

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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NEW ORLEANS MEETING

The 1961 Annual Meeting of the L.O.S. was held in New Orleans on December 2 and featured a report by Burt Monroe on the recent ISUMZ expedition to East Africa. Burt's excellent talk was supplemented by a fine series of slides and by a generous sampling of the more than 2000 specimens collected.

Over 60 members registered for the meeting, a drop from the last gathering but not too bad at that. We were particularly glad to welcome a nice delegation from Mississippi. The dinner meeting was held at Pittari's Restaurant and, to judge from general comment, both the food and service were more than good.

John Gee presented the report of the Nominating Committee and the official slate was elected without opposition. Officers re-elected were Buford M. Myers, President; Miss Mary Lewis, Vice-President and Mrs. H.A.J. Evans, Secretary-Treasurer. Newly elected Directors were Mr. Will Fullilove of Shreveport, Dr. Henry Haberyan of Gulfport and Mr. Steve Russell of New Orleans. Mrs. Evans' report for the past year showed receipts of \$462.06 and disbursements of \$337.47, leaving a balance on hand of \$1166.07, of which \$806.40 is in a Savings and Loan Assn. and \$359.67 is in the bank account. The Spring Meeting of the Society was set for Cameron, the date to be announced later.

The major field trip of the day was in

the Venice-Duras area, with several small groups going to Mary Plantation on the east bank of the river. Sidney Gauthreaux acted as compiler for the combined day's list and managed to tote up 103 species. Outstanding among these were Broad-winged Hawk, White-winged Dove, Ground Dove, Groove-billed Ani, Chuck-will's-widow, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-and-white and Black-throated Green Warblers, Ovenbird, Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager, Blue Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting. Best bird of the day was one which could only be identified at the time as a Myiarchus flycatcher. On the following day, it was collected by Brian Donlan and it proved to be Wied's Crested Flycatcher, the second Louisiana record.

NEW SPECIES FOR LA.

Brian Donlan recently added another species to the official Louisiana list when he collected a specimen of Wied's Crested Flycatcher. The bird was taken on November 24 near Venice and the skin deposited with the U.S.U. Museum of Zoology.

Normally found from the Sw. U.S. to Argentina, Wied's Crested is typical of the Mexican border country and is distinguished from the Great Crested by its slightly larger size, all dark bill, paler coloration below and different call notes.

-QUOTES-

"I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor and often very lousy. The turkey is a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America."

Benjamin Franklin: 1784

BIRD FINDING IN LOUISIANA

By MRS H. A. J. EVANS

Several years ago, Ava Tabor told some of the LOS members from New Orleans about a trip she had made to a heron rookery in Lake Boeuf near Thibodaux. Her account of the nesting birds was so exciting that we asked her to make arrangements for us to make the same trip. She graciously agreed to do this and since that time, several groups make the trip each year to see the birds, photograph them and to enjoy the sights of a cypress swamp. I made three trips last year with visitors from faraway places, all of whom were enthusiastic about the experience.

Lake Boeuf is located several miles east of La. Highway 308 between Raceland and Thibodaux. To reach Bird Island in the middle of the lake, it is necessary to go by a series of canals starting from the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Foret, located on this road. The lake is very shallow and special boats are used.

Many small land birds may be seen in the willow and cypress trees along the canals. Common and Purple Gallinules nest among the water hyacinths and King Rails and Least Bitterns feed in the marsh grassed. Hundreds of Snowy and Cattle Egrets, Little Blue, Louisiana and Green Herons have nests in small bushes forming islands in the lake. By the last week in May, many of the young birds are being fed by the parents and, if possible, a visit should be made about this time or during the first two weeks of June.

Mrs. Foret told us that she had lived over forty years near Lake Boeuf and the birds had nested there as long as she could remember. Boats can be provided by "Mrs. Sam" and her grandson and arrangements may be made by writing or phoning her. The address is Thibodaux, La. and the telephone number is Hillcrest 7-2972.

If you are perturbed at the shortage of news in this issue - well, so are we. The Editor of this paper doesn't make the news, but he will see that it gets into print. If you'd like these issues to be bigger and better, it's strictly up to you to send in more material of interest.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

-REGULAR MEMBERS-

Arnold, Mr. Keith Alan
Museum of Zoology, L.S.U.,
Baton Rouge 3, La.

