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LOUISIANA  
ORNITHOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY



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No. 50

Lafayette, Louisiana

17 June 1969

CAMERON SPRING MEETING

The spring meeting of L.O.S. was held in Cameron, Louisiana, on 19 April 1969. The weather was perfect and the various groups of birders got off to an early start, eager to see as many species as possible.

About 7:00 P.M. 45 members and friends gathered at Fred's Restaurant for the evening meal. Afterwards, the meeting was called to order by the president, Jacob M. Valentine, jr. He asked Gayle T. Strickland to check the bird list for the number of species seen. While the number was being counted, guests were introduced. Mr. Valentine gave treasurer's report in the absence of Mrs. Cernicek.

Dr. Marshall B. Eyster spoke on the spring bird survey. There are 28 areas to be covered. So far there are volunteers for only 14 areas. Volunteers are needed for the remainder - - Creole and Grand Chenier among them. All bird nests seen at any time are to be reported to Dr. Eyster.

Dr. Lawrence P. O'Meallie told of a publication of a check list for southeast Louisiana. He suggested that the group underwrite this publication. It was so moved and carried.

The death of Dr. Hugh C. Land on 23 December 1968, was announced to the group by Mr. Valentine. He said that Mrs. Helga Cernicek, secretary-treasurer, suggested that the society place \$200.00 in the Audubon fund in memory of Dr. Land. Charles Payne moved that the Board of Directors meet at the end of the session to consider this suggestion.

Mrs. Virginia Woolsey moved that the Board also consider the question of the society underwriting the publication of the checklist for southeast Louisiana, as the motion had not been seconded.

The president reminded everyone of the meeting at Chicot Park on the week-end of May 2. About nine people indicated that they planned to attend.

Mr. Valentine then showed slides of the sandhill crane colony in Mississippi, prefaced by an informative talk giving the size of the colony and other pertinent facts. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

By Miss Margaret Ferguson,

Acting Secretary

## OBITUARY

Sadly we report the death of Dr. Hugh Land, a beloved member, friend, and former president of LOS. Hugh Coleman Land died 23 December 1968 at his home in Natchitoches, Louisiana, of Hodgkin's disease, a lymph cancer.

Hugh was born in New York City on 10 February 1929. He graduated from Culver Military Academy in 1946 and received his B.S. magna cum laude from Marshall University, West Virginia, in 1950. After an M.S. in zoology and wildlife management at Ohio State University, he studied under Dr. George M. Sutton at the University of Oklahoma where he earned his Ph. D. in 1960.

Hugh was a dedicated and inspiring teacher, first in high schools, then at Concord College, Athens, West Virginia, and finally as full professor at Northwestern State College. In 1968, he received the Phi Kappa Phi award for Faculty Excellence.

His teaching extended beyond the ivied walls. Always able and willing to communicate his interest in ornithology and ecology he produced his own film on Guatamala for the Audubon Screen Tours and showed films and slides to many groups. In 1968 he accompanied the Explorer's Club-ABC expedition to the Mayan Caves of Guatamala as the team ornithologist. The expedition's work will be shown as a television special this summer.

Ornithology was both his vocation and his avocation. This man of many talents, besides publishing many articles in professional journals, wrote and illustrated BIRDS OF GUATAMALA, soon to be published. He was a member of the American Ornithologists Union, National Audubon Society, Explorers Club, Wilson Ornithological Society, Florida Audubon Society, Brooks Bird Club, Beta Beta Beta, and Sigma Xi.

Hugh Land is survived by his wife Margaret and three children. Mrs. Land is

living in Natchitoches, and is teaching at Northwestern State College.

His death ended a short but fruitful career as a teacher and scientist. Family, friends, and colleagues grieve his passing but we are thankful for knowing him and for the contributions he made.

## LOS FALL MEETING

The regular fall meeting of the LOS was held in Cameron on 7 December 1968. Members registered at Fred's Restaurant as they arrived, then went their various ways, birding wherever they thought birds would be found.

