



L.O.S.

News



The L.O.S. NEWS has just set a record: it has been 34 weeks since the last issue appeared--the longest newsless stretch in the history of the publication! Editorial headquarters, however, cannot take full credit for this achievement. During those 34 weeks not one single member sent in a news item! The officers of your Society want to bring out a minimum of four to five newsletters per year; but they cannot fill that many issues by telling merely of the things that happen around headquarters as the news part of this issue largely does. So sit right down and drop a line to J. Harvey Roberts, Department of Zoology, L.S.U., Baton Rouge. Let him know what you've been doing and what has been happening in your area. If you do so, we may still be able to get out another newsletter this year.

Neither of the travel stories in this issue, the exotic account by the Evanses on p. 2 nor Horace Jeter's saga west of the Pecos on p. 4, is a product of the 1958 summer vacation period. Jerry and Boots got the year off to a grand start by making their cruise last January, and Horace's adventures and misadventures date back to June 1957. We're still waiting to hear ourselves how members spent the summer, but we do already have a story on a fall trip of an ornithological nature to the far-off wilds of New York (see A.O.U. MEETING, p.5); and Earl Greene, the founder of the L.O.S., passed through Baton Rouge the other day on his way to fabulous Barro Colorado Island in the Canal Zone. He should have a lot to tell us when he gets back.

HERE 'TIS



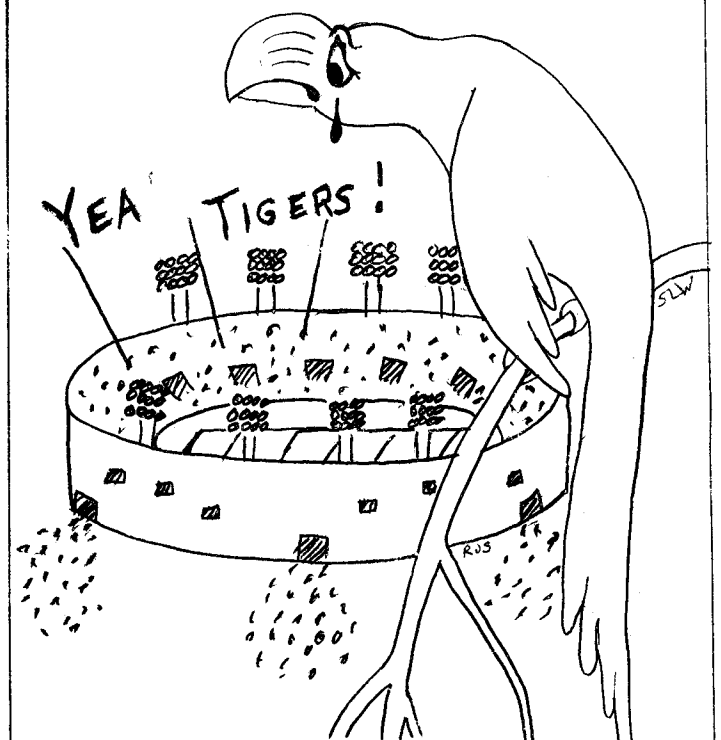
THE FALL MEETING

Though we held our 1958 spring meeting at Cameron, the Society has not officially convened in that super bird area in autumn for three whole years. It has therefore been decided that we'll go back to Cameron once again this year. The date has been set as Saturday, December 6. That's exactly the sixth anniversary of the memorable meeting at Cameron in the fall of 1952, the year of the first big western invasion, when the parish's customary great showing

in water birds was spiced with an unusual number of unusual land birds. There are signs that history may repeat itself. Already on a visit to Cameron Parish earlier in the fall, Johnny Gee has found a Curve-billed Thrasher--a stray from the West new to the Louisiana list.

Those of you who have been to Cameron in past autumns will need no urging to attend the meeting. Those who have not will not want to miss this opportunity to get acquainted with Louisiana birding at its best. It would be advisable to write at once for accommodations, available at Broussard's Motel, the Gulf Motel, or the old Cameron Hotel--all of which may be addressed simply as "Cameron, La." The dinner-meeting will take place as usual at Fred's Drive-Inn on Saturday night, and on arriving in town members should report at the Cameron Hotel to register for the meeting and to obtain information about the field trips. If possible, arrange to come to Cameron on Friday night so as to be ready to go into action early on Saturday morning.

LIL' ORPHAN ANI



Those L.S.U. ornithologists never come to look at me anymore!

