

L
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S

LOUISIANA
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



No. 76

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

15 September 1976

L.O.S. FALL MEETING

The L.O.S. annual fall meeting will be held in Cameron on November 13, 1976. Because accommodations are limited in the Cameron area, make your reservations well in advance.

Cameron

Broussard's Motel
(318) 775-5115

Gulf Motel
(318) 775-5118

Hackberry

Island Motel
(318) 762-5735

Rutherford Beach (Creole)

Rutherford Beach Motel
(318) 452-8680

Holly Beach

Tommy's Cabins
(318) 596-2127

We will have our usual informal get together at the Calcasieu-Marine Bank Friday night, November 12, 1976.

New Officers

Dr. Robert Newman, Dr. Tom Key, and Mr. Horace Jeter were appointed at the Spring, 1976, meeting to present a slate of officers for 1976. Their suggestions will be voted upon by the membership at the November 13, 1976, meeting. Nominations from the floor are welcomed.

Vote on Increase in Life Membership Dues
Scheduled for November 13, 1976
Cameron Meeting

A motion will be introduced at the fall meeting (November 13, 1976) to increase life membership dues from \$25.00 to \$50.00.

Program for the Fall Meeting

Dr. Howard Kisner, a surgeon from Natchez, Mississippi, will present the program at our fall meeting. Dr. Kisner has traveled and photographed birds extensively throughout North America. He recently returned from western Alaska where he photographed birds at St. Lawrence Island and the Shishmaref Inlet area. Previous trips have taken him to the Pribilof Islands (Alaska), northeastern Canada, and throughout the "lower 48."

BLACK-NECKED STILTS NESTING IN EVANGELINE PARISH

By
Harland D. Guillory
and
Jack H. Deshotels

On 29 May, 1976 we observed a Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus) at LaHayes' Lake, approximately 2 miles east of Reddell, Evangeline Parish. Subsequent weekend visits to the lake during June yielded three stilts; eight stilts and two nests with eggs; and ten stilts with four nests containing eggs. The nests were placed on a large floating mat of decomposing vegetation approximately 60 yards long by 40 yards wide which contained many spatterdock (Nuphar advena) rhizomes that were interspersed among the foul-smelling mass of vegetation. The rhizomes appeared to help support and hold the mat together. The surface of the mat was muddy resembling a mudflat, but a small one, very similar to the ones frequented by the marsh dwelling stilts. The nests were depressions scraped out of the surface of the mat and located very near young sprouts of spatterdock emerging from a few of the rhizomes embedded within the mat. Many nutrias (Myocastor copyus), several muskrats (Ondatra zibethicus), as well as a couple of Common Gallinules (Gallinula chloropus) used the plat-

form for resting. None of these were observed to molest the stilts. During the previous winter, many ducks were seen utilizing the platform for resting.

On 10 July, 1976 we visited the lake again hoping to find a few of the newly hatched precocial young; however, we observed only three adults and could find no eggs or young. Their disappearance is perplexing, but it could have been caused by some unknown predator. Human disturbance is possible, especially by local residents; however, the mat of decomposing vegetation cannot be seen from any shore without binoculars, being well concealed from view by spatterdock leaves that surround and rise six inches to a foot above the mat's surface.

Most importantly, the nest site during June and July is not accessible by boat because of the very shallow water and very dense growth of spatterdock. Although the Black-necked Stilt nests in suitable marshland areas with mudflats throughout much of the continental United States, in Louisiana they nest almost exclusively in the coastal marshes, particularly in Cameron and Vermillion Parishes. Inland nesting stilts, to our knowledge, were previously known only from a rice field located one mile west of the Judice community, found between 13 June and 4 July, 1965 by Marshall B. Eyster. Dr. Eyster's findings of 13 June produced 11 birds and two nests, one with four eggs and one with three eggs, respectively; while on 20 June and 4 July, only one nest with eggs was found floating in the flooded rice field and no adult birds were found anywhere in the area.

On 2 July, 1975 Randall Deshotels and Rodger LaFleur saw a stilt at Millers' Lake (about four air-miles NE of LaHayes' Lake) while during the same year Brent Ortego observed "two to four stilts on floating mats of emergent vegetation at two week intervals throughout the summer." None of these observers found any indication of nesting.

HAVEN FOR HUMMERS

By
Nancy L. Newfield

South Louisiana is a winter haven for a small but significant number of western hummingbirds. In late August, we begin to see the migratory movement of our breeding Rubythroats. Since it is difficult to study hummingbirds in the field unless they continually feed at a certain spot, planting flowers that will attract them to our garden is the best way to study these fleeting gems. Some of the best plants are: red salvia, turk's cap, sultan's turban, abutilon, red honeysuckle, trumpet vine, and shrimp plant.

