

THE PRAIRIE HORNED LARK
Newsletter of the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society

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The Texas Panhandle Audubon Society will hold its first meeting of the year on Monday night, January 17, 1983, at 8:30 p.m. at the Amarillo Garden Center. The occasion will be the annual election of officers for the coming year and will be followed by the installation of officers. The program will be presented by Jim Rogers, wildlife biologist with the Bureau of Reclamation, who will report on the results of a study of migratory waterfowl in the Panhandle.

BEST WISHED FOR A PROSPEROUS AND HAPPY 1983. Keep up the good work in conservation and try to conserve natural resources. Keep letters and other materials going to members of Congress! It has been a privilege to have served as your President and I have enjoyed it very much. The January meeting is election of officers and I want to thank everyone for helping to make this past year a good one. We would like to encourage new members to take an active part in our Society - even to the point of volunteering time and talent. We need you in the cause of conservation.

The observers were unable to get out on the lake as planned, so did not pick up the variety of waterfowl that had been hoped for. For the second time a Say's Phoebe was recorded on this count and it is interesting to note that on both occasions the weather was sleety and snowy, conditions under which you would not expect to find a flycatcher! New for the count was the Lark Bunting. 120 different species have now been recorded on this count.

SUMMARY OF CHRISTMAS BOUNTS:

Amarillo (Palo Duro Canyon) - This was an extraordinary count. Observers could hardly believe their eyes when two White-throated Swifts appeared overhead as lunch was being eaten at the first water crossing campgrounds in the Palo Duro Canyon. The birds darted about swiftly (!), at times so low that binoculars were not needed to see the white on their throats and breasts. They were still flying about as the birders left to continue the count. The last time White-throated Swifts were reported in the Panhandle was on 23 November 1971, also in the PDC. The species was new for the count as were the Peregrine Falcon, Common Moorhen, and Gray Catbird. The Double-crested Cormorant had been recorded only once before, and the Purple Finch three times. 137 different species have now been recorded on this count. The early morning hours were cold and breezy, but before the day was over the weather was ideal.

Quitaque (Caprock Canyons SP) - This time Lake Theo was literally covered with cucks and geese and almost every species that could be expected in our area in the winter were seen, including a new one for the count - a Snow Goose. Although there were only three participants, the count results were excellent. The 76 species were only three less than the high set on the very first count when over three times as many people participated. For the second time the Orange-crowned Warbler was found. The day was very overcast and snow showers were encountered on the way home. 109 different species have now been recorded on this count.

Buffalo Lake NWR - This was a solo effort made on an extremely windy day. The number of species was low but the raptor count was excellent. The 33 Marsh Hawks set a count record and the adult Goshawk was new. The last report of a Goshawk in our area was 31 December 1977. The two Say's Phoebes were real nice. They were feeding along the creek downstream from the dam in exactly the same spot where two were observed the previous 21 November. Were they the same birds? For the second time a Red-bellied Woodpecker was found, a species far west and south of its normal range in our area. 119 different species have now been recorded on this count.

Lake Meredith (west) - Three species were added to this count on a perfectly clear and cold day - Tundra Swan, Common Raven, and Lark Bunting. The three swans (2 adults and 1 immature) were off Alibates in a pool of open water. Swans were last reported in our area 25 March 1969. The Common Raven is even more rare. The last one reported was on 24 October 1974 not too far northwest of this latest sighting. 117 different species have now been recorded on this count.

COMMENT: Many birders believe it is only during migration that birding can be exciting. The above count results with their unusual sightings certainly belie that belief.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SIGHTINGS:

A male Williamson's Sapsucker in Amarillo, Potter Co., seen by Estelle Stevens on 20 December. The last time this species was reported in our area was 9 October 1975.

A Northern Shrike seen near Chicken Creek, Lake Meredith, Potter Co., 8 January 1983 - Ken Seyffert.

Lake Meredith (east) - A count that was cut short because of bad weather. The day was very overcast and heavy sleet and snow began falling in early afternoon.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1982/83

- 1. Amarillo (Palo Duro Canyon) - Dec. 19
- 2. Buffalo Lake NWR - Dec. 24
- 3. Lake Meredith (east) - Dec. 26
- 4. Quitaque (Caprock Canyon SP) - Dec. 30
- 5. Lake Meredith (west) - Jan. 2

