

THE PRAIRIE HORNED LARK
Newsletter of the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society

April, 1982

2206 Lipscomb, Amarillo, TX 79109

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PROGRAM FOR APRIL:

The monthly meeting of the TPAS will be on Monday evening, April 19, at 7:30 at the Garden Center. Mary Glenn will present "Philatelic Nesting Season", the story of birds and their nests as portrayed in the stamps of the world. From those who have seen it, we understand this is an outstanding collection and one everyone will want to see..... Mary Donelson will give the 5 minute bird talk, ...Harold Read....

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Helen Madsen and her conservation committee are to be congratulated on the excellent program of March 22. Tom Kritser received the Conservation Award. Dr. Joseph Cepeda spoke on the Audubon energy plan, with questions and discussion afterward. Vera Deason introduced our scholarship winner, Jo Meaker. Miss Meaker spoke briefly. The committee for the dinner, headed by Virginia Gill, saw to it that we had an abundance of food, served attractively. Our thanks to everyone who helped make our annual Conservation meeting a success....Rena Ross....

FIRST REPORTS OF SPRING MIGRANTS:

- March 7 - two Blue-winged Teal at Caprock Canyons SP, Briscoe Co. (KS); an injured Long-billed Curlew eat of Tulia, Swisher Co.(KS).
- March 10 - an Osprey on the Hugh Currie ranch near Lake Tanglewood, Randall Co. (RC) - the earliest date on record by 10 days.
- March 14 - a Say's Phoebe at Buffalo Lake NWR, Randall Co.(PA,KS); a Sage Thrasher southwest of Amarillo, Randall Co.(PA,KS).
- March 16 - a Veery in southwest Amarillo, Randall Co.(RR) - extremely early - the previous early date was April 16.
- March 18 - a Turkey Vulture over Amarillo, Potter Co.(KS).
- March 21 - an Eastern Phoebe in McBride Canyon, Potter Co.(KS); Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Vesper Sparrows between Borger and Sunray(FC,FS).
- March 25 - a Greater Yellowlegs east of Canyon, Randall Co.(ED,MD).
- March 28 - a House Wren and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in the Palo Duro Canyon SP, Randall Co.(KS); 12 Long-billed Dowitcher's southe of Amarillo, Randall Co.(KS).
- March 31 - 26 Double-crested Cormorants on Lake Tanglewood, Randall Co.(EM) - the largest single congregation of this species ever reported in our area.
- April 4 - Swain's Hawks near Amarillo,

east of Panhandle, and at Buffalo Lake NWR (PA,RR,KS); a male Western Bluebird and 18 Chipping Sparrows at Buffalo Lake NWR (KS); Rough-winged and Barn Swallows in the eastern Panhandle(RR).

- PA - Peggy Acord MD - Mary Donelson
- FC - Fern Cain EM - Elizabeth Moss
- RC - Roberta Currie RR - Rena Ross
- ED- Ed Donelson KS - Ken Seyffert
- FS - Frank Smith

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SIGHTINGS:

- Sage Thrasher - besides the first one reported 3/14, another was seen along a fence row south of Amarillo 3/28(KS), one near Amarillo 4/4(PS), and five in one group at Buffalo Lake NWR 4/4(KS).
- Fox Sparrow - two at Caprock Canyon SP 3/7 (KS).
- Long-eared Owl - four at Buffalo Lake NWR 3/14(PA,KS), and three 4/4 (KS).
- White-breasted Nuthatch - one in McBride Canyon 3/21(KS).
- Eastern Phoebe - unusually common this spring. Besides the one on 3/21, four were in the Palo Duro Canyon SP 3/28(KS), and one at Buffalo Lake NWR 4/4(KS).
- Golden-fronted Woodpecker - one at Buffalo Lake NWR 4/4(KS) - a species rarely reported at this location.

A BIRD VIGNETTE:

He ran across the road with his head and tail level. Reaching the shoulder of the opposite side, he stopped, raised his head, and looked around with his expressive tail moving up and down. While he sat in the sun to warm his back, we stopped to notice the red and white and blue patch on his face. Suddenly he bent forward and lowered his bill almost to touch his chest, looking as if the disgorge a pellet as a hawk or owl might do. What he "disgorged" was a love call - "Cooo, cooo, cooo" on descending notes. Taken by surprise at such a comic appearance, we laughed. For some ten minutes or so we sat and watched. When we returned the call, he head jerked up and that expressive tail moved this way and that. Sometimes he would run a step or two and listen, crest raised, curiosity aroused. "Where is that other bird? My rival?" The raised crown feathers appeared lightly checkered in brown and tan, the sides and breast streaked, the belly light tannish gray. What a bird! Six, eight, ten times he lowered his head in the strange movement and each time the mournful "Cooo, cooo, cooo" came out. Finally, still searching for the bird who answered him, he trotted off down the shoulder of the road in the sunlight, leaving behind two delighted spectators. Good-bye Mr. Roadrunner, happy courting to you.

