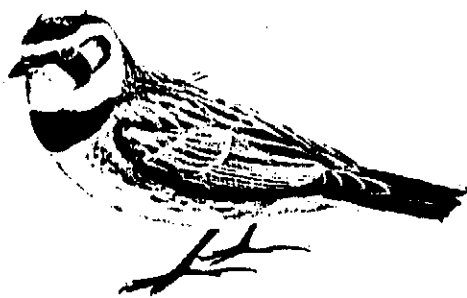


May, 1987



THE PRAIRIE HORNED LARK  
 Newsletter of the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society  
 406 West Grand, Borger, TX 790087

PROGRAM FOR MAY

Hillman Owen of Borger, Texas will give the program for May on his trip to Anarctica. We will meet at our regular time - 7:30 p.m. - at the Garden Center. This is an excellent presentation, and we hope that we will have a good attendance.

FIELD TRIPS

May 14, 15, 16. Texas Ornithological Society Spring Meeting in El Paso.

Saturday, May 24. 8:30 a.m. Palo Duro Canyon. Meet at entrance. Birds, wildflowers, nesting activity. Leader - Peggy Acord.

We have no summer plans. I urge any of you who are interested to support Kenneth Seyffert with the Breeding Bird Atlas. He is interested in any nesting activity any TPASer might see. Don't forget time and date and place for each observation. PA

CONSERVATION

A new foreign policy is needed to protect the tropical forests and other natural resources of our globe. National Audubon Society members and staff are working to make this happen:

In Congress, Audubon is asking that at least 20% of the monies set aside for Africa this year be spent on natural resource conservation and population stabilization. More money is being sought to save biological diversity, particularly in countries where local currencies have accumulated and must be spent there. Your help with congress is needed.

Audubon has prepared packets of materials on tropical forests that will be delivered to the Department of Education of each state by chapter education leaders. U.S. teachers will have the opportunity to be trained this summer at a new Audubon Camp in Trinidad.

Audubon has developed a set of slides that illustrate the impact of population growth on tropical forests. These are available from your Regional Office or in Washington D.C.

Audubon scientists are working on conservation problems in the Caribbean, Mexico and Canada seeking to identify and protect a chain of major wetlands in the Western Hemisphere for improved shorebird conservation.

Throughout the country, Audubon chapters are incorporating international issues into their conservation programs and many are working directly with environmental groups in other nations. San Miguel de Allende Audubon Society in Mexico is studying the Chiapas area and developing strategies for saving rain forests. Panama Audubon is promoting activism and awareness of tropical forest values through chapters programs, awareness of tropical forest values through chapters programs, field trips and liaisons with international organizations. Frontera Audubon Society in the Rio Grand Valley of Texas is working to save subtropic forests and woodlands on both sides of the Rio Grande. Likewise, other groups abroad are beginning to know our conservation program for what it really is -- thousands of people thought this country who care about the future and who are organizing to work to see that natural areas and wildlife are part of that future. From "Audubon Leader," April 1987.

The Texas Panhandle Audubon Society honored rancher Tom Britt of Wheeler County for a lifetime of conservation efforts during its annual conservation banquet. Mr. Britt has practiced range and game management on his 19,000 acre ranch for many years resulting in luxuriant native grasses and wildlife habitat. The rare Lesser Prairie Chicken still thrives on the Britt Ranch.

BIRD NOTES

Observations from Kenneth Seyffert: Vermilion Flycatcher This seems to be the bird of the season. Besides the one reported in the last Newsletter, I saw another male in the Palo Duro Canyon State Park on April 15, and Joel Reese had a male near Kress, Swisher County, on April 9.

Wild Turkey: I don't know whether it is the result of releases or what, but there are unusually large numbers of this species to be seen both in Palo Duro Canyon State Park and at Buffalo Lake NWR. Right now the gobblers are really courting.

Mallard: The TPAS field trip on April 18 to the Buffalo Lake NWR turned up a nest located on Stewart Dike containing 16 eggs. A female Mallard was flushed from it, but only four of the eggs appeared to be hers; the other twelve looked like teal eggs, Cinnamon or Blue-winged? Probably the former species as the latter species has only begun to arrive in the area, and the former arrived earlier and has been carrying on courting activities for sometime.

White Throated Swift: Approximately 75 were seen in Caprock Canyons State Park, Brisco Co., May 2. I was going up the South Prong at sunrise when I heard loud bird calls overhead. Looking up, I saw a milling mass of birds near the high and steep canyon walls. They circled about for several minutes before flying up canyon, and I never saw them again. Had they roosted in the canyon walls that night? This species is rarely seen in our area, and this sighting is far east of its normal route.

King Rail: At least three calling in the marshes at Sanford Dam, Lake Meredith, Hutchinson Co. on May 5. One emerged into the open at one time, and I got a good look at it. This is the first reported sighting in our area since an injured bird was found in Amarillo on May 26, 1965. The three birds were giving their mating calls (kik=kik-kik, etc.) very persistently and appeared to be setting up territories. Close watch should be kept for possible nesting as an adult male and a young male in down plumage were collected near this same area 5-7-July, 1950. Virginia Rails and Common Moorhens were also calling in the marsh and are probably nesting there.