BIRDS IN THE WEST INDIES

By Mr. and Mrs. H.A.J. Evans

We were leaving Miami on January 14 and expected our birding to start on our arrival in Puerto Rico. However, we were somewhat surprised to see from our window at the Columbus Hotel in Miami a Reddish Egret disporting itself in a lagoon and to find two Cattle Egrets on Biscayne Boulevard.

In Puerto Rico, as in all the other places visited, we found shore and sea birds extremely scarce. At the Agricultural Station we located such birds as the Yellow-shouldered Blackbird, Red-legged Thrush, Antillean Bananaquit, and Black-faced Grassquit. Cattle Egrets were counted in the hundreds on the island. At El Yunque, in the Luquillo National Forest, we saw the Pearly-eyed Thrasher, Puerto Rican Tody, a beautiful male Black-throated Blue Warbler, and such old favorites as the Parula Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. In this National Forest the last surviving Puerto Rican Parrots, a flock estimated at 400, still exist; and just as we were leaving, we were fortunate in seeing three that flew overhead. The only hummingbirds we could definitely identify were the Puerto Rican Emerald and the Green Mango.

Arriving in Port of Spain, Trinidad, we were awakened early by the Kiskadee, the well-known flycatcher, considered an absolute nuisance by the residents. Blue tanagers and Short-tailed Swifts were abundant. In the Botanical Gardens we saw Black-throated Orioles, a Golden-eyed Thrush, and unidentified tanagers and thrushes.

The next day we crossed over to the small island of Little Tobago to see the Birds of Paradise introduced there years ago from New Guinea. This island has now been made a government bird sanctuary and, after seeing two cocks and two hens of the beautiful Birds of Paradise, we received a greater thrill when on the other side of the island we viewed 50 or 60 Red-billed Tropicbirds and some Brown Boobies, which nest regularly on Little Tobago. While generally we were too early to see the nesting sea birds in the Lesser Antilles (apparently March to May are the best months), we had no greater enjoyment than watching these beautiful tropicbirds with their long streamer tails, like jet planes, circling around and intermingling with the clumsier but no less interesting boobies, some of which we observed feeding young in nests on the cliffs.

Returning to Trinidad forthwith, we were fortunate to meet Dr. William Beebe at Simla, the headquarters of the New York Zoological Society. He feels that the view of the beautiful Arima Valley from this location surpasses anything he has seen, even

in Java. Much could be said of the work being done there with butterflies and many other scientific matters, but confining our remarks to birds, we particularly noted the Tufted Coquette Hummingbird. Other birds noted in Tobago and Trinidad and "lifers" to us were the Jacamar, Three-banded Warbler, a lovely blue and yellow trogon (species at present unidentified), Guan (or "Wild hen"), Black-backed Hawk, and various species of swallows, swifts, hummingbirds, grassquits, finches, and flycatchers. The Silver Beak (Bec D'Argent), Red-legged Grampo, Violaceous Euphonia, and Cotinga were among the birds we were able to identify. Oropendulas were common in Tobago.

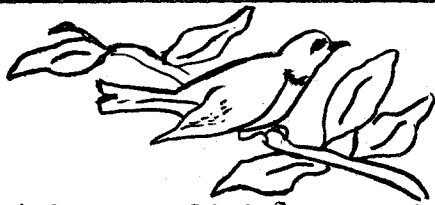
Our next visit was to Martinique, where only French is spoken--or nearly so. We had corresponded with Pere Pinchon of the Seminary College, and he had advised us that he'd meet us on our arrival and had sent a copy of his booklet (in French) on the birds of the French West Indies. We were staying at the Lido Hotel, and as the booklet in question is quite a few years old, we were somewhat hesitant about asking the undoubtedly aging priest to visit us at the hotel, which was situated on a cliff and had 50 or 60 steps to be negotiated. But over the telephone he was obliging enough to agree to join us there.

Sitting peacefully the next afternoon on the hotel porch, we were forcefully invaded by a most vigorous, black-bearded, and youthful Pere Pinchon, bristling with energy. Pere Pinchon not only showed us his fine collection of birds, butterflies, shells, and other items, but also took us through the museum and zoo which he has started in Fort-de-France. His collections are amazing, and we feel that without doubt he is today the greatest naturalist in the French West Indies.

