

PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY:

The monthly meeting of the Texas Panhandle Audubon Society will be held on Monday, Feb. 16, at 7:30 p.m. at the Garden Center. Pesa Stich will give the program which will center around the animal rehabilitation work the Stichs are engaged in and the work they are doing with the public school system in connection with it.

LOBBY EFFORT OFF TO GOOD START:

The Southwest Regional Office of the National Audubon Society commends the twelve contributing Chapters and the Audubon Council of Texas (ACT) for providing funds to increase the Audubon lobbying effort at the State Capitol. Though a modest beginning, the \$12,000 in funding pledged for this effort has made it possible to hire Audubon's Texas Environmental Lobbyist, G. K. Sprinkle, subscribe to a legislative service, and provide a limited telephone and supplies budget. Our ability to contact members of the Legislature and track bills has been greatly enhanced, and the Regional Office should be capable of providing Audubon members with more timely information on legislative matters.

Audubon legislative priorities were set at the November, 1986 ACT meeting (held in conjunction with the Regional Conference) from results of a questionnaire circulated to all Chapter Presidents and ACT Delegates in early October, 1986. Top priority was afforded 1) groundwater protection and management, 2) funding hazardous waste management and enforcement, 3) wetlands protection and rivers conservation, 4) funding Texas Parks and Wildlife Department nongame program, and 5) strengthening pesticide regulation. In addition, attention will be given to a number of other issues including funding for various natural resource protection activities, container deposit, habitat acquisition, and energy efficiency standards for appliances.

The Regional Office has drafted legislation on rivers conservation and mandatory hunter education, modified a model bill on energy efficiency standards for appliances, and is working with the Sierra Club to draft wetlands legislation. Senator Santiesteban has agreed to sponsor the rivers bill which is supported by a number of conservation and recreation groups, and bills concerning many of our priority issues have already been filed. G.K. has been very active on these issues at the Capitol (including locating a prospective sponsor for the appliance bill) and in contacting Chapters to organize the grassroots lobbying effort which is essential for our effectiveness.

Audubon members that have any questions concerning the lobbying effort and our legislative issues or that wish to help are encouraged to contact the Southwest Regional Office (2525 Wallingwood, Suite 1505, Austin, TX 78746; phone 512/327-1943).

TEXAS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS:

Some of you may already have heard about a Breeding Bird Atlas for Texas. In case you have not, let me tell you about it.

A breeding bird atlas is a coordinated effort to determine the breeding distribution of all bird species in a defined geographic region. The region of interest is divided into blocks (in our area the block is one degree of latitude and longitude), and the breeding status of birds is recorded within each block. Within each block, a species' breeding status can be recorded as possible, probable, or confirmed based on the behavior of the birds or the finding of nests or young. In North America to date, nine states and two Canadian provinces have completed fieldwork for breeding bird atlas projects, and 18 states and four provinces currently are collecting data. Most European countries (beginning with the British Isles) already have completed an atlas and currently are involved in a co-ordinated all-Europe atlas. Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Africa have been atlased.

These atlases will be of great scientific importance and will be the basis by which future generations can keep watch over the evolving distribution and the status of its breeding birds. It is obvious that gathering this information for a state as large and varied as Texas is going to be a tremendous task, especially since most of the birders are concentrated in the more populous areas of the state and large areas have few or no birders at all (our case in the Panhandle). A successful atlas in the Panhandle will require the commitment of us all.

The project is under the direction of Dr. Keith Arnold, Professor and Curator of Birds at Texas A&M University, who is planning to initiate a breeding bird atlas in Texas beginning in 1987, to run through five years. Texas A&M has the computer facilities to handle such a large volume of data and to publish the results. Needless to say, such an undertaking will cost money. In addition to needing everyone's help in the field, the project also requires financial backing. If you care to contribute, checks should be made out to the Texas A&M University Development Foundation with a memo on the check: Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Send your contribution to Texas A&M University Development Foundation, Box J-7, College Station, TX 77844.

As plans develop, instruction booklets and field lists for recording nesting data will be made available to participants. Please plan on participating in the fieldwork even if you do not make a financial contribution. We are in particular need of participants from outside the Amarillo area. If you cannot help in the fieldwork yourself, we could still use your help in spreading word of the project to your friends or acquaintances to whom this project might be of interest, and by making known to us places otherwise closed to the public that would be opened to us in our search for nesting birds.

As project coordinator for this region, I welcome your participation. You may contact me at any time at 2206 S. Lipscomb St., Amarillo, TX 79109 or PH: 373-9580. - Kenneth Seyffert -

ALUMINUM! ALUMINUM! ALUMINUM!

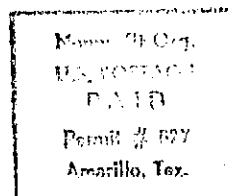
Once again we are asking for your old, discarded aluminum items. Please bring what you have gathered together to the next meeting.

A FAREWELL:

Beginning with the next issue, this newsletter will be under new editorship. Twenty years is long enough for one person and fresh ideas and different bias are in order. I am sure that whoever elects to take on the job will receive your cooperation and support.

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