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THE ROLE OF THE AMATEUR IN ORNITHOLOGY

by
Hugh Land

Nearly forty years ago a housewife in Ohio became quite interested in the activities of the birds in her yard. Gradually she became more and more concerned with the behavior of one bird, the Song Sparrow. There was nothing out of the ordinary in this interest, but unusual was the fact that she kept notes of what she saw. She did not dismiss her observations as merely something everyone else had already seen, and she did not jump to the conclusion that the scientists knew all about it. She not only kept notes, she made plans on how she might learn more about the behavior of each individual Song Sparrow.

She found a way of marking each bird in the yard and then followed his movements with binoculars. She began to note that each sparrow had its own personality, its ways of getting food and meeting intruders. Through her eyes we can watch the males set up territory, court, mate and raise a family. The following year, and for several years after that, she spent long, obviously delightful, hours observing these birds. Many of the same individuals nested again on their old territories but inevitably there was some reshuffling of mates.

All of the successes and failures of her Song Sparrows, their sounds, activities, and interactions make up the substance of a series of papers by Margaret Morse Nice.

The impact of her work in Columbus, Ohio, the wave it created on the sea of ornithological thought, is still causing ripples on distant shores. A new branch of science, ethology, the study of behavior, has come as much from the work of Margaret Morse Nice as from the work of any one person.

But all of this took place over thirty years ago and life history studies are old hat now, you might think. However, many familiar North American birds have not yet been well studied. In Bent's Life Histories (now available in paper-back editions) many of the species covered have been studied at the nest by only one or two people and for only a season or two. Most of the modern concepts of ecology and behavior have not been tested on these species. Any volume can suggest dozens of birds where additional observations would be highly significant.

Amateur studies can proceed in any direction, the only requirement being an interested person willing to record what he sees. A few years ago in Oklahoma a woman started keeping caged birds in her house as a hobby. Whether the project had a typical beginning with a parakeet or canary I don't know, but it soon grew into a room of its own and included magpies, buntings, solitaires, and other exotic birds from the far west and Mexico. It's not hard to imagine

the thrill of hearing a solitaire's rich cascade of notes transferred from a cool mountain ravine into her living room.

Her hobby took a scientific turn when, one day, she discovered her hand-raised, three-month-old female Orchard Oriole picking up ants that had invaded the back porch and smearing them on its wing feathers. The phenomenon of anting in birds is generally known but not well understood. Lovie M. Whittaker began a series of experiments involving as many different types of ants and birds as she could get together. She published her work, along with an excellent resume of past research on anting, in the *Wilson Bulletin* (1957, Vol. 69, No. 3, pp. 195-262). The article was so complete in its coverage that it not only is a landmark in studies of bird anting but occupied two-thirds of the space in that issue.

The important ingredient for productive work in science is careful observation. Incidents and events in the lives of birds that seem to have little significance are often the beginning of a worthwhile project for the inquiring mind. In a note appearing in the *Wilson Bulletin* for December, 1960, Lovie Whittaker states, "On July 15, 1957, at 1:05 P. M., I startled two adult Arkansas Kingbirds (*Tyrannus verticalis*) from a fallow flower bed at the University of Oklahoma infirmary. One bird returned immediately and spread itself out flat, neck extended with bill nearly touching the sunny ground, the full-spread wings and flared tail pressed upon it. For a minute or two the bird remained motionless. Its ventral plumage was hidden from view, but I noted with interest that the dorsal plumage was not raised, not even the pileum. Soon the bird lifted its breast and, in a low squat, made two hurried preening strokes along the outer primaries of one wing, before resuming the spread-eagle pose. Banging of a door caused it to fly.

"At once I examined the bed, marking the place used. The hard-baked earth bore no sign of mulch, manure, animal life, or of dust-bathing. Moments later, Mr. Ralph E. Reed, staff pharmacist, using a Nitrogen-filled Incubation Thermometer on that spot, obtained a reading of 60° C. (140°F). Air temperature was 95°F. at the local weather

station." Had I seen the same incident, I'm sure I would have passed on with the thought that there must be something wrong with that kingbird. Incidents of this sort can often be the beginning of a worthwhile project for the amateur or professional.

