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2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

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## PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER:

Sup. E. William E. Dyer of the Sanford Recreation Area will present a Dept. of the Interior film on "Proposed Wilderness Areas in Alaska" at our November meeting.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT TIME:

Elsewhere in this Newsletter is a list of the Christmas Bird Counts that will be made in our area this year. We urge everyone who can to participate. This is an exciting, though exhausting, time for birders who strive to find and identify every species of bird within a specified area 15 miles in diameter. To cover such a large area adequately, it is necessary to have a minimum of ten people working it. It is hard to find that many people in our area who will turn out. Can you imagine 260 people showing up, as happened last year on the Oakland, Calif. count? What would you do with that many? In our wide open country, I suppose you could station each party within signaling or shouting distance of one another; then, if a bird flew by that the first party couldn't identify, they could point and yell to the next party in line to be on the alert, hoping that the second party would have better luck with it. By the time the bird had passed by a dozen parties a consensus could be arrived at and a collective identification hazarded. This sounds to me like a fool proof system and should silence any hard-to-get-along - with Editor, should he or she be skeptical that you really did see a Whooping Crane fly over.

Seriously, though, it is necessary that a birder be prepared to support his observations with detailed notes should the compiler request them. Sightings of species out of their normal wintering range cannot be accepted just because you say you saw it. You must convince the compiler with your evidence, and it is to be hoped that an unusual species will have been seen by more than one person. The following from The Spoonbill, Houston Outdoor Nature Club is sound advice:

"The first steps in Bird Watching are to identify the Bird in the field and to learn to keep good field notes. Roger Tory Peterson gives these tips on the subject:

- "W" - Where and when: locality and date.
- "H" - Habitat: is it in the woods, marsh or meadow?
- "I" - Impressions: what does the Bird look like at rest, in motion?
- "C" - Comparison: what size is it in comparison to well-known Birds?
- "B" - Habits: how does the Bird behave, feed, move, fly?
- "ID" - Identification: identifying field marks; diagnostic bars; patches, etc.
- "S" - Sounds: listen to the Bird, write down your impressions.
- "I" - Important details: size, shape, color of legs, feet, bill, eyes.
- "T" - Tail: tail and wings, shape, length and pattern.

On keeping field notes, R. T. P. says "DO IT"

- "D" - Distance: how far away is the Bird?
- "O" - Optics: what kind of binocular and/or scope? Comments on lighting.
- "I" - Instant: how long did you see the Bird?
- "T" - Team: list names of observers.

## SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES:

- Dec. 15 - Palo Duro Canyon: meet at Park entrance at 8:00 a.m.
- Dec. 17 - Black Mesa, Okla.: contact either Kenneth Seyffert or Peggy Acord if you can participate. This count will only be made if a sufficient number of people indicate an interest. A meeting place will be arranged later.
- Dec. 20 - Arnett, Okla.: meet at restaurant next to Circle C Motor Lodge (east end of town) at 7:00 a.m.
- Dec. 22 - Lake Meredith(east): meet at Park headquarters in Fritch (419 Broadway) at 7:00 a.m. NOTE: Park headquarters have moved to Fritch.
- Dec. 29 - Lake Meredith(west): meet at Park headquarters in Fritch at 7:00 a.m.

## BIRD NOTES:

COMMON LOON - 1 at Lake Vincent, Ellis Co., Okla. 10/17 (Kenneth Seyffert).

WESTERN GREBE - 1 at Lake Marvin, Hemphill Co. 10/14 (KS), and 1 at Lake McClellan, Gray Co. 10/25 (KS).

WHITE PELICAN - 16 at Lake Meredith, Potter Co. 10/10 (Fern Cain); 1 still present 11/3 (KS).

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: 2 at Lake Tanglewood, Randall Co. 10/27 (Peggy Acord - first reported from our area in several years).

CATTLE EGRET - 1 near Lake Tanglewood, Randall Co. 10/13 (Peggy Acord).

WOOD DUCK - 17 at Lake Marvin, Hemphill Co. 10/14 (KS - 10 males and 7 females - largest concentration of this species reported from the northern Panhandle).

RING-NECKED DUCK - 400+ at Lake McClellan, Gray Co. 10/25 (KS - an unusually high number).

SWAINSON'S HAWK - 1000 to 1200 passed over Lake Meredith, Hutchinson Co. 10/9 and 10 (Fern Cain - observation each day limited to 1½ hours).

OSPREY - 1 still present at Lake Tanglewood, Randall Co. thru 10/27 (Peggy Acord), 1 still present at Lake Meredith, Hutchinson Co., thru first week of November (Park personnel).

PEREGRINE FALCON - 1 immature at The Elysian Fields, Randall Co. 11/2 (Bill & Ginger Hpliday - careful notes taken as it stooped Careful attention given to dark streakings on undersides, face mask, and lack of dark wing axillars).

VIRGINIA RAIL - 2 at Lake Meredith, Hutchinson Co. 11/3 (KS).

COMMON SNIPES - 13 in one flock at The Elysian Fields, Randall Co. 10/26 (KS).