....Peggy Acord....

BOARD MEETING:

There will be a Board meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Garden City, just prior to our monthly meeting on April 19.- Rena Ross

BIRD AWARENESS WEEK - May 2-9:

The first week in May is going to be proclaimed as BIRD AWARENESS WEEK in Amarillo, and we hope all the Audubon members will be on their toes to help people be aware of birds. We will have radio and TV interviews, newspaper publicity, Central Library Exhibit, and Bird of the Day to be announced in several places. Enter into the spirit of the week and be helpful with information as you can. If you have one of the blue buttons given out at the Ark, wear it everywhere you go that week. If you have any ideas for observance, let us know.Mary Moyer....

BALD EAGLE RALLY - May 7:

Plans are practically completed for the Bald Eagle Rally at Amarillo College, Ordway Hall, on Friday night May 7 at 7:30. We do urge every member of Audubon to plan now to be present and show some interest in the school representatives who will attend. We want it to be a rousing patriotic rally with a real Message. Leaders in the community will be there to give support. Dan True will be autographing his book, and will introduce the film. Bedford Forrest will be the Master of Ceremonies. There will be a small band to play before the program. YOU come to see what else we planMary Moyer....

BIRDATHON - BIRDATHON - BIRDATHON:

Our Second (and probably final) Birdathon will wind up the week on May 9, when the annual Big Day Count is taken. We have 7 excellent birding teams, and each one of you - local and out of town members - will want to sponsor one of the teams. The teams from last year will have their same territories, and the new teams will have areas not adequately covered last year. You may want to sponsor more than one team, but make your choice of one, at least.

We could still use some additional Managers, but if in doubt you could phone the Garden Center at 352-6513 as they will have sign-up sheets for each team.

The Birdathon teams are:

1. Peggy Acord assisted by Rita Kinney, with Mary Moyer as Manager 353-2684. They expect to see 85 bird species.
2. Fern Cain assisted by Frank Smith, with Frank Smith as Manager in Borger 274-5128, or Mary Moyer in Amarillo. They expect to see 51 bird species.
3. Nancy Elliott assisted by Marguerite Empie, with Mary Moyer as Manager. They expect to see 55 bird species.
4. Tom Patterson assisted by Bill Ford, with Charles Meadors as Manager 352-5167. They expect to see 51 bird species.
5. Rena Ross assisted by Mary Glenn, with Vera Deason as Manager 374-6390. They expect to see 60 bird species.
6. Rosemary Scott assisted by Winnie Wester, with Vera Deason as Manager. They expect to see 60 bird species.

7. Kenneth Seyffert assisted by Wayman Gill, with Armon Mays as Manager 373-0033. They expect to see 95 bird species. Kenneth was our champion last year.

When you decide which one you want to sponsor, phone the manager and tell them the amount you want to spend per bird. We had 2 one dollar per bird customers last year, but most were 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, and some 50¢ per bird sponsors.

Our Society won the trophy for the highest per capita contributions in our Region last year. More chapters are entering this year, and Lubbock is having their Birdathon on May 1. We certainly must do better than they do with all our experience.

LET THE PHONES BEGIN TO RING. Our share of the money goes into our Scholarship Fund. Our Birdathon funds from last year are helping Miss Jo Meaker attend our Western Camp this summer on our first scholarship.

....Mary Moyer....

FIELD TRIPS:

April 17 (Saturday) - Ceta Glen (Randall Co.) - meet at the entrance to the Christian Church Camp at 8:00 a.m. This will be a morning only trip.

May 2 (Sunday) - Frank Duncan ranch in southwest Hutchinson Co. Meet at ranch headquarters at 8:00 a.m. - bring your lunch.

WETLANDS FACE THREAT FROM TEXAS:

This year, wetlands protection is under attack in Congress by those who want to restrict Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Bills have been introduced to limit Sec. 404 requirements to "navigable waters" only, thereby removing 125 million acres, or about 85% of our wetlands, from federal protection. Senators and representatives from Texas are leading the charge with S. 777, sponsored by Senators John Tower and Lloyd Bentsen, and H.R. 393, H.R. 3083, and H.R. 3962, sponsored by Representatives Ron Paul, Sam Hall and Jack Hightower, respectively. Opponents of the 404 program will also try to make it easier to get a dredge or fill permit. Either of these changes could double the number of wetlands destroyed by dredging and filling. Additionally, Vice-President George Bush's Task Force on Regulatory Relief is considering similar weakening changes.

....BARRED OWL....newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society....