Bannon, Mr. Lewis A.
905 Audubon Ave.,
Baton Rouge, La.

Barron, Miss Winona G.
351 Broadmoor Ave.,
Baton Rouge, La.

Guice, Mrs. Georgia M.
607 First St.,
Winnsboro, La.

Hayse, Mr. Franklin Allan
Museum of Zoology, L.S.U.,
Baton Rouge 3, La.

Kramer, Mrs. Laura R.
11230 Prentiss Ave.,
New Orleans 27, La.

LaVal, Mr. Robert M.
513 Whitfield Drive,
Natchitoches, La.

Moss, Mrs. R.A.
5154-C St. Anthony St.,
New Orleans 22, La.

Odom, Mrs. Ed
P.O. Box 458,
Orange, Texas

Templeton, Mr. Ron Kenneth
9407 Palm St.,
New Orleans 18, La.

-CHANGE OF ADDRESS-

Feduccia, Mr. John Alan
Museum of Zoology, L.S.U.,
Baton Rouge 3, La.

Jones, Mrs. Bessie May
830 Barracks St.,
New Orleans 16, La.

Compilers for the various Christmas Bird Counts in Louisiana, south Mississippi and south Alabama should get their reports in to the News at the earliest date possible.

ROSE-COLORED SPARROWS

WITH WHITE CROWNS.

Observers in Louisiana are right now in danger of meeting up with birds whose pattern of markings and color seems a dream-like mix-up of the characters pictured in their field guides. Imagine an apparent Purple Finch whose form, basic plumage pattern, mannerisms, and habitat are those of a White-crowned Sparrow. Such is the apparition that may appear before your eyes any day.

Mark it well! Note down the exact time and place where you saw it and forward full details immediately to Bob Newman at LSU. The strange bird you see will be an import from California -- a White-crowned Sparrow specially dyed on the under parts for quick recognition. If you look more closely, as you should, you will discover that it wears a standard metal band around its leg.

The odd-looking White-crowned Sparrows now loose in Louisiana are participating in a large-scale translocation experiment being conducted by Dr. Richard Mewaldt of San Jose State College in collaboration with the LSU Museum of Zoology. Fifty-one of them arrived in the state by air express on October 28. They were liberated on the same day along River Road south of Baton Rouge. Two hundred additional California White-crowns are scheduled for release at the same point in the near future.

What will happen? No one knows. And that is the point of the experiment. Will all settle down near the point of release? Will they disperse widely over the state? Will any attempt immediately to return to California? These are fascinating questions that no one can answer now, but you may help to provide answers. So be on the alert!

L.O.S. members in Baton Rouge are naturally in a particularly favored position to make acquaintance with these colorful displaced sparrows. We urge them to plan an excursion to the release area which can be quickly reached by driving out the new Nicholson drive extension to Ben Hur Road, turning right onto Ben Hur, proceeding to

River Road, and then making another right turn. The release point was the shrub-bordered stretch of River Road just preceding the first sharply angled turn north of Ben Hur Road. By the prescribed route the journey from the L.S.U. Museum to the release point will register 6.6 miles by the speedometer.

Don't expect to find the sparrows at the exact spot of release. In three days dispersion had extended to at least 0.4 mile from the center. Look for the birds in brier clumps, along brushy road borders, in weedy fields, and at the edges of woodland. You will not find them communing with their relatives the White-throated Sparrows in the depths of the forest. If you locate any, attempt to determine how many are adults and how many are immatures. Your field guide will provide means of making the distinction. Study it in advance.

Ellen Taylor and Barbara Bodman can testify to the heightened excitement of this new dimension in the game of bird-finding as on October 31, they located five of the dyed sparrows in a bean patch just north of the release point. They thereby outdid Bob Newman himself who on the day preceding searched for an hour and recorded only three of the marked birds. Everyone so far, however, must take a back seat to teenage Charles Higgins, who lives at the release point. He is an extreme specialist -- not a bird watcher per se but a newly-born dyed-White-crown-watcher. Riding horseback with binoculars on the afternoon of October 30, he located 20 of the imported releases.