At 6:00 P.M. the members met at Fred's for the evening meal, assembling gradually. Forty-eight persons were present. Dr. Eyster called the meeting to order at 7:45 P.M. Miss Ferguson was requested to take the minutes of the meeting in the absence of Mrs. Cernicek. The President stressed the need for more news for our Newsletter. A note was read from Miss Levi and Miss Tabor, regretting the fact that they could not attend. Bob LaVal compiled the bird list. A total of 136 species were seen.

Mrs. Charles Payne, chairman of the nominating committee, offered the following slate of officers for the coming year:

President: Mr. Jacob M. Valentine,  
Lafayette  
Vice-president: Mr. Robert LaVal,  
Homer  
Secretary-treasurer: Mrs. Helga  
Cernicek, New Orleans  
Director: Mr. John Walther, Sabine  
Refuge

The slate was accepted as offered, no further nominations being made from the floor.

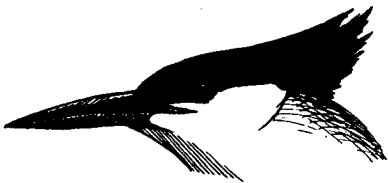
Dr. Hugh Land reported that 23 or 24 areas of the 28 in Louisiana were covered in the June '68 census of nesting birds, as requested by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Dr. Eyster remarked on the Christmas Bird Counts, asking for volunteers for the Cameron area. No one volunteered. Shreveport and New Orleans will have Bird Counts this Christmas, as well as Natchitoches, Lafayette, and Venice. Dr. Steve Russell and his wife, from Tucson, Arizona, were introduced.

The spring meeting was tentatively set for the weekend of April 19-20 at Cameron. The meeting at Chicot State Park was set for the first weekend in May (May 3-4), depending upon the availability of the Group Camp.

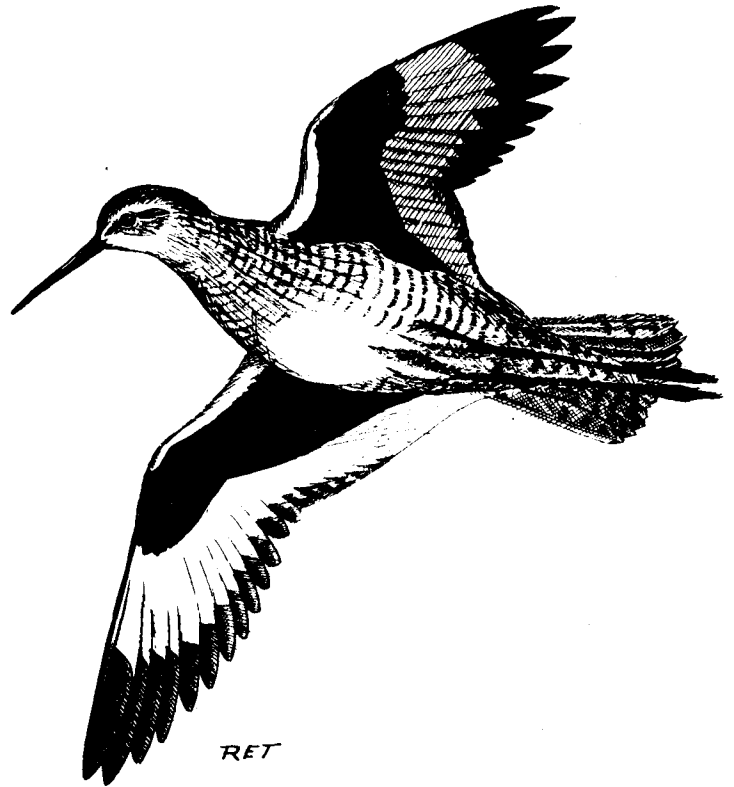
This being the 21st anniversary of the LOS, several prizes were given to celebrate the occasion. As members registered, they wrote the number of birds that would be seen, according to their estimations. One person guessed the exact number: Mr. John Leuton of Baytown, Texas. Two others missed it by one: Miss Charline Aubrey of Vivian, La., and Mr. Bedford Floyed of Gulfport, Miss. The one who missed by the largest number was also given a prize: Mrs. Louise B. Stewart of Alexandria, La.

