

May, 1980

2206 S. Lipscomb, Amarillo, Tx, 79109

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PROGRAM FOR MAY:

Betty Drake of Phillips will show color slides of wildflowers for our program on Monday, May 19 at 7:30 p.m. at the Garden Center. Those of you who saw the program she gave some years ago will remember the beautiful pictures she had at that time, and we are told she will present new ones made since then. Bring your friends to this last meeting of the season.

A REMINDER OF WHAT PROTECTION OF NATURE AND WILDLIFE IS ALL ABOUT:

There are many ways to serve the cause of nature and wildlife: preserve habitat, clean up waterways, and so on. But the reasons behind what we do are so obvious that we too often neglect to mention them. President Russ Peterson stated them eloquently in the closing minutes of his speech to the recent convention of the society's Western Region:

"Two weeks ago I had a most memorable visit to our Lillian Annette Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River in Nebraska.

Six million ducks and geese and one-quarter million sandhill cranes collect along a 65-mile stretch of the Platte at this time of year--fattening up with solar energy before flying many hundreds of miles to their nesting grounds. It's a rare spectacle today, but illustrative of the great flocks and herds of wildlife that dominated the national scene before we Homo sapiens took over with our axes, our saws, our plows, our bulldozers, and our pesticides.

Today 70 percent of the Platte's former flow is extracted for irrigation upstream of our sanctuary, and over the last 10 years one-half of the wet meadows where the cranes feed has been converted through pivot irrigation to croplands. The tide marches on.

I will never forget my visit two weeks ago. Driving to the sanctuary, we saw over one marsh thousands and thousands of ducks and geese that literally darkened the sky. Eleven bald eagles--three in one tree--dressed up the landscape. Cranes were everywhere--feeding in the wet meadows and the cornfields, flying overhead, serenading the valley with their wonderful call.

As we stood in a blind on our sanctuary at sundown, the cranes flew by in even greater numbers, their combined voices in ever greater volume. Suddenly five cranes tumbled their wings and descended to stand in the shallow water before us. Then ten more--a hundred more, thousands of them--landed, creating islands of cranes where before there was only water.

I suggest you visit your Towe Sanctuary next spring. You will never forget that fantastic spectacle of the thousands of cranes--residents of Mexico, the U.S., Canada, and the Soviet Union--descending on the Platte as they have been doing for many centuries--adding their voices together in one tremendous chorus of life--calling out to us to protect the water, the air, and the land."

BIRD NOTES:

April 12 - the first sighting of the year of a Mississippi Kite by Rena Ross and Elaine Robinson. This was at their home in town, and is

about two weeks earlier than normal.

April 13 - last reported Bald Eagle--Buffalo Lake NWR by Ken Seyffert.

April 16-18 - A Black & White Warbler in Miami, Roberts Co., by Orilla Bryant. This is an early date.

April 19 - the field trip to the Palo Duro Canyon was attended by two people, Peggy Acord and Rosemary Scott. They reported nothing unusual but did make the first observations of the year of the Ash-throated Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Lark Sparrow.

April 20 - Rena Ross, Ken Seyffert, Rosemary Scott and Esther Waddill had a very pleasant and productive morning of birding at Buffalo Lake NWR, observing 65 species in about four hours. Some of the more interesting birds were: a Green Heron; 4 White-faced Ibis; an Osprey; 350 Long-billed Dowitchers (the only common shorebird this spring); 2 Black-necked Stilts; a Barn Owl. The first reported Chimney Swifts of the year (6) were seen in town by KS. Between Canyon and the refuge, about 100 Brewer's Blackbirds could still be seen.

At Lake Tanglewood, Peggy Acord reported the first Forster's Tern. April 23 - a very good bird for Miami was a Black-throated Gray Warbler reported by Orilla Bryant.

April 24 - two good finds at Lake Tanglewood by Elizabeth Moss--a Common Egret and a Yellow-crowned Night Heron.

April 27 - the field trip to McClellan Lake in Gray Co. was attended by Peggy Acord, Ed and Mary Donelson, Ken Seyffert and Rosemary Scott. It was another pleasant, but cool, outing and 63 species were seen. The very best bird was a Palm Warbler, seldom reported in the Panhandle. An Osprey flew overhead, and down below we found a good variety of woodpeckers; Yellow and Red-shafted Flickers; Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy, Downy, and Ladderbacked. The flycatchers seen were: Eastern and Western Kingbirds; Scissor-tail, Great-crested, and Ash-throated. We watched two vigorously singing Warbling Vireos. We listened to both the Eastern and Western Meadowlarks singing, and observed several brightly colored male Bullock's Orioles, among them one "funny looking" one that was part way to being a Baltimore. Two good finds were 3 Rusty Blackbirds, and a Black-throated Green Warbler. A pair of Robins was building a nest.