Unfortunately, as he pointed out, such birds as Sooty and Noddy Terns, Audubon Shearwaters and quite a few others of great interest, only arrive later in the year to nest, and as we examined his specimens of birds, eggs, and nests, the phrase "pas maintenant" (not now), doomed many of our fondest hopes. But at Morne Rouge in the Martinique rain forest, we heard the beautiful and mournful call of the Rufous-throated Solitaire and, after much searching, saw this shy bird.

In Guadeloupe and Antigua we saw little of additional interest, though throughout the islands, the Golden Warbler--like our own Yellow, only much more brilliant--was common. The hummingbirds principally noted in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Antigua were the common Antillean Crested, the Garnet-throated and the Emerald-throated, known also as the Blue-breasted.

REPORT ON
THE SPRING
MEETING**



Hurricane Audrey remolded Cameron physically. Old landmarks were changed, old buildings were demolished. The landscape still bears the scars, still is littered with mute evidence of destroyed homes (remnants of furniture and appliances: washing machines, refrigerators, bedsteads, and television sets). Less evident, but nevertheless just as real, is the damage to grazing lands. Whether the numerous but scattered carcasses of cattle resulted from starvation, the appearance of the range points in that direction. A pair of little shoes, a rusty overturned tricycle far out in the waste suggest the awful human consequences.

But there is a brighter side to Cameron. Bright new homes, churches and a new school, reveal the hope and courage among the people. The new motels and, especially, Fred Carmier's restaurant were welcome improvements for the L.O.S. members. Fred's not only served an excellent dinner at reasonable cost but provided very suitable quarters for the formal meeting.

Formal meeting! Never was there a meeting more informal. Practically the only planning done previous to the meeting was the decision to show the beautiful colored movies made in southern Louisiana and Mississippi by Mr. M. L. Miles, formerly of Baton Rouge, and to show the wonderful sound film on woodpeckers that is owned by the Museum of Natural Science. The President solicited, wheedled, and cajoled (as if this were necessary!) to persuade various members to cite the best finds (with precise locations) as well as the greatest disappointments. Avocets, phalaropes and Cattle Egrets played second-fiddle to the Roseate Spoonbills. It seemed impractical to go to the spoonbill colony, so these remarkable birds came to us. A nice flock settled to feed in the area of Big Lake near the holdings of the Magnolia Petroleum Company, south of the Sabine Refuge. Several of the members just happened to be in the area at that time (those particular members usually just happen to be at the right places at the right time!). Avocets were remarkable for their numbers and their apparent indifference to our presence. Imagine getting as close as thirty feet from such a bird with a motion picture color camera! Can't imagine that? Then wait until the Elliots get their film back from the processing laboratory. Forget to adjust for distance, or set the diaphragm, or -- horrors of all horrors -- forget to put in the film? Not a chance!

Other noteworthy finds included the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Western Tanager. Several members remarked about the full plumage in many of the Golden Plovers (seen lazily standing around among Black-bellied Plovers on the mud flats back of the courthouse).

Among the disappointments was the failure of the cold front to push down to the coast and precipitate hordes of warblers and other small birds as it has been known to do in the past. Instead, a brisk south wind swept the place nearly clean of such migrants. Other disappointments included the absence of "Old Reliables" also missed on the Christmas census: Ground Dove, Downy Woodpecker, and Chickadee. Could it be that Audrey really wiped out these permanent residents and that replacements have not yet found the area? The Carolina Wren (missed on the census) was found sparingly in several places, and the Sharp-tailed Sparrows were again in their familiar seaside habitat.

All-in-all, there was little to complain about, considering that in one day the group of some 40 people saw 163 species of birds.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Ethel Jones recently changed her status in our Society to that of a Life Member. Other Life Members are: Bob and Juanita Krebs, Electa Levi, Albert E. Eigenbrod, Katherine Hearne, Rene Wilson, Bob and Mary Ann Moore, B. Stanley Nelson, and Rose Feingold. Jerry and Boots Evans and Ava Tabor remain our only Patrons. New members are as follows:

Mrs. William H. Berbuesse, New Orleans
Mrs. B. E. Bordelon, Baton Rouge
Mr. Walter C. Carey, New Orleans
Mrs. Nell C. Cuthell, New Orleans
Mr. Hubert O. Davis, Jr.; Bogalusa
Mr. Dan Dennett, Jr.; Alexandria
Miss Margaret Ferguson, San Antonio
Mrs. John C. Ferne, Baton Rouge
Dr. Paul D. Gard, Jr.; Bogalusa
Mr. Ed R. Grant, Covington
Miss Betty Harrel, Baton Rouge
Mrs. Maurine S. Jarrell, Metairie
Mr. A. R. Johnson, Baton Rouge
Dr. Robert A. Norris, New Orleans
Mr. Taylor Oncale, Lake Charles
Mrs. Charles L. Payne, Lake Charles
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Plater, Thibodaux
Mrs. Elrie Robinson, St. Francisville
Mr. R. A. Russell, New Orleans
Dr. Clifford Tillman, Natchez
Rev. William B. Venable, Baker
Mr. Robert M. Wagner, Baton Rouge
Mr. William H. West, Leesville