Thus the work is there to be done in any field of ornithology, and, as the examples I have given indicate, some of the best work has and will be done by amateurs.

MINUTES OF THE FALL MEETING

Cameron, Louisiana

December 7, 1963

Approximately 80 persons attended the meeting which was held at Fred's Restaurant in Cameron with Mary Lewis, president, presiding. Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as presented in the Newsletter of June, 1963. The treasurer's report, given in the absence of Mrs. Ralph Bodman by Mrs. George Lowery, was as follows:

TREASURER'S REPORT

On hand April 27, 1963	\$ 438.50
Receipts	<u>307.25</u>
Total	745.75
Disbursements	<u>121.97</u>
Total Dec. 3, 1963	623.78
Special Fund	<u>1,109.18</u>
Total LOS funds	\$1,732.96

It was announced that there had been no requests for use of the research funds set aside at the fall meeting in 1962; it was decided that the grants should be offered for another year.

A total of 154 birds was tallied by the group; perhaps the best birds were a Curve-billed Thrasher and a Swainson's Hawk. (Because of limitations of space in this issue it was not possible to give the list of birds as was requested by some members.)

The following slate of officers and directors for 1964, presented by Sidney Gauthreaux, Jr., Chairman of the Nominating

Committee, was elected unanimously:

President Stephen Russell, New Orleans
 Vice-Pres. Henry Haberyan, Lake Charles
 Secty-Treas. Mrs. Ralph Bodman, Baton Rouge

Directors Ralph Andrews, Lafayette
 Hugh Land, Natchitoches
 Larry O'Meallie, New Orleans

There was vigorous discussion of Dr. Hugh Land's proposal for further activities on the part of LOS (see November, 1963 issue of Newsletter for proposals). There seemed to be some agreement (not complete) that LOS should offer the opportunity for more participation in a variety of activities on the part of those members who wished to take advantage of such opportunity. Those who disagreed with this view did so on the basis that the informality of LOS activities was one of its charms in a world that has become increasingly organized and committee-ridden; they also pointed to the lack of participation by members in getting out the Newsletter and in making the Christmas counts generally sponsored by LOS as evidence that might indicate a lack of sufficient interest to support other activities. Most members seemed to believe that there were other types of activities that might interest many members, particularly new ones, and that LOS should undertake further activities.

Major differences related to the following issues: (1) Should such activities be sponsored by LOS at a state level or should they originate and be carried out on a regional level? (2) If the latter, is it necessary to change the Constitution and By-laws or can these activities be planned and implemented under the present structure? It was noted that regional activities can be and are carried out now on an informal basis. It was also noted that the Board of LOS lacked continuity since all members (including officers) are elected for only one year terms; this made it difficult to plan for continuing activities.

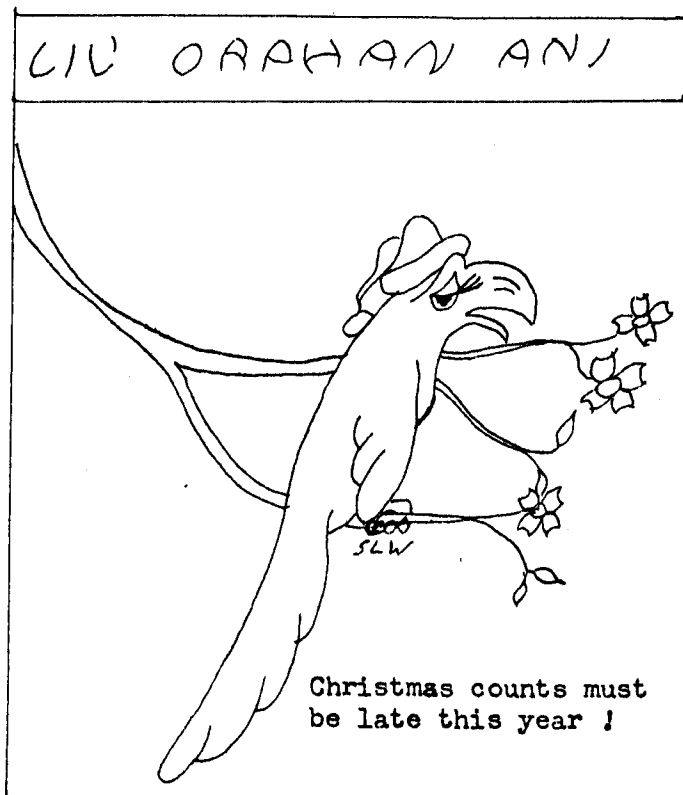
It was decided that the Board of Directors should study the present structure of LOS to determine if any changes were necessary in order to plan and implement further activities for LOS members. In the mean-

time any interested regional group was encouraged to embark on activities and to notify other members of the opportunity for participation; in this way it was hoped that evidence of interest in further activities might be accumulated.

