

L
O
S

LOUISIANA
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



No. 30

New Orleans, La.

July 15, 1962

NOTES FROM L.S.U.M.Z.

Dr. George Lowery and Dr. Robert Newman attended the International Ornithological Congress at Ithaca, N.Y. in June. They delivered a joint paper on their daytime study of ultra-high migration with the spotting scope....The nest of a Caracara near Gum Cove, in Cameron Parish, was visited by Dr. Lowery and a group of graduate students....Dr. David Lack, the famous English ornithologist will spend several days in the state studying our local birdlife.... Douglas Lay is headed for Iran to collect mammals, joining an expedition sponsored by the Chicago Museum of Natural History.... Keith Arnold is going to Costa Rica to begin an ecological study of some genus of passerine birds....Burt Monroe will collect birds in certain areas of Honduras where no collections have ever been made and will work on systematic problems of certain species....Douglas Lancaster, a former student at L.S.U. is going to Argentina to continue his study of tinamous. He has received a Frank M. Chapman research grant for this work.... Ed Armstrong is making a study of the light-breasted Barn Swallows which nest on the Gulf Coast, including that of La. Any information on their breeding colonies will be welcomed by him.

Tom Imhoff's book on the birds of Alabama is now in print and may be secured from the University of Alabama Press at Tuscaloosa. It should be of particular interest to the many members who have enjoyed birding at Dauphin Island.

N.A.S. COMES SOUTH

Members of the National Audubon Society who have never had the opportunity to make an annual convention will welcome the next one to be held in Corpus Christi, November 10-13. Headquarters will be at the Robert Driscoll Hotel. One highlight will be the field trip to the Aransas Refuge, the winter home of the Whooping Cranes. Most of the birds should have arrived at the refuge by the convention dates.

A second field trip will take the Audubon members and delegates to see the wildlife, the range-management practices and the cattle operations of the fabulous King Ranch, where they will be treated to an outdoor barbeque dinner, Texas style.

This should be a marvelous occasion—make your reservations early and join the crowd from Louisiana.

A new batch of check lists has just been printed and the Society is able to offer them at the reduced price of a nickel each or \$1.00 per 100. They may be ordered from Mrs. H.A.J. Evans, 1144 Calhoun St., N.O. 18, La. Incidentally, if you are one of those lag-gards who still hasn't sent in your dues, please send them to her promptly.

CAMERON SPRING MEETING

Members of the LOS gathered at Fred's Restaurant in Cameron the evening of April 29 for the regular Spring Meeting. Over 70 people attended including several out-of-state members and a number of guests. In the absence of the president, the meeting was called to order by Vice-President Mary Lewis. The secretary was requested to write a note of sympathy to Mrs. Louise Cormier (Mrs. Fred) whose mother had passed away that day closely following the death of her husband, Fred, the previous week.

Minutes of the Fall Meeting were dispensed with and the treasurer gave the financial report:

On hand, Dec. 3, 1961	\$359.67
Receipts -	
Sale of check lists and charts	18.21
Dues	141.00
	<u>\$518.88</u>
Disbursements -	
Expenses Fall Meeting	11.00
LOS news and meeting notices	86.25
Nat'l. Audubon Soc. dues	15.00
Bank Charges	1.66
	<u>\$113.91</u>
Balance on hand	\$404.97
Special Fund	806.40
Total on hand	<u>\$1211.37</u>

The group voted to hold the Fall Meeting in Cameron, the date to be announced later. Miss Lewis asked for better cooperation from the membership in sending in items of interest for the LOS News. Bob McCartney, a graduate student at L.S.U., asked that any information on the breeding of Fulvous Tree Ducks be forwarded to him. Dr. Lowery told of the study on Barn Swallows being made by Ed Armstrong and asked for information on the nesting of these birds to be sent to him. The program for the meeting was presented by Gary Ross of LSUNO who showed a film made by him on a trip to British Honduras and Guatemala last summer.

The species count for the day was taken by John Gee and the tally showed a list of over 200, the largest ever recorded at one of these gatherings. A detailed report by John appears elsewhere in this issue.