Dr. Land gave an interesting program of slides taken on a recent trip to Guatemala, under the auspices of ABC-TV. He and other members of the Explorers' Club made up a party to observe bird life and to explore caves in Guatemala, while ABC officials directed and technicians photographed their activities.

The meeting ended about 9:30 P.M.



Margaret Ferguson,  
Acting Secretary



LOS Financial Report  
December 7, 1968

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Active account on hand, 4-27-68----  | \$1127.86 |
| Receipts: Dues, checklists, seasonal charts-----   | 95.31     |
| TOTAL  | \$1223.17 |
| Disbursements: (1) Typing, printing, mailing of NEWS issues & new membership list; related expenses; Cameron prizes----- | 156.98    |
| (2) Stamps & other office expenses----   | 10.00     |
| (3) Bank charges-----  | .10       |
| TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS----  | 167.08    |
| Total balance on hand, active account: -----   | \$1056.09 |
| Special fund in New Orleans bank: As of last report-----   | 951.34    |
| Dividends-----   | 70.65     |
|  | 1021.99   |
| Total LOS assets, 12-7-68: -----   | 2078.08   |

Submitted by Mrs. H. Cernicek, Secretary-Treasurer

BIRDING IN MEXICO  
by  
Marshall and Grace Eyster



Mexico is an intensely interesting country and it has an impressive array of birds, many of which are gaudy tropical forms. There are over 750 resident species plus another 200 winter visitors and transients. This amounts to almost 1000 species, which far exceeds that of the United States and Canada combined. Mexico has over 400 species not found north of its border and 80 species that are endemic. This abundant bird life is due to a large extent to the remarkable diversity of Mexico's climate and topography. With this avian fauna as a lure we anxiously left on August 10, 1968, on a trip that was to include 26 days in Mexico and encompass over 4,000 miles of travel.

We do not plan to mention all the birds we saw in Mexico but only some of the more interesting forms and some of the better birding areas. In general we found the bird life and other forms of wildlife rather scarce. Very few animals were seen dead on the road. One Gray Hawk was seen dead on our first day out of Brownsville and we saw one dead opossum toward the end of the trip. It would appear that the people have killed off much of the wildlife along the highways and those that are hit by traffic are cleaned up rapidly by the vultures and other scavengers.

The first night in Mexico we tented in Rio Corona National Park about 18 miles north of Ciudad Victoria. This "park" is a monumental misnomer by U.S. standards. There was never a single sign to indicate its location. We knew approximately where the road to the park was supposed to be but we had to travel up and back the highway where the only indication of a road was a rocky trail leading off to the right. We started down this but after about 500 feet we became convinced that this could not possibly be the way. It was hot dry desert country but we decided that we would have a look around to see what birds might be present. Shortly after, four young college-age Mexicans came along in a car and told us in Spanish that the park was only about one-half mile ahead. So on we forged and were glad we did. As far as we could determine the park was only about 100 acres in size and the only improvement was a small wooden table someone had made from scrap lumber. The Rio Corona is a beautiful river with large trees along its banks. About a dozen Mexicans came in various groups to swim in the river during the late afternoon and evening but by dusk they had all departed. That afternoon one of the first birds that we heard and saw was a pair of Kiskadee Flycatchers. Next was a flock of noisy Groove-billed Anis moving through the trees followed by three raucous Green Jays. Our son pointed out what at first glance appeared to be a Pileated Woodpecker. However, knowing that the Pileated was not supposed to occur in southern Texas we investigated the bird and discovered that it was a Lineated Woodpecker. We saw three at close range the next morning outside our tent. In addition, Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Red-billed Pigeons, White-winged Doves, Brown Jays and Lichtenstein's Orioles made their appearances. Picturesquely flying over the river just at dusk was a large flock of very noisy green colored parrots. The next morning they were still around the water and we identified them as Green Parakeets. They invariably produced a racket when they flew but were quiet whenever they landed in a tree and started to

feed. We were to see and hear many more parrots further south.