Species:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Pied-billed Grebe	10		3	8	
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	1				
Great Blue Heron	3		2	4	1
TUNDRA SWAN					3
Snow Goose				23	
Canada Goose	715			270	478
Green-winged Teal	10	5	150	200	1
Mallard	1508	560	3000	7500	600
Northern Pintail	1500	1	21	5000	254
Northern Shoveler	11			7	
American Wigeon	10	1	10	500	25
Gadwall	29	2	63	50	
Canvasback	8			8	
Redhead				1	
Ring-necked Duck	2		4	15	
Lesser Scaup				7	
Common Goldeneye	1		7		10
Bufflehead				14	
Hooded Merganser	3		2	1	
Common Merganser	1		12		200
Ruddy Duck				4	
Bald Eagle	1	1			14
Northern Harrier	6	33	6	10	14
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1	1		1
Cooper's Hawk					1
GOSHAWK		1			
Red-tailed Hawk		7	9	1	34
Ferruginous Hawk	7	10	5	1	3
Rough-legged Hawk		7	1		2
Golden Eagle	1			1	1
American Kestrel	16	9	9	30	28
MERLIN				1	
PEREGRIN FALCON	1				
Prairie Falcon	1	1			1
Ring-necked Pheasant		4	1		3
Wild Turkey	27				126
Northern Bobwhite	73	1	18	41	11
Scaled Quail	109		115	64	320
Virginia Rail			8		
COMMON MOORHEN	2				
American Coot	68		42	70	50
Sandhill Crane				750	
Killdeer		1		2	
Common Snipe		1			
Ring-billed Gull			16		90
Herring Gull					1
Rock Dove	4	8	6	24	
Mourning Dove	1	1		138	1
Greater Roadrunner	1		3	2	2
Great Horned Owl	1	4	1		2
WHITE-THROATED SWIFT	2				
Belted Kingfisher	5		2		1
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	33			6	
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER		1			
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1				
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	8	7	7	5	11
Hairy Woodpecker					2
Downy Woodpecker					2
Northern Flicker	24	3	22	8	34
Say's Phoebe		2	1		
Horned Lark	220	400			3
Blue Jay	1			7	1
Scrub Jay	8			13	
American Crow	2		5	9	13
COMMON RAVEN					1

Species	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Carolina Chickadee					11
Black-crested Titmouse	4			2	
Brown Creeper	1			1	1
Rock Wren		1		1	1
Canyon Wren	3			1	
Bewick's Wren	17	1	5	7	12
HOUSE WREN				1	
Marsh Wren	4	1	8	4	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	4			3	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4			9	2
Eastern Bluebird					12
Mountain Bluebird			20		22
Townsend's Solitaire	4		2	9	2
American Robin	7			74	5
GRAY CATBIRD	2				
Northern Mockingbird	33			8	1
Brown Thrasher	3	2		2	1
Curve-billed Thrasher	1			1	1
Cedar Waxwing	3		11	60	6
Loggerhead Shrike	2	6	8	5	9
European Starling	234	113	70	130	
ORANGE -CROWNED WARBLER				3	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	8			1	
Northern Cardinal	19		9	21	21
Rufous-sided Towhee	5	2	2	19	5
Brown Towhee	2				
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	4		2	7	1
Tree Sparrow		1	20		83
Field Sparrow				10	
Lark Bunting	46	126	30	215	30
Savannah Sparrow	1	1		6	
Fox Sparrow				3	
Song Sparrow	7	2	11	49	30
Swamp Sparrow				3	
White-throated Sparrow				1	3
White-crowned Sparrow	191	42	46	190	252
Harris' Sparrow	3		1	2	
Northern Junco	121	54	78	260	155
McCown's Longspur	110	2720		4	
Lapland Longspur		30			
Chestnut-collared Longspur	12	50			
Red-winged Blackbird	1560	153	5000	575	212
Eastern Meadowlark			1		
Western Meadowlark	175	195	37	350	32
Brewer's Blackbird		25			1
Common Grackle			1		
PURPLE FINCH	1				
House Finch	21		1	2	23
Pine Siskin	19		18	8	39
American Goldfinch	6		24	244	66
House Sparrow	110	145	26	189	12
TOTAL	77	46	55	76	69

PARTICIPANTS: (1) - Peggy Acord (Amarillo); Fern Cain (Borger); Jim Montgomery (Roswell); Mary Moyer (Amarillo); Bryan & Joann Pruitt (Amarillo); Ken Seyffert (Amarillo). (2) - Ken Seyffert (Amarillo). (3) - Peggy Acord (Amarillo); Jodie & Nancy A _____ (Huntsville); Margaret Failey (Frisco, CO); Fern Cain (Borger); E.B. Ellis (Austin); Joel & Casoy Reese (Kress); Ken Seyffert (Amarillo). (4) - E. B. & Cindy Ellis (Austin); Ken Seyffert (Amarillo). (5) - Peggy Acord (Amarillo); Fern Cain (Borger); Ken Seyffert (Amarillo); Frank Smith (Borger).