Other decisions made at the meeting were: (1) the President should be relieved of the clerical work of preparing the Newsletter and he was authorized to purchase services for this work; (2) a revised list of members and their addresses should be sent to all members sometime in 1964; (3) the Spring meeting will be held in Cameron.

The entertainment program for the meeting was highly interesting and enthusiastically received. The picture, Museum Safari, a pictorial report (with sound) of the African expedition jointly undertaken by LSU and the du Ponts, was presented with comments by George Lowery.

Respectfully submitted,
 Jean Lowery
 Acting Secretary



REPORT FROM CALIFORNIA

by

Horace H. Jeter

In 1963 my birding activities consisted primarily of efforts to build up My Life List. The goal set for the year was 12 new species. At the end of the first four months my score remained at zero. Finally on May 2, when most of the abundant White-winged and Surf Scoters had left, I drove up to Tomales Bay (north of the Golden Gate) and was surprised to find a species which I had almost decided did not really exist - Common Scoter, 2 pairs. I considered this a good omen for my trip to Southern California, which was to begin the following day.

My primary objective in Southern California was the Condor, but I failed to find it even in its favorite haunts in Ventura County. Weather forced me to abandon my efforts before I otherwise might have. But in the Condor country I added the Mountain Quail, a beautiful and rather elusive species. In Los Angeles I found the introduced Spotted Dove. In Glendale, Herb and Olga Clarke stay busy filling hummingbird feeders, principally for Anna's and Black-chinned. Here I added the Costa's to my list - a beautiful male - while enjoying a scotch and soda. We celebrated with a second round. My excursion southward extended as far as Coachella, near the Salton Sea. Here I finally succeeded in getting the Crissal Thrasher, which had been a real "jinx" bird for me on past trips to Arizona and west Texas.

My next expedition was to Yosemite National Park. Three days here were spent primarily struggling over Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers; finally I was satisfied that I could correctly distinguish between them when they were in full song. Efforts to track down the Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker were fruitless, and I drove over Tioga Pass to Mono Lake. Here I quickly located two Gray Flycatchers, singing a gratifyingly distinctive song and flicking their tails rather like a Phoebe as Allan Phillips had told me they would. Then on up to Yuba Pass in Lake Tahoe to try there for the B-B T-T Woodpecker. Troubles again

until Mrs. Beth Snyder, a San Franciscan who has a summer cottage there, practically took me by the hand and led me to one.

In mid-July, I made a quick trip back to Yosemite for a major assault upon Mount Dana which had been covered with snow the month before. After a great deal of huffing and puffing, and thumping of heart, I got up to about 11,500 feet and finally came face to face with a Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, my third leucosticte.

Near the end of August I drove back down to Southern California. Although an Audubon Society Pelagic trip failed to furnish a single lifer, it was great to have a chance to visit and bird with Mary Lewis again. On September 1st I returned to the Condor stronghold in Sespe Canyon and was rewarded by having a fine adult Condor soar past. Lifer No. 11 for the year.

A pelagic trip from Monterey on September 8th yielded my 12th lifer--a Skua. Later I got a good look at an Ashy Petrel and a pair of Xantus' Murrelets. I then decided to revise my goal for the year up to 18.

The next pelagic trip was on October 5th, also from Monterey. Three more Lifers: Fork-tailed and Black Petrels and Red Phalarope. We also saw a Skua again, as well as Xantus' Murrelets, 3 species of shearwaters, Sabine's Gulls, and Cassin's and Rhinoceros Anklets - a very successful and interesting trip. And my score stood at 17.