NEW LIFE MEMBER

The latest person to become a Life Member of the Society is Rev. E. Matthew Turk, S.J. A native of Memphis, Fr. Turk was an enthusiastic and highly competent birder with the New Orleans group while he taught there at Jesuit High School. For the past three years, he has been in Kansas and he returns there after a summer around El Paso. The area around St. Mary's, Kansas is an unfamiliar one to most La. birders and we believe some of his notes from there will be interesting to readers of the News:

"As a Southerner coming to Kansas, I missed the varied habitats of the South - instead of field, wood and stream at every turn, I faced endless grassland that swallowed up its birdlife. The widely separated hedgerows, woodlots and streams, however, actually concentrate the birdlife proper to them. The prairie, moreover, actually has habitats within itself which are as distinct as the habitats of meadowlark and woodpecker. For example, the longspurs in Kansas still stick to arid areas, and many sparrows listed "in grassland" prefer certain types and heights in their grasses. The Kansas list of field birds is larger than that of any Southern state except Texas but I found the birds harder to find than I had been accustomed to.

The Kaw River yielded Bald Eagle, both Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, Pigeon Hawk, Osprey and numerous shorebirds, herons, ducks and geese. The rare woodlots and edge make the warblers a pleasure in season and are the staked areas for expecting occasional and rare visitants like Townsend's Solitaire, Red Crossbill, Evening and Black Grosbeaks and the rarer owls and woodland species.

Eleven years of continuous records at St. Mary's, begun in 1951 by Fr. T.J. Hatrel, (another LOS member), have added breeding range extensions and many occurrence dates to the files of Kansas University. In addition, the building of dams, lakes and ponds has attracted birds not recorded in the area even ten years ago. There is variety, to be sure, but I still miss the relatively rich and easy birding of the South."

* Corr. Black-headed Grosbeak

BIRD FINDING IN LOUISIANA

By **MAC MYERS**

One of my favorite areas for breeding season field study is located in St. Tammany Parish along the Tchefuncte River. To reach it, turn north at Goodbee on U.S. 190 between Hammond and Covington. Several miles north of Goodbee a concrete road intersects from the right. Turn right here and, almost immediately, turn right again onto an unimproved dirt road leading off into the woods.

Situated along a very beautiful stretch of river, the hardwood bottomland and adjoining pinelands and fields support an amazing variety of summering birds. In fact, during a three day period this June, I listed fourteen species of warblers in this vicinity. Included were Black and White, Swainson, Worm-eating, Prairie, Kentucky, Louisiana Water Thrush and American Redstart as well as more common warblers.

The bottomland is characterized by many large beautiful oaks, magnolias and beeches as well as some cypress and river birch. It is crisscrossed by several ravines and foot paths. Although the ravines make excellent paths during dry weather, one should keep an eye peeled for snakes as I was nearly bitten by a cottonmouth during the course of my field work. Many warblers, vireos, flycatchers and other birds may be found in these woods if one is willing to track them down in the tall trees and almost impenetrable thickets. Several species, including the Louisiana Water Thrush, nest in or near ravines among the upturned tree trunks and root systems. Other characteristic birds of the bottomland are Wood Duck, Chuck-will's-widow, Pileated Woodpecker and Barred Owl.

As one moves back from the river into the piney woods and brushy fields, different birds appear. Most conspicuous is the Yellow-breasted Chat. This multi-melodied songster keeps up an almost unending chatter around the clock. Other characteristic birds of this habitat include Brown-headed Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Bobwhite and Pine Warbler.

All in all, one can spend a very pleasant

day in these woods and in the fields and pastures nearby studying not only the birds but also the diversified plants and mammals of the area.

SPRING COUNT BY JOHN P. GEE

On April 28, during the Spring Meeting, members and their guests reported over 200 species from within the boundaries of Cameron Parish. A heavy rainfall Friday afternoon helped to precipitate a large number of small migrants and unsettled weather Friday night and Saturday morning made for good birding throughout the weekend. The group reported 31 species of warblers and an equal number of shorebirds.