ED. NOTE: Dr. Newman announced at the Fall Meeting that at least one release would be made in the vicinity of Moisant Airport, so New Orleans birders should be on the alert for these imports.

Each year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the various State Services, conducts a mid-winter inventory of waterfowl. The count this year will be taken during January 5-15 and will also include an inventory of Bald Eagles. These counts are conducted chiefly from the air but reports from ground observers will be very important in determining the eagle population. L.O.S. Members are urged to report the numbers and locations of all Bald Eagles to Dr. Newman at the LSU Museum of Zoology.

BIRDING THE EASTERN SHORE**BY Wm. J. GRABER**

The eastern shore of Maryland and Delaware is rimmed by long narrow islands and peninsulas of sandy barrier beach in much the same way that Padre, Galveston, Ship and Dauphin Islands border their respective states along the Gulf Coast. The most easily accessible and ornithologically rewarding area stretches from Ocean City, Md. due north 25 miles to Rehoboth Beach, Del. Pettingill describes it as "...an excellent spot for observing migrating water birds, especially those commonly associated with salt water, with the greatest flights...during October and November."

I had the opportunity to bird this area over the weekend of November 17-19, following a medical meeting at the Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. By the final day of the meeting, my attention was already wandering and, as soon as possible that afternoon, I headed out of town with only about an hour of daylight remaining.

My first good find came quickly. As I came down the Chesapeake Bay Bridge my attention was diverted to a group of white forms at the water's edge. These proved to be about 50 Whistling Swans feeding in company with Black Ducks and Canada Geese. A brief side trip just at sunset to Love Pt. at the northern end of Kent Island produced a flock of White-winged Scoters along with Common Goldeneyes and Buffleheads. At this same spot on my return trip, I again saw the Whistling Swan - this time a group of 100.

My first stop the next morning was at the Blackwater River Natl. Refuge. This locality maintains one of the largest winter populations of Canada Geese in the country; the manager estimated 70,000. They were everywhere! Though the multitude of geese was impressive enough, I did not see anything else of special interest and hurried on to the southern end of the coastal strip at Ocean City.

The immediate approach to Ocean City is over a half-mile bridge connecting the island to the mainland. Here were a few shorebirds, some ducks and many gulls and terns, including two Great Black-backed Gulls. At

the edge of the city is an inlet bordered by two rocky jetties extending 50 yards into the ocean. Near the end, diving and then reappearing were two Red-throated Loons. On the walk back, a female American Scoter flew in the inlet, circled and flew out, her light cheek patch showing plainly. But of more interest were several small shorebirds on the rocks of the jetty across the inlet. I set up my scope looking for the expected slaty back and breast and conspicuous yellow legs but, unfortunately, they were not the Purple Sandpipers I hoped for but a group of Sand-lings absorbing the warmth of the sun.

In working north up the shore I stopped frequently in search of the bird to be mentioned in the next paragraph, each time going over the sand dunes and to the water's edge. Along with the loons, ducks, gulls and terns invariably seen were usually one or two Gannets soaring far out over the ocean. All that I saw were in the adult plumage.

Finally, near the Indian River Inlet in Delaware, I found what had become the Holy Grail of my quest - a bird whose winter range is one of the most nearly unique of any in the world. This range is almost 1200 miles in length and in many places not more than 50 to 100 yards wide, being limited rather sharply to the sand dunes of the seashore. And, as I found out, there are many blank spaces along this coastal strip. This bird is the Ipswich Sparrow, a pale, slightly larger relative of the Savannah Sparrow. It is so pale, in fact, that it is more nearly gray than brown, with faint though distinct breast streakings. I found 5 of them, skulking through the coarse grass, flushing a few yards and dropping back to the sand.

The Indian River Inlet also has rocky jetties extending into the Atlantic on both sides. This time the 3 small birds on the rocks were Purple Sandpipers. It was interesting to see them feeding, always on that part of the rocks kept wet by the waves. Many times the incoming breakers sent them scurrying back, but they immediately returned to continue their search for food.

Thus came to an end one of my most interesting and rewarding days in the field. Needless to say, I can heartily recommend this area for sampling the winter bird life of our northeastern coast.