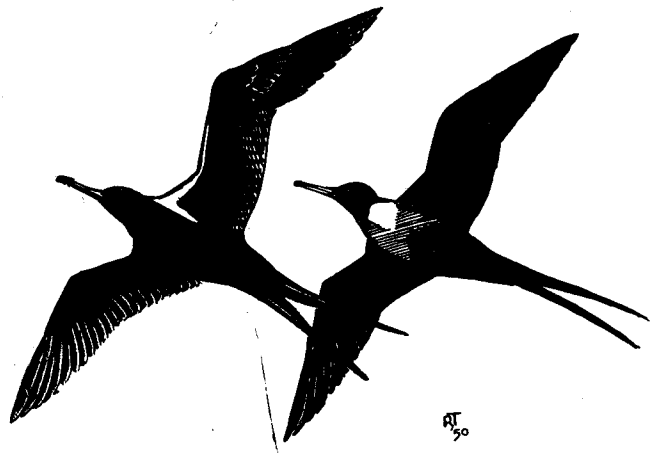
The next morning on our way into Victoria our first Black-bellied Tree Ducks appeared. Later that evening in our campground near Valles we had Ladder-backed and Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Black-headed Orioles and more Green Parakeets. Traveling on towards Zimapan we observed many Vermilion-crowned Flycatchers along the highway as well as a very pretty Buff-bellied Hummingbird, seven Black-headed Saltators and many Blue-black Grassquits. The latter species we were to see in many other areas. It is a most interesting bird to watch. It characteristically will sit on a wire or post and fly straight up into the air for 10-12 inches and then land again in the same spot. This behavior is a repeated many times in succession.

Birding is difficult in Mexico in many areas because there are absolutely no places to pull off the highway to observe an interesting bird. As a result many birds had to be passed by. Another deterrent was rain - almost a daily occurrence. We took the high mountain road southward hoping to see some new birds and beautiful scenery. However, when it was not actually raining we were in fog so thick that we barely could see 10 feet in front of the car. Driving the next day to Tule we saw many beautiful Vermilion Flycatchers along the road and a male Painted Bunting. It was not uncommon to see many caged Painted Buntings, Mouse Finches and other birds for sale in the markets. In Mexico City, even in the parks, there were few birds. In a trailer court in Cuautia we recorded some new birds such as the Rufous-backed Robin, Bronzed Cowbird, White-collared Seedeater and Collared Towhee. The Seedeater had a very melodious song.

We were disappointed with birding in and around Oaxaca. We walked three miles up a mountain-road and saw only one new

species for the trip, the Bridled Titmouse (previously seen in Arizona). We did see in the Oaxaca area Black Swifts, Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds, Rufous-capped Warblers, White-throated Towhees, and Bridled Sparrows.

Along the route to Tehuantepec and Salina Cruz a flock of 20 Yellow-winged Caciques were spotted. As we stopped they flew one by one right in front of the car to the other side of the road. They were beautiful in their black and bright yellow plumage. We also saw the White-lored Gnatcatcher, Varied Bunting and Rusty Sparrow.