CRAMP IN THE BIG BEND

By Horace H. Jeter

Most of my vacation trips provide memories which make me want to pay a return visit to some of the major points of interest. Such was not the case this year, when I spent six days in June in Big Bend National Park, out in west Texas. It was certainly an interesting place, but any more complimentary adjective would require more charity than I possess. Nevertheless, for an avid bird watcher it is a "must" at some time, since it is the only place in the US to find certain species.

The park consists of the Chisos Mountains, reaching an elevation of over 7800 feet, surrounded by creosote bush desert and bordered on the south by the Rio Grande. The only place to stay is in the Basin, located in the Chisos at about 5400 feet. Here are cabins, a dining room, many gnats and flies, and cold beer.

One day I drove southeast to Boguillas Canyon, through which passes the Rio Grande; I took a short side trip en route to Hot Springs, represented by a few abandoned buildings. Here I found Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Black Phoebes, a Vermilion Flycatcher, Verdins, Black-tailed Gnatcatchers, Bell's Vireos, Pyrrhuloxias, a Painted Bunting, and House Finches. At the canyon I added a Rough-winged Swallow and began an uninspired "Mexican Life List" consisting of four species noted just across the river.

The best birding, as well as the less uncomfortable temperatures, is up in the mountains. The most interesting birds can nearly all be found along the trail between the Basin and Laguna, a meadow at an elevation of about 6700 feet. The one really beautiful bird here is the Scott's Oriole, which is common in the vicinity of the Basin. Both its song and its call-note are remarkably like those of the Western Meadowlark. Also common at the Basin are Canyon Towhees and Rufous-crowned Sparrows; I saw one pair of Say's Phoebes, several Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, and a few Acorn Woodpeckers. At night I heard Poor-wills and Elf Owls calling. At the Basin and along the trail to Laguna I saw the noisiest bird of the area, the Mexican Jay, the remarkably quiet Ash-throated Flycatcher, and a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. About 3/4 of a mile or so from the Basin things get interesting, for here I added a lifer that I did not expect: Black-chinned Sparrow. My attention was first directed to it by its song, which is similar in form to that of the Field Sparrow. I tallied a total of eight singing Black-chins during my stay in the

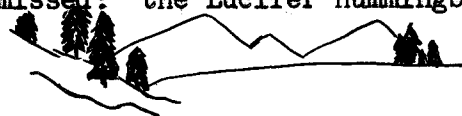
Chisos, most of them along this trail, where they occurred up to 6600 feet or so. There was a family of Rock Wrens where I first found the sparrow, and several times I saw and heard Band-tailed Pigeons. Farther south and much higher up, I heard Canyon Wrens singing from the cliffs on the side of Emory Peak. Here in the Chisos and in the Davis Mountains to the north both Common Bushtits and Black-eared Bushtits may be found. I found both species along the trail to Laguna, sometimes in mixed flocks. Black-ears predominated in the vicinity of Boot Spring.

Speaking of Boot Spring, this is the best known area for finding the most famous specialty of the Chisos, the Colima Warbler. It may be reached by taking a trail east from Laguna. At Boot Spring I found only one singing Colima, and he was hard to get a good look at. Also in this area I found a singing Painted Redstart, a Blue-throated Hummingbird, Hutton's Vireos and a few other species more easily found nearer the Basin. At 11:50 a.m. I added a lifer here while eating lunch, when a Whip-poor-will called a few times. Later I was startled when I flushed a female Whip along the trail up the canyon. She was escorting two downy young.

But to get back to the Basin-Laguna trail. Here one is likely to see Black-crested Titmice, which may appear anywhere that there are trees. High up the trail, as one nears Laguna, Spotted Towhees are fairly numerous. Although the subspecies in this area is supposed to have the white spots greatly reduced, this was certainly not noticeable to me; the song is more complex than described in Peterson's Guide and it is not like that of the Eastern Towhee. Up in the vicinity of the Spotted Towhees I saw and heard several Colima Warblers, with greater ease than at Boot Spring. Black-chinned Hummingbirds are present all along the trail in small numbers, but Broad-tailed Hummers are more numerous at the higher elevations.