In addition to flowers, feeders placed near the flowers can hold hummers after the flowering season begins to wane. Formulas are as varied as the types of feeders available at pet shops, garden stores, and mail-order houses which advertise in wildlife publications. The birds are not choosy.

Once you have plants flowering and feeders set up, you can enjoy the performance. By late September a few Rufous appear with the abundant Rubythroats. Females and immatures far outnumber males. Some stay to winter at good feeders, but most continue their journey after a week or two.

Other species turn up also. A Broad-tailed Hummingbird was recorded once at Baton Rouge. The Black-chinned Hummingbird has been reported with increasing frequency with 14 reported in the State this past winter. The Buff-bellied Hummingbird has been seen on several occasions. Bob Raether has had one at his feeders in New Orleans for the past two winters.

Most of us hope to add to the State list as Ron Stein did last winter. Ron was host to Louisiana's first Allen's Humming-

bird. Since Allen's Hummingbird is common only in coastal California, it is not to be expected in Louisiana every year.

Several other species seem to have the potential to migrate to or through Louisiana. Anna's Hummingbird has been recorded in the Houston, Texas, area several times recently. The Calliope Hummingbird and Costa's Hummingbird nest at latitudes more northern than Louisiana, so a strong western front in fall might possibly push these migrating birds into our State.

For those of us in the "Hummingbird Fraternity," fall brings the excitement and expectation of small children at Christmas-time.

LOUISIANA-TEXAS BIRD WATCHING
AT TOLEDO BEND

By
Persis Johns Crawford

Much fun can be had in Louisiana-Texas bird watching at Pendleton Harbor, Milam, Texas, on fishing-famous Toledo Bend Reservoir!

Bird favorite #1 to be seen here April through December is the beautiful pale pearly gray Scissor-tail Flycatcher, with sides and wing-linings of salmon-pink and extremely long scissor-like tail. Guy Brown, Manager of Pendleton Harbor, does a free "floor show" for his bird-loving customers. About three times a day he stands by the gasoline pump in front of the lodging office, his palm outstretched with a live cricket offering. "Mrs." Scissor-tail Flycatcher streams down to the lodge office roof, sits a moment, then darts down and takes the cricket right from his hand! "Mr." Scissor-tail Flycatcher sits on the pine tree at the nest high above and just observes.

Last year we were told of an eagle nest in the area. On April 9 of this year (1976) we spotted a "first" in our six years of fishing at Toledo -- an immature Bald Eagle, a "bicentennial special!" We were thrilled to observe it for some time from our boat, using binoculars. Two days later we saw what looked like the same bird, and after a while, in the same vicinity, and not too far distant, what looked like its twin brother! It was a memorable time, watching them often as close as 100 yards!

Another spectacular treat here is watching some 10,000 Purple Martins gather at dusk to roost nightly under the three highest bridge spans of three-mile long Pendleton Bridge! Crappie fishermen who fish at night with lanterns under this bridge can confirm this story of the 30-45 minute period just at sunset when this large group of Martins assembles. Martins are said to be famous for their huge communal roosts. Departing at night from the nest boxes is definitely true of the males after the end of April. By mid-September nearly all the Martins under the bridge at Toledo Bend are gone, but from the end of April until mid-September you can watch them sailing and gliding in, sometimes darting around together in massive formations, then lining up under this bridge like sardines in a can. And you should hear the bird talk "chatter!"

In addition to seeing many varied water birds in this area, we enjoy observing many species of field birds as well. Toledo Bend fishing is fun! Toledo Bend "birding" is, too!

TOM HICKCOX HAS PAINTED BUNTING
AT A WINTER FEEDER

The following is an interesting letter I received from Tom Hickcox dated June 25, 1976:

Dear Dr. Noble,

In response to the request for interesting bird sightings in the May LOS News-
letter, we had a female painted bunting visit our feeders when we lived in Gonzales from the middle of January until we moved February 15th. I understand from Dr. Lowery that buntings during this period are rare.

Identification was positive. One of my feeders is a window feeder with a one-way mirror, so we were able to view it from less than a foot. The green and yellow coloration, plus the finch beak gave us the positive identification. My seven year old daughter sighted the bird first on Jan. 17 and 18, 1976. I saw it first Jan. 26 and then practically daily until we moved Feb. 15. She normally came the same time as the cardinals, e.g., early in the morning and just before dusk. I offered the people that bought the house a feeder in the hope that they would keep track of it, but they had two cats and weren't interested.

At my new house in Galvez I have had real good luck with my martin house. I counted 19 the other morning.

Best luck in your studies,

Tom Hickcox

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. Ernest E. Bruce, Jr.
11 Paige Dr.
Monroe, La. 71201

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3327 Chapelwood Dr.
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Mr. and Mrs. Julian A. Darden
555 E. River Oaks Dr.
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Mr. Kenneth Eyster
226 Montaigne
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Mr. H. Ward Fontenot
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