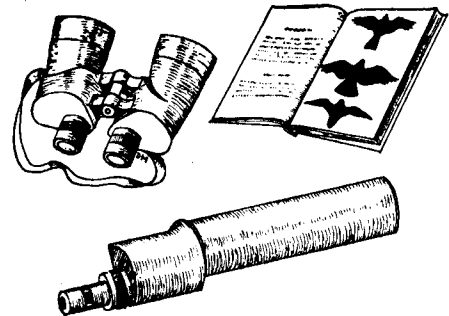


Salina Cruz is a fishing village and a port on the Pacific Ocean. Sitting on the masts of some of the fishing boats anchored in the harbor were Magnificent Frigatebirds. We saw a total of 131 as many others were flying in the air. There were 35 Brown Pelicans as well. Hundreds of Black Vultures were present along the beach feeding on several dead sea turtles and two Wandering Tattlers were hunting for food on a rock jetty.

Leaving Salina Cruz and the Pacific Ocean we headed north crossing the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to Acayucan, a distance of 140 miles. The isthmus is largely dense tropical lowland forest and we anticipated seeing many new tropical birds but were somewhat disappointed. We obtained an excellent look at a White-tailed Kite in its graceful flights right overhead. Many noisy flocks of parrots were seen flying but the only new ones that we could identify were 35 Orange-fronted Parakeets. We found the Magpie-jay with its very prominent crest of greatly elongated feathers and its unusually long tail. This was the bird pictured on the Audubon postage stamp of several years ago. The Bobwhite was seen here as well as in other places in Mexico. The Mexican individuals are much much redder than ours but still the same species. Late in the afternoon as we were speeding along hoping to make Acayucan by dark, our son shouted with excitement, "Quick! I saw a toucan!" We backed up and found there were eight gaudy Keel-billed Toucans sitting in a tree not far from the road. Their large colorful bills made them appear unbalanced and they had a distinctive beat-and-glide pattern of flight. This was a wonderful bird with which to end a day.

The next morning we started north toward Veracruz along the coastal lowlands. Many of the fields were flooded and the topography reminded us of southwestern Louisiana. There were many Common, Snowy and Cattle Egrets along with other herons. Every field had its Jacanas and we even saw some young. The Ringed Kingfisher which is similar to our Belted but larger and browner beneath was sighted but our hopes of seeing the Amazon, Green and Pygmy Kingfishers did not materialize. That night we camped on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico and in a small pond only about 200 feet inland was a pair of Least Grebes. The one spent most of the time sitting on the nest while its mate kept adding new aquatic vegetation to the nest. The date was September 1, and it seemed late in the season to be still building a nest but perhaps not for southern Mexico.

From Veracruz, where we saw at least 10 Brown Pelicans in the bay, we turned westward to return to Mexico City. Along the route there were Boat-billed Flycatchers (similar to the Kiskadee), a noisy family of 8 Band-backed Wrens and the pretty Yellow-winged Tanagers. The night was spent in the new Zoquiapan National Park located approximately 30 miles east of Mexico City where it was wet and cold. Even a sweater and jacket were insufficient at the 8,000 ft. elevation. The next morning in a little protected cove near the campground we found the largest concentration of song birds that we had seen in Mexico. Many were old friends such as the Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Rufous-sided Towhees, Yellow and Palm Warblers, Mexican Chickadees, Mexican Juncos, Lesser Goldfinches, Pigmy Nuthatches, Eastern Bluebirds and Painted Redstart. However, there were some new birds to add to our life list. There were 8 Black-eared Bushtits, 2 Tufted Flycatchers, 2 Olive Warblers, 3 Red Warblers along with a wren and several hummingbirds that we were unable to identify. All of these birds were present at about the same time and we didn't have to move more than 10 feet to see them all. It was a fabulous birding area and Zoquiapan will linger in our minds for a long time.



For those contemplating a trip to see Mexican birds there are some useful books. These include Emmet Blake's Birds of Mexico: A Guide for Field Identification and Ernest Edwards' Finding Birds in Mexico. Neither of these have many colored plates but Roger Tory Peterson has been working for some time on a field guide to Mexican birds which no doubt will be similar to his other guides.