At dusk on the evening of November 24th, Bob Paxton and I, armed with a spotlight, entered Tomales Bay State Park. We soon heard a Saw-whet Owl calling (number 18!). As we tried to coax it nearer by imitations a larger bird flew in and perched about 25 feet away. It was the elusive Spotted Owl in perfect view. After peering at us for about a minute, it flew a few yards away and proceeded to hoot several times for us. What a show from my 19th and last lifer in 1963!

FLORIDA BIRDING

by

Ava Tabor

Electa Levi and I left Thibodaux on November 1st to drive leisurely to Miami to attend the National Audubon Convention.

On Saturday, November 2nd, we spent part of the day at Waukulla Springs where we saw our first lifer, the Limpkin. There was a mother Limpkin and two half grown young that were feeding at the boat dock. There were Anhinga, Common Gallinule, D. C. Comorant, Coots, Blu-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron and Common Egret near the dock.

The next day out from Daytona Beach we saw a Brown Pelican Rookery and only wished we could get a few pairs to bring back to Louisiana with us. We saw two Oystercatchers and three Ospreys out of Vero Beach.

We arrived at the new Everglades Hotel on November 4th and met Dallas and Julia Ward of New Orleans. On November 5 we took an all day bus trip to Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and Pine Jog Nature Center. Dade Thornton was our able leader. We saw Wood Ibis, Smooth-billed Ani, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, etc. Got rained out at the Center and we failed to see the Everglade Kite that was usually seen flying over the Center.

We met Bill Julian, Refuge Manager at Loxahatchee, who stated he was at the Sabine Wildlife Refuge in the 1950's.

We saw our first Spot-breasted Oriole, dead; it flew out in front of a police car, and was killed. Across from the new Everglades Hotel was a small park and we saw our first pair of Spot-breasted Orioles there.

On November 8, we drove to Greynolds Park to see the Scarlet Ibis. At 4:00 P.M., the Ibis begin to fly into the Rookery, a small Island in a lake. Hundreds of Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret, Common Egret, Louisiana Heron, Little Blue Heron, Green Heron, Great Blue Heron, White Ibis, and then suddenly, a single Scarlet Ibis of a brilliant red zoomed in and circled over us and lit in a

small tree across from us. Dallas Ward had set up his scope and we all got an excellent view of the First Scarlet Ibis. Two more came; the second bird we got in the scope but the third settled out of sight.

A member of the Florida Audubon Society had the Scarlet Ibis eggs flown in and the eggs were placed in the nests of White Ibis. We were told that 12 Scarlet Ibis hatched.

Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, told the Convention that the next three generations must act to preserve wilderness areas if new generations are to know the beauty and bounty of American Wild Life. Secretary Udall was in Florida to dedicate the Key Deer Sanctuary at Key West.

On Sunday, November 10 we went to Grandon Park on Key Biscayne where we saw a fabulous collection of ducks and geese of the world. I almost went wild and was naming the species I knew when a young man came up to me and said he took care of the ducks and geese and wished I would tell him what some of them were. He asked me to wait until he went and got his book that he had sent to England for. He returned in about 15 minutes with a Peter Scott "Introduction to the Ducks and Geese of the World," and we spent over an hour together identifying the ducks and geese. The next day at the Meeting he told me he had located a copy of Peter Scott's book for me.

At Crandon Park there was a small flock of Brazilian Cardinals that were breeding in the Park. The original birds escaped from the Aviary where there was a fine collection of tropical birds.

On November 11 we visited Fairchild Tropical Gardens. On the tour of the Gardens we saw 5 Spot-breasted Orioles, and twelve Smooth-billed Anis on the lawn, and more in the trees. At Coral Gables we saw a flock of some 75 Red-whiskered Bulbuls come in to roost. Several years ago they were let out by a rare bird farm in the vicinity. Roger Peterson, for whom they were lifers, told Dallas Ward where to find them.

BIRDFINDING IN CAMERON PARISH

by

John Gee

Note: Consult your Louisiana Seasonal Occurrence Chart for specific information concerning seasons birds can be found.

Several years ago Audubon Magazine printed a letter from a rather famous Missouri bird-watcher. The man sharply criticized Pettingill's A Guide to Bird Finding, and complained he spent a whole day driving through Louisiana's Cameron Parish without seeing any ducks or geese in fact, nothing but a bunch of grackles and a few herons. I think the man must have been both blind and deaf, but have remembered the story because it emphasizes the fact that Cameron birding can be pretty frustrating to the newcomer.

