Lazuli Bunting (114) Evening Grosbeak (115) House Finch (116) Pine Siskin (117) American Goldfinch (118) Green-tailed Towhee (119) Rufous-sided Towhee (120) Brown Towhee (121) Lark Bunting (122) Savannah Sparrow (123) Grasshopper Sparrow (124) Vesper Sparrow (125) Lark Sparrow (126) Rufous-crowned Sparrow (127) Cassin's Sparrow (128) Chipping Sparrow (129) Clay-colored Sparrow (130) Field Sparrow (131) White-crowned Sparrow.

Participants - Peggy Acord, Fern Cain, Roberta Currie, Rita Kenney, Rena Ross, Kenneth Seyffert, Estelle Stevens, Esther Waddill, Jack Williams (+ five Explorer Scouts from Pampa).

This count was below our average and can probably be attributed to the count being held at least a week too early and to the very high winds of that day (gusting up to 60 m.p.h.).