



THE SPOONBILL

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"The melancholy days are come,
the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds, and naked woods,
and meadows brown and sere."

These words written by William Cullen Bryant could not have been meant for birders. What days could be melancholy when there are so many treasures of the bird world to be found in the same naked woods and meadows brown and sere?

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COVE FIELD TRIP, SEPTEMBER 13 by Dan Hardy

Texas ornithology has few institutions; one is Arlie K. McKay. Seventeen carloads of people followed this remarkable man September 13 around the wilds of Cove.

Meeting between Old and Trinity Rivers we trekked light woods and marshlands to Mayes Lake and viewed many ducks, eleven Avocet, and a group of Pectoral Sandpipers stupidly blocking our path; Gnatcatchers were abundant. Mr. McKay then showed us the saltwater barrier (with accessible road atop) east of Trinity River while hordes of Wood Ibis waded beside Interstate 10. In a mixed pine-oak area on the way to Lake Charlotte Broad-winged Hawks (7), a Fish Crow (seen and heard by several), bluebirds, and Pine Warblers slowed progress. The lake, new to many of us, and majestically lined with cypress, rewarded us with an Osprey pinwheeling and diving across the water. A leisurely lunch followed, complete with praying mantis. The early afternoon was spent south of Cove on Mr. McKay's old property where copperheads, butterflies, and birds vied for our attention.

Of 79 species totaled, prominent were Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, Bank Swallows, and Dickcissel (and no House Sparrows).

Thirty nine 'day trippers'; Margaret Anderson, Jerry Baker, James Barnes, Tommy Barnes, Johnny Fay Barnette, Tess Barry, Julia and Ewell Bradley, Avis and Harry Brister, Sue Buck, Nettie Busby, Marilyn Crane, Jane Dodge, Melba Drake, Pansy and Tassie Edwards, Gladys Galbreath, Eva Gilman, Clayton Gilman, Sarah Gordon, Johanna Grabbe, Dirk Hagemeyer, Dan Hardy, Dorothy and David Lefkovits, Arlie K. McKay (leader), Wallace Mebane, Norma Oates, Nell Ray, Louise Rodgers, Ed Taylor, Marion Taylor, Gloria Tveten, John Tveten, Mike Tveten, Josiephine Wilkin, Ella Wolfer, and Helen Wolfer.

Thank you, Arlie McKay!

THE GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The information below was taken from information furnished us by Hank and Eileen Robison of Houston, members of the Sierra Club.

The Golden-Cheeked Warbler breeds only in climax cedar, or more correctly, juniper, and they breed no place other than the Edwards Plateau of Texas. At one time there were more than 40 counties that were hospitable to this warbler: this has shrunk to less than 30 counties, leaving the habitat scattered and scarce.

Meridian State Park lies northwest of Waco and contains 463 acres, much of it covered with the kind of juniper this warbler must have. The town of Meridian, population of around a thousand, is about three miles from this park, and a group of citizens has decided a golf course would be nice. Though there is plenty of privately owned property that would be more suitable for a golf course, this

club has obtained a 60 year lease on 79 acres of the state park plus a \$70,000 grant from the Federal government to construct said golf course.

This park is one of the very few places the public can go to look for the Golden-Cheeked Warbler without trespassing on private lands or traipsing incredibly rough country. Many people have traveled from far beyond Texas to catch a glimpse of this bird, which has been placed on the rare list. If the destruction of his habitat continues he will undoubtedly be placed on the endangered list in the very near future.

Further information pertaining to this planned destruction was furnished in the October bulletin of the Travis Audubon Society. According to this bulletin a lawsuit was filed September 5 in Federal District Court by the Texas Committee on Natural Resources (TCO NR) and the Travis Audubon Society seeking an injunction to prevent construction of the golf course. This suit was filed after negotiations by TCO NR failed in an effort to prevent the lease and loan and to find an acceptable alternative.

Other plaintiffs in the suit are the Texas Ornithological Society, the Dallas County Audubon Society, the Houston Audubon Society and the Texas State Conference of the National Association of Colored People. The Executive Committee of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club voted unanimously to include the Lone Star Chapter as a plaintiff, subject to approval of the San Francisco office.

Newspaper reports say that the defendants in the suit have told the court they would hold their plans in abeyance until the case is settled. We strongly urge all readers to write their state senators and representatives in protest of this encroachment on our wildlife heritage.

STUDY OF ATTWATER'S PRAIRIE CHICKEN

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is embarking upon an extensive study of the Attwater's Prairie Chicken. Landowners, hunters and other outdoorsmen are asked to help.

One of the first talks in the study is to find out the location of the existing Attwaters. Biologists are interested in any sightings. Information concerning the location of the sighting and the landowner's name, address and phone number should be sent to Don Frels, 105 San Jacinto, c/o Parks and Wildlife Department, La Porte, Texas, 77571, or phone 471-3200.

Our field guides made no mention of this bird, so we talked to Mr. Frels about it. He informed us that the Texas Gulf coast is the only place in the world this species is found.