As elsewhere, it is important to know where to go and what to expect. Despite its many square miles of virtually homogenous marsh, Cameron Parish, in my opinion offers a greater variety of birdlife than any other part of Louisiana. It is one of the very few places where a Louisianan can reach the Gulf of Mexico by road. It has beaches, lakes, and prairie. It has oak-clad islands in the marsh reminiscent of the hammocks of Florida. It has low sandy ridges covered with such western plants as cactus and huisache. Even the vast marsh is penetrated by many miles of road.

In order to assist you in exploring some of Cameron's principal habitats and observing a cross-section of its birdlife, Sidney Gauthreaux has prepared a guide map of routes to be taken and places to be visited. This article is designed to supply additional detail regarding the places identified on Sidney's map:

1. Cameron Prairie: Immediately behind the town of Cameron is a stretch of short grass prairie which (in season) is a favorite haunt of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Golden and Upland Plovers, Water and Sprague Pipits, and Blue and Snow Geese. To reach it, drive behind the Parish Courthouse and take the oil field road marked private. Mr. Burleigh, the man in charge

is accustomed to birders and will not object to your presence if you identify yourself, if stopped. The road turns right after it comes out onto the prairie and then dead ends about a mile to the east. The ridge is bounded on the north and south by sloughs and marsh which are ideal for ducks, rails, herons, ibis, shorebirds and other typical marsh residents. Unless the weather has been very dry, many of these birds can be seen from the car. About half way down the main shell road, near an oil-field separator station, a branch road turns off to the north. Take this road to enter the marsh itself and obtain close-up views of its inhabitants.

2. East Jetty: Return to Cameron and turn left onto the main street. One block east of Fred's Restaurant turn right onto a black-topped street which turns to shell where it forks after 1/8th mile. Take the left-hand fork and drive through prairie and short salt-marsh where Long-billed Curlews, Black-bellied Plovers and Willets are common. Whimbrels are also present during migration. The road follows Calcasieu Pass and ends at the base of East Jetty. Avocets, White Pelicans, gulls, terns, and shorebirds, and an occasional Reddish Egret or Eared Grebe should be looked for in the shallow Gulf waters, along the beach, and in the river channel. A short walk down the beach will take you to a pond which is usually productive. Wet spots in the marsh contain Clapper Rails as well as Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

3. East Jetty Woods: Return to the first fork to be encountered on the return to Cameron. Turn sharp right toward the woods and park where the road dead ends at an oil well. Walk the woods toward the left (east). This typical cheniere can be pretty empty of birds at certain times of the year but when migrants are present it is one of the few places where small land-birds can sometimes be found in abundance. In fall and winter the chenières are apt to hold late migrants as well as western and northern vagrants. The cactus, huisache

and salt-cedars around the edges are also good.

Some of the best birding spots are west of the Calcasieu River. Return to Cameron, and take the ferry. Continue on the black topped highway towards Holly Beach. Keep an eye on the roadside ditches and scan the several large ponds which lie on the right of the road. Falcons and Marsh Hawks may be seen from the road as well as flocks of Blue and Snow Geese. At Holly Beach the highway divides, one fork heading towards Johnson's Bayou and Port Arthur, the other towards Sabine Refuge and Hackberry.

4. Magnolia Road: To reach one of the best places to see waterfowl and marsh birds take the highway from Holly Beach toward Hackberry. About 4½ miles from Holly Beach turn onto a shell road owned by Sacony-Mobil Oil Company. If the gate is locked, a key can be obtained from the Sabine Refuge Manager. Bird from the car and follow the road, and its short subsidiary roads, back about a mile until it dead ends. Return to the highway.

5. Sabine Refuge: You will cross the south boundary of the refuge as soon as you leave Magnolia Road in the direction of Hackberry. This portion of the refuge covers about 120,000 acres of almost solid marsh, most of which can only be reached by boat. However, birding is often good from the highway, particularly during the early morning hours. If you stop at Headquarters, you may meet the manager, Mr. John Walther. Both he and his wife are avid birders.