At Laguna I saw a pair of Hepatic Tanagers; a Black-headed Grosbeak was singing between Laguna and Boot Spring. White-throated Swifts may appear almost anywhere, but I saw them regularly flying about the cliffs near Emory Peak.

White-necked Ravens frequent the desert areas and are usually present near Government Spring Junction; Common Ravens frequent Santa Elena Canyon, and one flew over the Basin one day. There was only one species of my listed birds to look for that I missed: the Lucifer Hummingbird.



A.O.U. MEETING ~

The L.O.S. was well represented at the recent 75th Anniversary Meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in New York. Miss Ava Tabor and Mrs. Electa Levi of Thibodaux and Mrs. Ethel Jones and Mrs. Katherine Hearne of Shreveport were there and, from all indications, were having the times of their lives. Of course George and Jean Lowery and Bob Newman were there also. George says that he attended his first A.O.U. convention in 1934 when he was still a student at L.S.U. and that he has missed few since that time and he doesn't intend ever to miss another. George and Bob presented a joint paper entitled "The Continental Pattern of Migration on the Night of October 3, 1952" in which they analyzed data from 168 simultaneously operating stations in North America where counts were made of birds passing before the moon. From these data it was possible for them to show the volume and direction of migration over a wide area of the continent in direct comparison with surface weather, winds aloft, and air stability.

Also attending the meeting was Jerry Verner, graduate student at L.S.U., who was the recipient of one of the Marcia B. Tucker Awards, which are given each year to outstanding graduate students in the United States and Canada. The awards pay the expenses of the recipients to the A. O. U. meeting. Jerry presented an excellent paper at one of the technical sessions in New York, reporting on his studies of the Red-footed Booby on Half Moon Cay, British Honduras, in the spring of 1958.

Also attending the meeting were Earle R. Greene, Robert C. Conn, Chan Robbins, and Thomas R. Howell, whom we proudly claim among our membership. Our old and cherished friends Bob and Juanita Krebs, who are both Founders and Life Members of the L.O.S., came over from their present home in Summit, New Jersey, to attend the annual banquet.

At the business meetings of the Society George Lowery automatically moved up to First Vice-President. Regina, Saskatchewan, was selected as the site of the next convention and the date has been tentatively set for the week of August 25. For sheer ornithological pleasure begin now to lay your plans for attending next year's meeting. If you don't think these A.O.U. conventions can be incomparable fun, ask Ava, Katherine, Ethel, or Electa. The papers sessions, which last three days, are always chockfull of exciting ornithology and there are numerous social events, an all-day field trip, and various other occasions for meeting and talking with over 300 fellow ornithologists.

L.O.S. members who are not also members of the A.O.U. should consider joining the latter. It is one of the main scientific societies in the world devoted to the advancement of ornithology. Members receive the official quarterly publication The Auk and in that way keep abreast of ornithological discoveries and research. Maintaining a membership in the A. O. U. helps the society and is one small way you can patronize ornithology in the United States. Dues are only \$5.00 a year, Life Membership \$100. Money received from Life Memberships goes into the Society's special Endowment Fund that is used in getting our special publications such as the "A.O.U. Check-List of North American Birds," "Recent Studies in Avian Biology," and the forthcoming "Handbook of North American Birds."

EXHIBIT COMPLETED

The Museum of Natural Science at L.S.U. has now completed the sea bird habitat group that was financed in part by the L.O.S. Many visitors to the Museum have expressed the opinion that the exhibit is one of the finest to be seen anywhere. It depicts a scene on Isle au Pitre in June and includes dozens of terns and other denizens of our offshore islands. Many of the terns--Sandwich, Royal, Caspian Terns and Black Skimmers--are shown on their nests, some of which contain eggs, others newly hatched downy young. Terns mounted in flight postures and suspended in the most mysterious manner fill the air above the foreground of the exhibit and still others are painted on the backscene. The whole composition blends together so perfectly that the visitor, standing in front of the exhibit, gains the impression that he is actually on one of these sea bird islands amid its teeming throng of bird life. On one edge of the exhibit and portrayed mainly as part of the painted backscene is a section of a Black Mangrove marsh in which there is a small colony of Brown Pelicans. Some of the mangrove bushes actually enter the foreground of the exhibit where two pelican nests are shown, one containing eggs, the other downy young being fed by an adult. The scene also contains examples of the Thick-billed Plover and American Oystercatcher. One of the legend panels adjacent to the exhibit carries prominently the following statement: "This Exhibit Was Made Possible by a Donation from the Louisiana Ornithological Society." We are informed that thousands of people visit the L. S. U. Museum each month, that over 6,000 (including 3,642 school children) came there during the month of May alone. The L.O.S. can justly look with pride to the contribution it has made to wildlife education through its financial assistance to the L.S.U. Museum.