With an estimated population of just over 1,000, the Attwater's prairie chicken is an endangered species. Although they know the prairie chicken's population is declining, biologists do not have thorough knowledge of all the causes, and until they do, they have no means to reverse the decline.

Mr. Frels, who is the wildlife supervisor for Region IV, where the study is being made, says other agencies are concerned with the population decline and are launching projects of their own to examine various aspects of the problem.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the World Wildlife Fund are purchasing lands to preserve existing habitat.

Texas A & M University, in cooperation with the Caesar Kleberg Foundation, is doing experimental habitat manipulation, experimental propagation of pen-raised birds, studies on its nutritional requirements, and a chromosome study to determine the prevalence of lethal genes in individual chickens and individual colonies.

Major colonies must be located and counted annually to determine trends.

For this work two study areas will be selected in the birds' present range. Chickens will be trapped and marked. Activity will be recorded with the use of telemetry equipment. Individuals of both sexes will be followed to determine feeding, breeding, nesting and brooding territories. Biologists say they hope they can ultimately stabilize the prairie chicken population and remove it from the endangered list.

BENTSEN-RIO GRANDE TO GET FACILITIES taken from Texas Parks & Wildlife Notes

A \$302,900 contract has been awarded to Wilson Construction Company for the construction of new facilities at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park.

The project will include a new headquarters building, a service building, two restrooms with showers, a restroom renovation, a park residence, 78 trailer sites, and 15 picnic units.

Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park is a 588-acre park located approximately three miles southwest of Mission in Hidalgo County. It is a favorite spot for birdwatchers, and many rare species of birds are found there including Lichenstein's Oriole, Hooded Oriole, gray hawk, pauraque, groove-billed ani, longbilled thrasher, green jay, kiskadee flycatcher, and red-eyed cowbird.

The project should be completed in July, 1970.

It was reported in another issue that nature trails would be established so that visitors would be able to learn of the interrelationship between the unusual plants and the tremendous variety of birds. Two trails are going to be connected and a guide book prepared.

A NOTE FROM OLD FRIENDS!

Hi! Greetings from Albuquerque! We miss our OG friends considerably; now that it's fall migration time the urge is rising, but jobs interfere. However, we do fairly well on week-ends - have added 9 or 10 to the life list already.

Just finished reading Margaret Millar's "The Birds and Beasts were there." If you haven't read it, you might want to - it's terrific. Has some good words for T.O.S. and mentions the Freeport Count several times.

There's no OG here, but a N.M.O.S. that we plan to join in October, very loosely organized, I'm told - monthly publications and semi-annual field notes. Spring bird trip-field. I'll give 'em the Spoonbill-show 'em how to do it! (Incidentally, dues are \$4.00 yr. with much less offered than OG). If there's anything good I'll send it along.

Best to all, Dan & Marian Washburn.

Note from editors: Thank you for remembering us, Dan and Marian! Good luck and let us hear from you soon and often.

COASTAL PESTICIDE STUDIES CAUSE ALARM FOR MARINE SPECIES
taken from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department News Notes

Seadrift-- Concentrations of persistent pesticides from studies conducted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department cause much concern for some marine species and some bay areas.

Beginning in July, 1965, the Department's pesticide study project samples have included oysters, forage fish, game or predator fish, and shore birds and their eggs. So far, monitoring samples have been taken in most of the coastal bay systems with random samples from the Gulf of Mexico.

All oyster tissue samples analyzed have averaged considerably less than 1 part per million (ppm) DDT or other pesticides. Forage fish samples analyzed had an average DDT residue ranging from 0.173 ppm to 31275 ppm. Samples taken in the Lower Laguna Madre have consistently had the highest residues found in Texas Waters.

The process of biological magnification increases the level of pesticide concentration in living animals. In an illustration of this process, plankton, one-celled animals and plants, are capable of concentrating pesticide residues found in seawater by at least 10 fold. Fish or oysters feeding on contaminated plankton will increase this level at least another 10 fold, and so on, up the food chain through the predator fish and birds, and eventually to man.

Fortunately, in most cases this "concentrated" amount is still much below the level where damage occurs to a species, or where there is danger from consuming one of these species.

In order to more fully investigate the danger from pesticide pollution, several species of fish and birds have also been examined. This examination has sometimes consisted of whole body analysis. Animals are frequently dissected and the various body organs analyzed separately.

When body organs are separately analyzed a whole new picture emerges. One sample of mullet contained 1.149 ppm of DDT and its metabolites in the liver, .76 ppm in the gonads, 16 ppm in the brain, and .346 ppm in the body flesh. Had this been prepared as a whole body sample, the residue level would have been misleading.

This tissue or organ concentration causes much concern among biologists. Random sampling results revealed that speckled sea trout had high concentrations in the liver and gonads, and some bird samples have contained extremely high pesticide residues.