BONAPARTES GULL - 1 at Lake Meredith, Potter Co. 10/24 (KS), and 2 at The Elysian Fields, Randall Co. 10/26 (KS).

BARN OWL - 1 at Buffalo Lake NWR, Randall Co. 9/1 and 15, and 1 in Amarillo, Potter Co. 9/27 (KS); 1 at Buffalo Lake 10/19 (KS and Chip Elliott - all observations of this species should be reported as it is one the Blue List).

LONG-EARED OWL - 1 in Ellwood Park, Potter Co. 10/21 (Armon Mays - bird being mobbed by Blue Jays), and 1 near Panhandle, Carson Co. 11/3 (Rena Ross).

POOR-WILL - 5 in Amarillo, Potter Co. 10/13 (Bill & Ginger Holliday - an unusually high number to be seen at one time).

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER - 2 in McBride Canyon, Potter Co. 10/24 (KS).

COMMON RAVEN - 2 approx. two miles south of Masterson, Potter Co. 10/24 (KS - observed at length as they fed on carrion on highway and perched on fence; also heard calling).

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH - 1 in Amarillo, Potter Co. 10/18 (Bill & Ginger Holliday - first reported sighting of this species in several years).

WINTER WREN - 1 at Lake McClellan, Gray Co. 10/25 (KS - observed at length as it scolded the observer).

WESTERN BLUEBIRD - several in Amarillo, Potter Co. 10/24 (Bill & Ginger Holliday), and several at same place around the same time ( R. L. Simmons).

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER - 1 female in Amarillo, Potter Co. 10/12 (Peggy Acord); 1 male in Amarillo, Randall Co. 10/19 (Bill & Ginger Holliday).

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER: 4 at Buffalo Lake NWR, Randall Co. 10/19 (KS); 1 at Lake McClellan, Gray Co. 10/25 (KS).

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER - 1 in Amarillo, Potter Co. 10/18 (Bill & Ginger Holliday); 1 at same locality 10/20 (KS).

PINE WARBLER - 1 in Amarillo, Potter Co. 10/18 (Bill & Ginger Holliday) - kept under observation for about thirty minutes - good field notes taken of plumage, including lack of yellow rump). Third reported sighting from the northern Panhandle.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK - 1 singing below the dam at Lake Meredith, Hutchinson Co. 11/3 (KS - west of its normal range).

#### A VERY UNUSUAL OBSERVATION:

September 20 - I had observed three Ospreys in our canyon area (below the dam at Lake Tanglwood, Randall Co.) for at least three weeks prior to this date, fishing along the creek. They perched in the big cottonwood trees that line the banks and fished from their topmost branches, diving down to secure a fish and then back to the branch to eat it.

On this date I noticed an Osprey sitting high up in a tree. It did not sit quietly as they usually did, but squawked every few seconds and seemed nervous. Since I was walking with no particular care or caution, I was amazed that it did not fly as I approached the tree. Always before, at my approach the Ospreys would take off immediately. This seemed a good opportunity to do some photog-

raphy, so I hurriedly took a few shots. When the bird still did not fly I took a little more time and set up my tripod. Then, I realized that the bird was squawking continuously and looking up into the sky. Out of the blue, another Osprey came swooping down, straight at him. There was no doubt of its destination. As it neared, the first one stood up, lifted its wings high, flapping them up and down excitedly as it literally was shoed off its perch. It flew after the other but seemed not to know what was intended and returned immediately to its former position on the limb. The other flew wildly through the air and disappeared across the creek out of sight. By this time, I realized this must be a mother and her young, although I could not see any difference in sizes.

The young one was not to be allowed to sit there, however. Within minutes, the parent appeared the second time, this time both birds squawking loudly. I managed to get a photo of the young one just before the mother scared it off the limb. It was in a defensive position as it lifted those big wings up and back, beak wide open, eyes fearful and hackles raised. This time, the mother had her way as she tried to protect the young one from me. It followed her across the creek, over the trees, and out of sight.

I did not want to keep them fearful and upset any longer with my presence, in case they wanted to return, so I left, thinking what an unusual sight I had just witnessed.

...Roberta Currie....

#### SWAINSON'S HAWK MIGRATION:

We saw them on two consecutive days around noon, October 9 and 10. The weather was warm (70° F.) and still (winds not over 10 m.p.h.). They came directly from the north, crossing the Canadian River below the area of the dam, and flew directly to the south. After crossing the river, a great number of them seemed to be spiraling upward to catch wind drafts. There would be a group of 25 to 30 go over followed by stragglers, and then you could look back over to the horizon and see another large group coming into view. We saw one group of at least a hundred and another with as many as 75. These came over for at least an hour and a half on both days. A cold front came into the Panhandle the next day (Friday), and we surmised that the hawks were traveling ahead of the cold front. It was very interesting to me to note that there were a number of very dark hawks in those groups - presumably the dark phase. From 1000 to 1200 were seen for both days.

....Fern Cain....

#### CALENDAR:

Nov. 18 - Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 p.m.  
Program - "Proposed Wilderness Areas in Alaska"  
Speaker - William E. Dyer