Some of the more interesting birds recorded included the following:

- Eared Grebe (breeding plumage-Magnolia Rd.)
- Brown Pelican (one-front beach)
- Anhinga (near Gibbstown)
- Roseate Spoonbill (many on Sabine Refuge)
- Fulvous Tree Duck (30 birds, two groups)
- Baird's Sandpiper (E. Jetty and elsewhere)
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper (behind Courthouse)
- Wilson's Phalarope (appr. 100 near E. Jetty)
- Sandwich Tern
- White-winged Dove (4 at East Jetty)
- Barred Owl (Hackberry)
- Lesser Nighthawk (Willow Island)
- Western Kingbird (several locations)
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (sev. locations)
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Bewick's Wren (Hackberry)
- Philadelphia Vireo
- Yellow-headed Blackbird (East of Willow Is.)

Species of warblers included Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Nashville, Cape May, Cerulean, Wilson's, Canada and a possible Mourning. Black Francolins were found at Gum Cove where they have apparently become successfully established since being released by the La. Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. The male is a truly striking bird.

Several LOS members were perplexed by a strange bird seen between Cameron and Holly Beach. First observed by Mr. and Mrs. David Aldridge, it was finally collected by Mac Myers and proved to be a mynah, Genus *Acridotheres*, species not yet determined. The best guess seems to be that this Asiatic curiosity escaped from or was released from a ship coming into the Calcasieu River.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

-LIFE MEMBER-

Rev. E. Matthew Turk, S.J.
St. Mary's College,
St. Mary's, Kansas

-REGULAR MEMBERS-

Andrews, Mr. Ralph
521 Alouda Drive,
Lafayette, La.

Bednarz, Mr. Wally
823 Gov. Nicholls St.,
N.O. 16, La.

Charlton, Mrs. Sarah
2206 Plank Road,
Baton Rouge, La.

Cook, Mr. Abner W., Jr.
268 Arthur Drive,
Shreveport, La.

Day, Mr. Walter N.
3 Shell Village,
Norco, La.

Eschete, Mr. Allen
P.O. Box 579,
Houma, La.

Gooch, Miss Margaret
2233 St. Charles Ave.,
N.O. 40, La.

Grant, Mrs. E. R.
Covington, La.

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

Metcalfe, Mr. and Mrs. Orrick
P.O. Box 483,
Natchez, Miss.

Mouw, Mrs. Philip W.
116 College Drive,
Hammond, La.

Mueller, Miss Selma
Rte. 1,
Carriere, Miss.

Nelson, Mrs. May M.
4236 So. Roman St.,
N.O. 25, La.

Polk, Mr. and Mrs. Harry J.
7500 Dominican St.,
N.O. 18, La.

Smith Mrs. W. F.
2206 Plank Road,
Baton Rouge, La.

Thompson, Mrs. L. R.
1956 Wisteria St.,
Baton Rouge, La.

Welch, Mr. Elder Wally
2507 Kensington Drive,
Baton Rouge, La.

Wright, Mrs. D. O.
2749 Millbrook Road,
Birmingham, Ala.

-CHANGE OF ADDRESS-

Gee, Mr. John P.
6120 Carlisle Court,
N.O. 14, La.

Gordon, Mr. James E.
2106 So. 128th St.,
Seattle 88, Wash.

Lewis, Miss Mary
941 St. Philip St.,
N.O. 16, La.

Moss, Mrs. Ronald A.
409 Bridge St.,
Cynthiana, Ky.

Payne, Mr. and Mrs. Charles
949 Terry Lane,
Lake Charles, La.

Stein, Mr. Ronald Joseph
Box 508, West 1st St.,
Reserve, La.

Weiss, Mr. J. F.
Box 9265, Station A,
Metairie, La.

BIG DAY COUNT

By JOHN P GEE

A friend of mine once wrote an article setting out in careful detail the rules and methods for a successful Big Day Count. He did not intend to be humorous but I laughed when he said that you must arrive at the proper woods fifteen minutes before midnight so that at the stroke of twelve your first species will be recorded as the Screech Owl responds to your imitation of its quavering whistles. Little did I know that years later I would be seriously discussing such nonsense with other Big Day addicts.

The Big Day is a tournament, a marathon when one tries to record as many species as possible in one calendar day. Usually but one small, cohesive group of birders is involved, and the "rules" state that the participants must operate together as one party. The party usually confines its efforts to one state or other geographic area. Otherwise, there are no set rules as to where you may go or how the birding is done. The result is a marvelous mad dash fully as taxing as any decathlon.