April 28 - a very exciting day for Rosemary Scott in Vega, Oldham Co. She observed for about an hour, and at times from a few yards away, what she is convinced was a Red-faced Warbler. This warbler is confined

almost entirely to southeastern Arizona and New Mexico; the only Texas records are from El Paso, the Big Bend, and mid-land. Unfortunately, the party that joined her the next day were unable to find the bird and confirm such a rare sighting. She also reported a Black & White Warbler.

April 29 - in Vega Oldham Co., Indigo and Lazuli Buntings; an Osprey; a Wood Thrush---Nancy Elliott, Rosemary Scott Esther Waddill, Rosemary Wood

May 3 - at the Palo Duro Club, Esther Waddill had a good day with the Warblers, including a Magnolia the Black & White, and the American Redstart.

The field trip to Memorial Park Cemetery was attended by Peggy Acord, Mary Moyer and Ken Seyffert. (a big turnout)

There was not much activity outside of a group of Great-tailed Grackles that were quite active in their courting, and both they and Common Grackles that were seen carrying nest materials.

May 4 - this was a very productive day for Ken Seyffert at Buffalo Lake NWR. 83 species were recorded, among which were: a Cattle EgRET; a Snowy Egret; a White-Faced Ibis; several pairs each of Blue-winged and Cinamon Toals; a Cooper's Hawk; a Swains Hawk on a nest; 9 Ring-necked Pheasant; a Willet; 3 Black-necked Stilts; a Barn Owl a Chuck-will's-widow (flushed several times and followed closely); a loudly singing Brown Thrasher; a Black & White Warbler; the first Yellow Warblers of the year (singing); the first Orchard Oriole; many many Brown-headed Cowbirds; a Green-TAILED Ttohee; a Brown Towhee; the first Grasshopper Sparrows; Cassin's Sparrows (singing) a Brewer's Sparrow; male Lark Buntings on the way back to town, singing and "skylarking". A Yellow-billed Cuckoo at the ranch was heard by Roberta Currie. This is an early date.

May 6 - Vera Deason reports a Mallard hen nesting under the ivy in the court of the Garden Center.

May 8 - a male Lazuli Bunting in Miami by Orilla Bryant - the first time this species has been recorded in her yard.

May 8-9 at 2805 S. Travis in Amarillo as reported by Rena Ross - a Lazuli Bunting; Ruby-throated Humingbird; Nashville Warbler; Northern Water-thrush. The latter was found stunned on the front porch but it recovered.

A DAY'S LIST OF YARD BIRDS

Orilla Bryant of Miami sends in the following list of birds she observed in her yard May 6. With activity such as this around the house, who would want to leave home? She says she maintains several feeders in her backyard and scatters "small grain all over place"

1. Bobwhite
2. Mourning Dove
3. Yellow-shafted Flicker
4. Hairy Woodpecker

5. Down Woodpecker
6. Ladder-backed Woodpecker
7. Western Kingbird
8. Swallow (undentified)
9. Blue Jay
10. chickadee
11. Mockingbird
12. Robin
13. Cedar Waxwing
14. House Sparrow
15. Orchard Oriole
16. Baltimore Oriole
17. Bullock's Oriole
18. Common Grackle
19. Brown-headed Cowbird
20. Cardinal
21. Painted Bunting
22. House Finch
23. American Goldfinch
24. Chipping Sparrow
25. Clay-colored Sparrow
26. White-crowned Sparrow

ALUMINUM ALUMINUM ALUMINUM:

Don't forget to bring your discarded aluminum articles! We won't be collecting any more until our September meeting when we expect to have a big heap.

BIG DAY COUNT:

As we go to press, the total number of species turned in stands at 129. We have not heard from the party at Lake Meredith. Participants were Peggy Acord, Nancy Elliott, Mary Moyer, Rena Ross, Rosemary Scott, Ken Seyffert, Esther Waddill. Here are the species that were seen:

1. Great Blue Heron
2. Cattle Egret
3. Black-crowned Night Heron
4. Mallard
5. Gadwall
6. Pintail
7. Green-winged Teal
8. Blue-winged Teal
9. Cinnamon Teal
10. Am Wigeon
11. Northern Shoveler
12. Redhead
13. Lesser Scaup
14. Ruddy Duck
15. Turkey Vulture
16. Mississippi Kite
17. Sharp-shinned Hawk
18. Cooper's Hawk
19. Red-tailed Hawk
20. Swainson's Hawk
21. Marsh Hawk
22. American Kestrel
23. Bobwhite
24. Scaled Quail
25. Ring-necked Pheasant
26. American Coot
27. Black-necked Stilt
28. American Avocat
29. Snowy Plover
30. Killdeer
31. Spotted Sandpiper
32. Wilson's Phalarope
33. Long-billed Dowitcher
34. Least Sandpiper
35. Baird's Sandpiper
36. Stilt Sandpiper
37. Ring-billed Gull
38. Black Tern
39. Rock Dove
40. Mourning Dove

41. Roadrunner
42. Barn Owl
43. Burrowing Owl
44. Common Nighthawk
45. Chimney Swift
46. Black-chinned Hummingbird
47. Broad-tailed Hummingbird
48. Belted Kingfisher
49. Golden-fronted Woodpecker
50. Common Flicker
51. Red-headed Woodpecker
52. Ladder-backed Woodpecker
53. Eastern Kingbird
54. Western Kingbird
55. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
56. Ash-throated Flycatcher
57. Eastern Phoebe
58. Say's Phoebe
59. Empidonax sp.
60. Western Wood Pewee
61. Olive-sided Flycatcher
62. Horned Lark
63. Bank Swallow
64. Rough-winged Swallow
65. Barn Swallow
66. Cliff Swallow
67. Blue Jay
68. Scrub Jay
69. Common Crow
70. Black-crested Titmouse
71. Bushtit
72. House Wren
73. Bewick's Wren
74. Canyon Wren
75. Rock Wren
76. Mockingbird
77. Curve-billed Thrasher
78. Robin
79. Hermit Thrush
80. Swainson's Thrush
81. Gray-cheeked Thrush
82. Ruby-crowned Kinglet
83. Cedar Waxwing
84. Loggerhead Shrike
85. Starling
86. Solitary Vireo
87. Orange-crowned Warbler
88. Nashville Warbler
89. Virginia's Warbler
90. Yellow Warbler
91. Yellow-rumped Warbler
92. Townsend's Warbler
93. Black-throated Green Warbler
94. Blackpoll Warbler
95. MacGillivray's Warbler
96. Common Yellowthroat
97. Wilson's Warbler
98. American Redstart
99. House Sparrow
100. Western Meadowlark
101. Yellow-headed Blackbird
102. Red-winged Blackbird
103. Orchard Oriole
104. Bullock's Oriole
105. Great-tailed Grackle
106. Common Grackle
107. Brown-headed Cowbird
108. Western Tanager
109. Cardinal
110. Black-headed Grosbeak
111. Blue Grosbeak
112. Painted Bunting
113. House Finch
114. American Goldfinch
115. Lesser Goldfinch
116. Green-tailed Towhee
117. Rufous-sided Towhee

118. Lark Bunting
119. Grasshopper Sparrow
120. Vesper Sparrow
121. Lark Sparrow
122. Rufous-crowned Sparrow
123. Cassin's Sparrow
124. Gray-headed Junco
125. Chipping Sparrow
126. Clay-colored Sparrow
127. Brewer's Sparrow
128. White-crowned Sparrow
129. Lincoln's Sparrow.

YOUR LETTERS OF SUPPORT ARE NEEDED FOR THE SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY:

Every year more than 1,000 eagles, falcons, hawks, and other birds of prey return to the spectacular cliffs of the Snake River Canyon in Idaho, the world's densest known nesting area of birds of prey. In 1971, when Cecil D. Andrus was governor of Idaho, 26,000 acres of the nesting area was set aside for federal protection as the Birds of Prey Natural Area. This protects the birds' nesting sites but not the nearby places in which they hunt; as Andrus has put it: "The preserve protects their bedroom but not their dining room."

Andrus, now Secretary of the Interior, and John V. Evans, Idaho's current governor, are trying to protect that dining room. They want to designate 610,000 surrounding acres as a "conservation area." Most of the land is already owned by the federal government; the rest could be acquired by trades with the state. Grazing and other present uses could be continued. To conservationists this may sound like a simple and painless way to protect a national treasure, but some local ranchers believe it is government "meddling" and a threat to a hoped-for irrigation project (a project most observers consider unrealistic).

Governor Evans has championed the conservation area at political risk, and Andrus has sent Congress his recommendations for a bill to make the area a reality. You are asked to write to your senators and your representatives, urging them to support this legislation and ask that it be brought promptly to the floor for passage. And send copies of your letters to Secretary Andrus, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.