Breeding Bird Atlas Update: The number of species coming under the Confirmed nesting category continues to grow. To date we have: Black-crowned Night Heron, Mallard, Northern Pintail; Cinnamon/Blue-winged Teal; Swainson's Hawk; Red-tailed Hawk; Golden Eagle; Mourning Dove; Great Horned Owl; Ladder-backed Woodpecker, American Crow; Bishtit; Rock Wren; European Starling; Red-winged Blackbird; House Sparrow, American Avocet.

Don Myers identified two California Gulls May 2, at Elysian Fields (Amarillo Sewage Ponds). One Purple Martin over Diamond Horseshoe Pond 5/5, Black-necked Stilt at Triangle Ponds; and 30 Black-crowned Herons in a rookery in a caliche pit in which a tree (or trees?) grow. It seems that you have to overfly this area in a helicopter to see this. Is that fair? HOLD THE PRESS! Don had a Perigrine Falcon at Triangle Ponds this morning (5/10). It flew over and landed at the edge of the pond. He was able to get his scope on it and then it flew away.

I (FC) had two Solitary Sandpipers and three Upland Sandpipers at a rain pond off Hwy. 136 on the road to Panhandle. The Lark Buntings have been so beautiful and plentiful on their migration route north. Barbara Ames, Borger, a backyard birder is beginning to make very good observations in the area, and we appreciate her calling to tell us what she has seen.

Vignette: (from Peggy Acord) The sight of a small winged projectile stopped me as I looked out the back door to check the bird activity in the yard. I grabbed my glasses and stepped outside. The male Black-chinned Hummingbird was displaying with great enthusiasm. While I watched, he started with a series of low figure eight movements then moved to a U-shaped rocking flight high over my head. I looked in vain for a female but could not find one. He was feeding in my huge red buckeye, probing the dusky red spikes with that long bill. In between, he rested near the bottom of the tree well back into the foliage. I watched him until dark when he was roosted in the buckeye. I had visions of a continuing courtship of the as yet unseen female, but by morning, Mr. Black-Chin had gone on his way, and I was left with the strong feeling that springtime emotions had prompted him to "display" while guarding a good food supply from other birds - an interesting bit of bird behavior to watch.

That's all folks. Next Newsletter in September.

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HOLD THE PRESS (once more)!

A meeting of the Board of Directors and officers of the TPAS will be held at the Garden Center at 6:30 p.m.

AND Mary Moyer says please bring aluminum (either to her house or the Garden Center.)

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BIG DAY COUNT, Potter and Randall Counties, May 9, 1987

Participants: Peggy Acord, Fern Cain, Glenda Cook, Maurine and Joed Forbus, Betty Gerard, Martha Jarnigan, Rita Kenney, Mary Moyer, Don Myers, Joann Pruitt, Joel Reese, Lea Reynolds, Rosemary Scott, Frank Smith, Page Smith, Robert Smith, George and Esther Waddill, and Winnie Wester - Tom Johnson

Eared Grebe	Horned Lark
Pied-billed Grebe	Rough-winged Swallow
Great Blue Heron	<del>Bank Swallow</del> (70)
Black-crowned Night Heron	Cliff Swallow
White-faced Ibis	Purple Martin
Mallard	Blue Jay
Gadwall	Scrub Jay
Pintail	White-necked Raven
Green-winged Teal	American Crow
Blue-winged Teal	Carolina Chickadee
Cinnamon Teal	Tufted Titmouse
American Wigeon	Bushtit
Northern Shoveler	Bewick's Wren
Redhead	Rock Wren
Ring-necked Duck	Northern Mockingbird
Ruddy Duck	Brown Thrasher
Turkey Vulture	Curve-billed Thrasher
Mississippi Kite	Sage Thrasher
Sharp-shinned Hawk	American Robin
Red-tailed Hawk	Swainson's Thrush
Swainson's Hawk	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
-Ferruginous Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Kestrel, American	Cedar Waxwing
Bobwhite Quail	Loggerhead Shrike
Scaled Quail	European Starling
Pheasant	Black and White Warbler
Wild Turkey	Nashville Warbler
Black-necked Stilt	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Avocet	Blackpoll Warbler
Killdeer	Common Yellowthroat
Greater Yellowlegs	Wilson's Warbler
Lesser Yellowlegs	House Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Western Meadowlark
Wilson's Phalarope	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Long-billed Dowitcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	Orchard Oriole
Bairds Sandpiper	Northern Oriole
Stilt Sandpiper	Brewer's Blackbird
Ring-billed Gull	Great-tailed Grackle
Black Tern	Common Grackle
Rock Dove	Brown-headed Cowbird
Mourning Dove	Northern Cardinal
Roadrunner	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Great Horned Owl	Black-headed Grosbeak
Burrowing Owl	Blue Grosbeak
Common Nighthawk	Painted Bunting
Black-chinned Humingbird	House Finch
Belted Kingfisher	Pine Siskin
Common Flicker	American Goldfinch
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	Rufous-sided Towhee
Red-headed Woodpecker	Lark Bunting
Hairy Woodpecker	Savannah Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Grasshopper Sparrow
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	Vesper Sparrow
Eastern Kingbird	Lark Sparrow
Western Kingbird	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
Great-crested Flycatcher	Cassin's Sparrow
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Northern Junco
Say's Phoebe	Chipping Sparrow
Empidonax sp.	Clay-colored Sparrow
Western Pewee	White-crowned Sparrow
	Song Sparrow