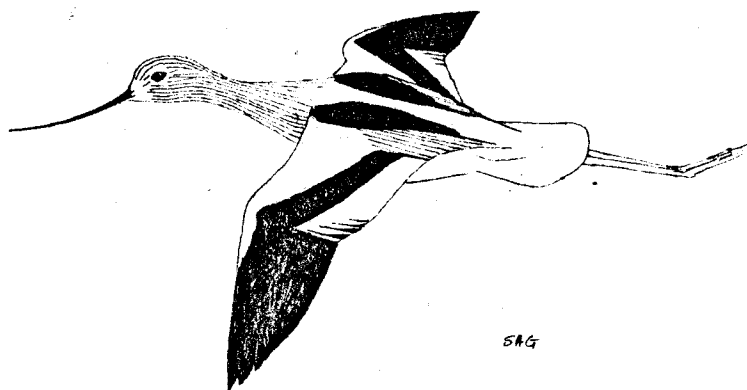
6. Hackberry Woods: North of the refuge the road traverses rather ugly prairie where Western Meadowlarks are sometimes found in winter. Hooded Mergansers frequent the sloughs and ditches in this area. When you enter the town of Hackberry, turn left at the Catholic Church and stay on the zig-zagging concrete road until it crosses a small bridge and turns to shell. On your right will be Vincent's Woods, the largest "island in the marsh," which can be reached by auto. Check the woods, since it and similar islands are the only places other than cheniers where small land birds can be counted on. After cold snaps, it is apt

to have such birds as Carolina Chickadee and Woodcock, and it has the only Tufted Titmouse record for Cameron Parish. Barn and Barred Owls roost in the tall oaks, and both Horned and Screech Owls have nested here.

The shell road which turns left at the bridge takes you to several smaller islands which are also interesting.

7. Peveto Beach Woods: Return to Holly Beach and take the coastal highway towards Johnson's Bayou. After about 10 miles you will notice a long, low stretch of woods on your left between the highway and the Gulf. There is one shell road which will take you to the woods. It has a cattle guard and "no hunting" sign but no gate. Park at the woods and explore either to the west or to the east. This is probably the best strip of coastal cheniere left in Cameron. Principal trees include Hackberry, Chinaberry, and Hercules Club. The ground beneath is open and carpeted with luxuriant St. Augustine grass. If you walk far and wish to return to the car by a different route, cut over to the beach for your walk back.

If you care to continue west along the coastal highway, watch for rarer species of hawks and flycatchers. Canada and White-fronted Geese also frequent this part of Cameron.



The places mentioned so far can all be visited in one day. If you have additional time, the following are recommended:

8. West Jetty Beach: After crossing the ferry and heading west, take the first shell road leading off to the left. This short road passes an oil well and dead ends at a hunting camp. If the camp is occupied ask the owner's permission before proceeding on foot. Go south towards the beach, through rough prairie dotted with shrubs which are excellent for sparrows in winter. Cross a muddy strip of marsh and scan the beach for shorebirds and roosting gulls and terns. Red-breasted Mergansers or a Loon may be seen in the Gulf. This is an interesting area but the half mile walk is rather difficult. A walk down the beach may yield Piping or Snowy Plovers, and occasionally Horned Larks.

9. Willow Island: Drive east from Cameron for 5 miles and turn half right onto a shell road which after one mile will jog sharp right and then left. There is a dump and a wireless transmitter station on your right where the road turns left. Enter the wooden gate next to the transmitter station and bird along to a dirt road and in the brush to the right of the road. This area is excellent for sparrows, and has produced a number of western vagrants. If you care to take a long hike the dirt road and the ridge it follows will continue a mile or more through the remnants of Willow Island, a beautiful cheniere which was destroyed by Hurricane Audrey.

10. West Creole Ponds: Return to the shell road and follow it to the east away from Cameron. Within a mile a long pond will be seen on your right partially hidden by a hedge of Cherokee Rose and brush. Fulvous Tree Ducks often stop here in spring and it is particularly good during drought periods. At the east end of this pond turn left onto another shell road which passes other ponds before it comes out on the black-topped highway. Turn left to return to Cameron or right to Creole.

11. Grand Cheniere: The road between Creole and the Rockefeller Refuge is an

attractive drive although I know of few really good birding spots along it. If you wish to take this road to leave Cameron Parish via Pecan Island and Abbeville, you will drive along typical cheniere and pass a number of ponds which sometimes hold thousands of ducks.