## CHICOT STATE PARK MEETING

A small group enjoyed a pleasant weekend 2-4 May 1969 at Chicot Park. The total registered included 18 adults and 7 children. A few of us arrived in the rustic group camp area Friday evening, others joined on Saturday. Dr. Eyster led the early Saturday morning walk (which actually extended until noon) along the park roads and grass-covered clearings. After a quick lunch in the community kitchen and dining hall, a boat was rented for group use, and some of us rowed it back to our camp area. Then off again to Miller's Lake, where we took another long hike along the levee. The weather all day long was sunny and mild, actually "too good" for birding.

We missed many warblers and other migrants which were apparently continuing on their way north without a rest stop at Chicot. Still, a total of 79 birds was reported at the evening meeting as compiled by Mr. Valentine, while a sudden thunderstorm raged around the assembly building.

Two interesting films were shown: "Mark Catesby, the Colonial Audubon" (following an introductory book talk about this early naturalist by Mrs. Eyster), and "So Little Time," on the subject of conservation. Both films contained many fine nature and bird scenes.

A prize was awarded to Mr. Musumeche for being closest in estimate of species seen on Saturday, also to Mrs. Barry for coming all the way from Beaumont, Texas.

Sunday morning dawned overcast, but the sun appeared later. The group enjoyed a long walk along a lovely wood trail, which had been discovered by our new member, Mr. Wiggs. We returned at noon, and after lunch it was once again time to pack up and say good-bye to Chicot until another year.

By Helga Cernicek

DUES!

DUES!

DUES!

Yes, it's that time again! Your 1969 dues were due this January. DID YOU SEND YOURS? Don't wait to be reminded! Last year your secretary-treasurer had to send out over 100 reminders for overdue dues. If in doubt whether you owe or not, you lose nothing by sending in your \$1 (or \$2. for a couple); we will simply credit it for the following year in case you had already paid for the current one! Remember also that you may send \$5. for the next 5 years, and protect yourself against any possible raise. So don't delay - send today! Please address as follows:

Mrs. Helga Cernicek  
Beauregard Jr. High School  
4621 Canal Street  
New Orleans, La. 70119

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Vaughn Barber  
9521 E. Damuth Place  
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Mrs. Lou Bordelon  
250 N. Cane  
Eunice, La. 70535

Mrs. Theron Brown  
1825 Perkins Rd.  
Baton Rouge, La. 70808

Mrs. S.E. Burgoyne  
450 Cloud Drive  
Oak Royale Apartments  
Baton Rouge, La. 70806

Mr. Urban A. Cyruss  
Rt. 1, Box 457  
St. Bernard, La. 70085

## NEW MEMBERS, continued

Mr. Kermit C. Cummings  
517 Hiawatha Trail  
Pineville, La. 71360

Mr. Larry Escuriex  
608 Charles Street  
New Iberia, La. 70560

Mrs. Frank E. Hawley  
11475 Mollylea Dr.  
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Mrs. Nelson Jones  
2030 Persa  
Houston, Texas 77019

Dr. and Mrs. E. Bruce McLean  
13047 Florida Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Mr. Donald Milk  
617 Stevenson Street  
Lafayette, La. 70501

Mrs. Dorothy E. Rhoades  
121 Bellridge Drive  
Lafayette, La. 70501

Mrs. Lester Romero  
306 West Dale St.  
New Iberia, La. 70560

Mr. John J. Sheehy  
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Metairie, La. 70005

Mrs. W.C. Truitt  
P.O. Box 157  
St. Francisville, La. 70775

Mr. Robert Wiggs  
Rt. #1, Box 386 D  
Lafayette, La. 70501

Mr. Sartor O. Williams III  
428 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Shreveport, La. 71105

Mrs. Mildred S. Wood  
1142 Meadow Lea  
Baton Rouge, La. 70808

Mrs. Marguerite A. Woods  
2268 Ferndale Ave.  
Baton Rouge, La. 70808

Miss Suzanne V. Znameroski  
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New Orleans, La. 70130