



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

PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER

Tommy Rosson, who was our selectee for attending a National Audubon Camp this year, will give the program. Meeting will be at 7:30 at the Garden Center.

A Board Meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, September 19 Buffalo Lake. 8:30 a.m. Meet at entrance.
Saturday, October 3 Ceta Glenn. 8:30 a.m. Meet at entrance.
Saturday, October 17 Terry and Allen Ranches. Meet at Fern Cain's house, 406 West Grand, Borger, at 8:00 a.m. Turn off HY 207 at underpass to Wilson Street. Or continue under underpass from HY 136 to Wilson Street. Turn North at the light at the intersection of Wilson and McGee Streets, go one block to Grand Ave., turn East on Grand 1/2 block. House faces south, has a porch and porch swing.
 Saturday, October 31. Lake Marvin

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Some of you were involved in the wave of protests that erupted in the wake of an astonishing order from National headquarters last May 18, an order that abolished most of the Regional Offices and fired several of the Regional Vice-Presidents and other field staff. It seemed obvious in that ill-considered action, and in other recent policy changes, that National Audubon envisioned itself essentially as consisting of a Board of Directors, a magazine, a headquarters staff in New York and a lobbying staff in Washington, D.C. It had begun to look upon its members primarily as magazine subscribers and a source of funds to support the New York and Washington offices -- and to regard the regional offices and chapters as financial burdens. In fact, it was this feeling of being National's lackeys that made me drop out of the National Audubon Society at one time.

Fearful of a proxy "fight", as they chose to call it (I call it democratizing the Society), the National Board held an emergency meeting July 27, decided on a strategy and empowered a special committee of nine directors, plus President Berle and other staff, to negotiate with a group of 19 chapter representatives - about 2 per region. These representatives were hand-picked by National and the surviving Regional Vice Presidents. The negotiating session was held August 8, in Washington. According to accounts reaching us, the discussions were frank. The result was a plan that nine persons representative of chapter concerns would be elected to the National Board this year -- with the condition that three would be elected for terms of only one year, three for terms of two years, and three for three years.

The nine "Chapter directors" are to be elected, one from each region, with each chapter entitled to one vote. What this means, technically, is that the nine chosen will then be included among the slate of 12 to be endorsed by the National Board's own nominating committee -- the device through which the Board has been self-perpetuating. They will then be elected at the annual meeting, set for December 4 in New York City, through the casting of proxies gathered by National. Even so, the by-laws will have to be amended because they now provide for only 3-year terms.

The one-year, two-year, three-year deal was, at best, a grudging concession by National's ruling group. If they wanted to respond to concerns of the grass roots, why shouldn't the nine chapter-oriented directors be elected for full 3-year terms, as are other directors? The deal sets us a category of second-class directors. If they prove obstreperous, three can be dismissed through failure of renomination after one

year, 3 others after 2 years, and the final three disposed of at the end of three years. Moreover, the scheme appears designed to assure that chapter experienced directors will never constitute more than one-fourth of the full board of 36 members.

Major policy questions remain unresolved:

A "two-tier" membership system designed to channel a larger of membership revenues to New York, less to the chapters, remains on the National agenda.

Will the Regional Offices be restaffed, or gradually phased out? There already has been a shifting of states to eliminate one or two regions.

Will the society's historic emphasis on education be restored, or replaced by television "specials" and other media gimmicks?

This latest action by the National Board to overtly bully the grass roots members has caused so much wailing and gnashing of teeth throughout the land, that it appears this stimulus may have caused the catharsis needed to get the N.A.S. back on a sane course by the grass roots members getting into the driver's seat.

Don Myers

A.C.T TO MEET IN EL PASO

The El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society invites you to far West Texas November 13-15 for the Fall 1987 Meeting of the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) This statewide federation of Texas Audubon chapters has been busy in 1987, with the Texas Legislature and National Audubon's recent reorganization of its field staff both demanding lots of attention. The NAS reorganization led to some big changes for Audubon in Texas and will be the main subject of discussion at the El Paso meeting.

For registration details, contact TPAS President Don Myers, 806/355-1551, Ext. 281 or Audubon's Southwest Regional Office (512/327-1943).

BIRD NOTES

June 3. 2 Yellow-crowned Night Herons SE of Amarillo. PA
June 6. A Great Egret SE of Amarillo. PA Forster's Tern with all black bill. DM
June 12. White Pelican west of Childress DM
July 6 Marbled Godwit southeast of Amarillo - another 3 weeks later. DM
July 7 Great Egret south of Canyon. KS
July 21. Curved-bill Thrasher north of Vega.
July 23. Solitary Sandpiper southeast of Amarillo DM.
July 24. A park ranger at the Alibates National Monument found a dead Poor Will on the trail.
July 25. Snowy Egret at Buffalo Lake NWR KS
August 4 Bunches of Upland Sandpipers heard going overhead with a cold front. PA Lots of them in the fields thereafter
August 7. Ed Kutac and Don Myers had a Kingfisher in the Rita Blanca National Grasslands. There was no water within miles; all the lakes were dry.
August 8. Eastern Phoebe at Boys Ranch EK & DM
August 11. Don Myers found a playa lake west of Amarillo that had at least 10 Sora Rails calling. One flew from the edge of the road and its short yellow bill could be clearly seen. Earlier (8-9) Kutac saw a rail fly at the Diamond Horseshoe playa that he knew was either a Virginia or Sora. Myers went the next day and 3 Soras answered his tape. Two days later, Myers visually sighted 3 and Kenneth Seyffert saw 10 on August 15 as well as a Yellow Rail which is the area's first sighting.
August 13. Northern Waterthrush at Buffalo NWR.
August 30. Marbled Godwit at sewage pond and again Sept 3 - 7

So many Solitary Sandpipers have been seen in August that they are not a rare bird this fall. Also, Myers has seen several Spotted Sandpipers with a high of 10 at Thompson Park.

PA = Peggy Acord; FC= Fern Cain; EK= Ed Kutac; RS = Rosemary Scott;
KS = Ken Seyffert

Highlights of the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project from Ken Seyffert's letter:

Heading the list is the Green-backed Heron pair with fledgling found by Nancy and Ed Elliott in their Canyon block. This represents the first confirmed nesting of the species in the Panhandle. Steve Rader found a Lesser Prairie Chicken nest with eleven eggs in his Glazier block, and you don't find one of those every day! Tommy Hinkle with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department found a brood of Wood Ducks on the Gene Howe Wildlife Management Area in Hemphill County, along with nesting Least Terns on the river that got washed out and then re-nested. David Rideout with the Department also found them nesting on the river north of Childress. A. O. Stark in Quitaque found a Golden Eagle nest with two eaglets in the Caprock Canyons area. Probables that if confirmed would have been firsts for the Panhandle: the American Bittern at Lake Tanglewood (Tom Johnson); Ruby-throated Hummingbird on territory in Wheeler (Dick DeArment); King and Virginia Rails in the marsh at Sanford Dam, Lake Meredith (Ken Seyffert) I could go on and on as many good finds were made by many people. Very unusual was the young Red-headed Woodpecker nestling that had apparently fallen out of its nest and was retrieved by a genuine retriever dog and gently brought to George and Esther Waddill for confirmation. That's the way to do your confirming.

BIRDING TRIVIA

Question. What four birds are recorded only in the northern 48 states?

Answer: 1. Lesser Prairie Chicken
2. Yellow-billed Magpie
3. Brown-headed Nuthatch
4. Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Question. What bird flies the slowest?

Answer. American Woodcock. It is said that it is able to fly and maintain its altitude at only five miles per hour.