Good birding!

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. G.R. Lieber, Jr.
106 Arthur St., Shreveport, La.
Mrs. John C. Ohrt
621 Southfield, Shreveport, La.
Dr. J. H. Sims
4120 Haring Road, Metairie, La.

REGULAR MEMBERS

Mrs. Sally Adams
1421 Hilary St., New Orleans, La.
Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose
2159 Cloverdale St., Baton Rouge, La.
Dr. John B. Flood
587 Oneonta St., Shreveport, La.
Mr. George Almon Hill
4533 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, La.
Mr. Charles S. Kohler
9185 Meadowood Drive, Baton Rouge, La.
Miss Ann Renee Lanneau
565 Duncan Ave., Natchez, Miss.
Miss Basile Rene Lanneau
565 Duncan Ave., Natchez, Miss.
Mr. Angelo Palmisano
6566 Colbert St., New Orleans, La.
Mr. Richard Robinson
716 W. Roosevelt, Baton Rouge, La.
Mr. Albert John Stefanski
519 W. 16th St., Crowley, La.
Mr. Larry Williams
115 East Glyndale, Lafayette, La.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mr. Walter Bougere
6036 Patton St., New Orleans, La.
Mrs. H.A.J. Evans
Parklane Apts; #409
5701 Jackson St., Houston, Texas
Rev. Matthew Turk, S.J.
808 Spring Hill Ave., Mobile, Ala.

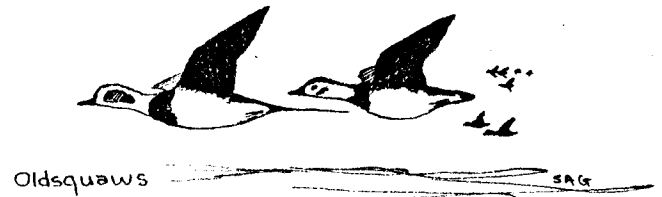
SPECIAL MARCH LOS MEETING AT CHICOT

Chicot State Park is in Evangeline Parish about 8 miles north of Ville Platte and just off highway #167. It is a scenic area of rolling woodlands surrounding a 2400 acre, cypress-bordered lake. We have reserved the group camp for a "semi-rustic" outing on the weekend of March 20-22. There are sleeping accommodations for 120 persons in 20 cabins. The cabins are unheated and campers must supply their own bed linens, pillows and towels. A central dining hall is equipped with electric refrigeration, a gas stove, cooking equipment, dishes and silverware. There is a minimum charge of \$20.00 per night. The charge is \$1.00 a night for adults (over 18) and 60c for children payable on departure. For members who might like to attend, but in greater comfort, there are also ten vacation cabins elsewhere in the park. These have two bedrooms with double beds, combination kitchenette and dining room, and showers. They are completely furnished and the fee is \$7.00 per cabin per night. Reservations for these cabins must be made well in advance by writing Cabin Custodian, Chicot Park, Route 3, Box 494, Ville Platte or by calling 363-2403.

The park should provide some interesting bird-watching even though our proposed date is a little early for many migrants. There are many foot tracks through the woods and elevated views of the lake. Boats may be rented. For those who wish to go farther afield, such interesting places as Miller's Lake, Cocodrie Swamp and the Turkey Creek area are nearby. The wild azaleas should be in bloom.

It would be nice if we could all go together on the food and cooking, but planning is difficult when we come from many parts of the state. I suggest that each family or group provide their own food and, if possible, bring a camp stove. This will avoid confusion at the main stove. This year will be experimental--perhaps another year we could plan for feeding the entire group. I also suggest that individuals or families in any community contact

others and double up on the food. I don't anticipate that we will be pressed for accommodations, but it might be necessary to split some couples and families into "boy cabins" and "girl cabins" if there is a big turnout. I think members will find it worthwhile to come Friday evening, if possible--this will leave all Saturday for birding.



ANNUAL SPRING MEETING - CAMERON, APRIL 24-26

The annual spring meeting in Cameron has been set for the weekend of April 24-26. Make your reservations now at Broussard's Motel, the Gulf Motel, or at the Cameron Hotel.