NOTES AND NEWS



We are pleased to welcome among our new members Dr. Robert A. Norris, an extremely capable ornithologist who is now on the faculty of the Department of Zoology at Tulane University. Dr. Norris is especially interested in ecology and bird behavior and will doubtless contribute much to our knowledge of Louisiana birds.

Stephen M. Russell is now an instructor in zoology at L.S.U.N.O. where, in addition to his teaching duties, he is still hard at work in the preparation of his doctoral dissertation, "A Distributional Survey of the Birds of British Honduras." Steve is, in the opinion of many who know him, one of the finest young ornithologists in the country. Mr. W. E. Clyde Todd, former Curator of Birds at Carnegie Museum and world authority both on arctic and Tropical birds, recently stated that he regarded Russell as "one of the coming experts on Middle American Birds." Mr. Todd, who is now in his nineties, is one of the oldest members of the A.O.U. and has seen ornithologists come and go for over seventy years; consequently, his opinion of Steve is most gratifying. He must really like Steve for he turned over to him all of his own notes on the birds of British Honduras even though he himself had planned a publication on the subject just as soon as he finished his present project, a voluminous work on the birds of Labrador. Incidentally, we cannot allow the opportunity to pass to point out again that the extensive ornithological investigations by L.S.U. Museum personnel in British Honduras in the last three or four years were initially made possible by another of our highly esteemed L.O.S. members, Mr. H. A. J. Evans of New Orleans.

Horace W. ("Wild Bill") Belknap and his attractive family are no longer with us. Bill resigned his position with Audubon Park to return to his native state of Idaho where he is reported to be working with the state's game department. We shall certainly miss the Belknaps, and now that Bill is no longer looking after the Whooping Cranes in Audubon Park we have some apprehensions regarding the welfare of these important birds.

Edwin Willis received his MS degree in zoology at L.S.U. in June and then spent the summer studying marine biology at the University of Washington Marine Station at Friday Harbor in Puget Sound. Ed now has an assistantship in zoology at the University of California where he will work toward his doctorate.

John Sutherlin has retired from his position as Manager of the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge and has moved from the state. We shall miss John and his splendid cooperation with us on our Cameron adventures.

John Gee has continued to display his exceptional ability to find new state records by turning up a Curve-billed Thrasher at Hackberry on August 26. But, confound the luck, he failed in his efforts to get the specimen. All "first state records" should be backed up by a specimen. Then a hundred years from now anyone can still examine the specimen and re-confirm the validity of the record. Johnny had similar tough luck when he found the Clay-colored Sparrow in Louisiana for the first time. He even saw it a second time without being able to "get the proof." But he persevered and finally on April 16, 1955, he found the bird a third time and in this instance collected it. The specimen now reposes for all time to come in the L.S.U. Museum of Zoology.

Jerry and Boots Evans saw a Western Tanager on Daughin Island on September 14 and Francis M. Weston and Tom Imhof collected a Say's Phoebe at Fort Morgan on September 19.

The folks in Baton Rouge cannot be expected to produce anything worthwhile until after the football season is over and they get their minds off those No. 1-in-the-Nation Fighting Tigers.

Wade and Marjorie Fox report a new arrival: Christopher Wade, Nov. 5, wgt. 6 lbs. 6 ozs. Congratulations—even little foxes are welcome in the L.O.S.



HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR FIELD-LISTS?

Those attending the spring meeting of the L.O.S. had the opportunity to obtain a supply of the Society's new "Field Checklist of Louisiana Birds." These record cards are of immense value in keeping daily lists and are available to members at the following prices: 8¢ each; \$2.75 per package of 50; \$5.00 per 100. Order your supply from the Secretary-Treasurer of the L.O.S., 6255 Chandler Drive, Baton Rouge. The card lists all species of birds known to occur in Louisiana at the time of its preparation and the nomenclature follows that of the new A. O. U. Check-List (5th ed., 1957).