As far as I know, the Big Day Count in Louisiana began accidentally when, in 1956, I happened to hit a big precipitation of birds in Cameron. Approximately 130 species were recorded in less than a day, without any attempt to visit many habitats or find all the species in the area. When Bob Newman told me that this was the largest daily species count for a single party in Louisiana, I began wondering just how many a person could see in our state in one day if he really tried.

Two years later I found myself studying maps and check lists and wishing that I had kept the article which had inspired my earlier chuckles. Ed Willis, Sidney Gauthreaux, Tom Eyster and I decided to start in the piney woods and bottomland swamps near Lake Charles and work our way through the prairies and marshes to the coast of Cameron. Without any pre-count work, without prior knowledge of the northern part of our route and without a cold front to precipitate small migrants we listed 167 species that April 12. No real rarities were found but we saw a Peregrine on a telephone pole at night, Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Hackberry

and a Whip-poor-will at Willow Island. Just as night fell, we found our last species, a Snowy Plover calling on the beach near Cameron. We were worn out but satisfied that it had been a most exciting race.

Several other counts were held in intervening years but until 1962 none were as successful as the first. Most of the inspiration and the success of this year's count are due to Laurie Binford. He also spent the day before the count determining the best route through the northern areas while Sidney, Hugh Black and myself checked the southern beaches and marshes.

The following day, April 21, 174 species were observed by the four of us working together from one car. During the night, we missed the Barn Owl but heard Barred and Screech. At Gillis at dawn the Horned Owl, Chuck-will's-widow and Pine Woods Sparrow responded on schedule. Sam Houston State Park and Westlake gave us most of our woodland birds but we missed the Red-breasted Nuthatch Laurie had found the previous day. As usual, we missed the Red-cockaded Woodpecker which seems easy to find only when one is not looking everywhere for it.

As has been the case since the counts started, we had no cold front and worked hard to find a scattering of small migrants at Hackberry and at the East Jetty woods. But this year we were lucky on hawks - Red-shouldered, Marsh, Broad-winged and Osprey were included. Once again a Peregrine was observed at night asleep on a telephone pole. The best bird of the day was a Swallow-tailed Kite migrating along Bayou Chou-pique south of Lake Charles. We counted 30 species of shorebirds but only 16 of warblers. In one pond at the East Jetty were a Marbled Godwit, Knots and a Reddish Egret. An Eared Grebe was at Magnolia Road and both Common Loon and Red-breasted Merganser were seen from the beach at West Jetty.

As always, we missed a number of species known to be in the area. We sincerely believe that, with enough work beforehand and some luck, someone someday will record 200 species in a day in Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes. I hope that one of you who reads this will be among the group that breaks the record, but even if no record is broken I can assure you that participation in a Big Day Count is a memorable experience.

NEW AUDUBON SANCTUARY

March 17, 1962 marked the establishment of an official Audubon Sanctuary on Dauphin Island, Alabama. One of the prime movers in this project was Fr. J.L.Dorn, former president of the LOS and now on the faculty of Spring Hill College in Mobile.

Congratulations were sent by the President for the LOS and the Society was personally represented by Ex-President Ava Tabor. Dr. Henry Haberyan of Gulfport, wearing two hats as President of the MOS and Director of the LOS, was also present to extend felicitations.

Anyone who has ever birded at Dauphin in the spring or fall is fully aware of its attractions. This new area of 167 acres on the eastern end of the island can hardly fail to make this even more of a mecca for birders. Good beaches, historical associations, comfortable accommodations and superb birding--what more do you want?

BIRTHDAY COMING UP

We hadn't realized it until lately, but this coming December 6 will mark the fifteenth birthday of the LOS. On that date in 1947, approximately 34 interested birders gathered in the old cafeteria on the Tulane campus and put the organization together. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, officers and directors were elected and the new baby was off and running.

In one of the forthcoming fall issues, we hope to present a brief history of the LOS. Unfortunately, some of the early records are missing and we need help. We particularly want the names of the officers and directors for the period between the original group under Earle Greene and those elected in the fall of 1954. If your memory or your notes go back to those early days, please let us hear from you.