A peregrine falcon found dead on Padre Island contained 8.4 ppm of DDT residue in the brain and 56 ppm in the liver. Another bird, a white pelican, found dead near Corpus Christi, contained 84 ppm of DDT in the body flesh; 120 ppm in the liver; 18 ppm in the brain; 31 ppm in the heart; and 16 ppm in the kidney. In addition, this same bird had over 2 ppm of Dieldrin in most body tissues and 115 ppm and 114 ppm of polychlorinated biphenyl compounds in the body flesh and liver, respectively.

The residues of DDT found in analysis of sea trout ovaries or eggs have ranged as high as 7.98 ppm. Liver from this species has contained as high as 9.3 ppm of DDT residue.

Evaluation of the data being amassed in this study indicates that the impairment of reproductive ability and decrease in the survival of young are the greatest dangers to a species at the present time.

One researcher found that a species of fresh water trout fry hatching from eggs that contained 2.95 ppm or more of DDT would not survive. Another study has shown that one of the metabolites of DDT, DDE, has caused a change in the metabolism in birds that results in their inability to produce firm eggshells. The result is thin or non-existent eggshells and a marked increase in egg mortality before hatching can occur.

Evidence from data now being examined indicates that levels of DDT and other persistent pesticides are high enough that, in some species and in some bay areas, significant but undetected increases in mortality have occurred somewhere between the time the egg was fertilized through the first few weeks of life.

CLEARING HOUSE, September, 1969

- Grebe, Pied-billed: (1-3) 23, 26, 30, Cove, AKM.
- Cormorant, Olivaceous: (2) 5, Cove, AKM.
- Anhinga: (4) 7, Cypress Creek at Katy-Hockley Road, DHH.
- Heron, Green: (6) 5, (1 or 2) 5 days, Cove AKM.
- Egret, Cattle: (40, 000+) 7, Warren Ranch Lake, DHH.
 - Reddish: (1) 5, 20, Cove, AKM.
- Nightheron, Black-crowned: (1), 5, Cove AKM.
 - Yellow-crowned: (2) 5, 26, (1) 13, 27, Cove, AKM.
- Stork, Wood: (8) 20, SE Houston (Gulf Freeway at Woodridge), NP.
- Ibis, White-faced: (100 +) 13, 20, (200) 19, (21) 27, Cove AKM.
 - White: (5) 13, (11) 27, Cove, AKM.
- Spoonbill, Roseate: (6) 5, 13 (1-2) 19, 27, 30 (28) 20, Cove, AKM.
- Treeduck, Fulvous: (About 130 in two flocks) 14, Katy area, MA & RM.
- Duck, Mottled: (6-10) 3, 19, 27, (47) 5 (120) 13, Cove, AKM.
 - Pintail: (30) 30, Cove, AKM.
 - Teal, Blue-winged: (20) 13 (1-11) 20, 23, 26 (30) 30, Cove, AKM.
- WIDGEON, AMERICAN: (2) 20 (20) 27, Cove, AKM.
 - Shoveler: (3-5) 13, 20, Cove, AKM.
- Hawk, Sharp-shinned: (1) 17, 19, Baytown, NB.
 - Red-shouldered: (1) 4 days (3) 13 (2) 14, Cove, AKM.
 - Swainson's: (1) 11, Cove, AKM.
 - Marsh: (1) 20, 30, Cove, AKM.
- Osprey: (1) 14, San Jacinto Battleground, NB.
- Hawk, Sparrow: (1) 11, 20, 23 (3) 26, 30, Cove, AKM.
- Bobwhite: (4) 26, Cove, AKM.
- Rail, King: (1) 9, Cove, AKM.
- Coot, American: (16) 26, Cove, AKM.

- Plover, Upland: (1) 1, 16, Cove, AKM
 Sandpiper, Spotted: (3) 5 (2) 13 (6) 26, Cove, AKM
 Willet: (1) 20, Cove, AKM
 Yellowlegs, Greater: (2-3) 5, 13, 20 (6) 26, Cove AKM
 Lesser: (3-15) 5 days, Cove AKM.
 Sandpiper, Pectoral: (75) 13 (3) 19, 27, Cove, AKM.
 Least: (NC) 6 days, Cove, AKM.
 Dowitcher: (20) 13, Cove, AKM.
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: (NC) 26, Cove, AKM.
 Western: (NC) 3 days, Cove, AKM.
 Buff-breasted: (3) 19 (8) 20, Cove, AKM.
 Avocet, American: (8) 13, Cove AKM.
 Phalarope, Wilson's: (16) 16, Baytown tunnel, DL & NB.
 Tern, Gull-billed: (1) 20, Cove, AKM.
 Caspian: (1) 5, Cove, AKM
 Black: (5) 21, Bolivar ferry, NP; (NC) 4, 5, Cove, AKM.
 Skimmer, Black: (2-4) 4 days, Cove, AKM.
 ROADRUNNER: (1) 1, Howell-Sugarland Road, W & LM.
 Owl, Great Horned: (1) 25, 27 (2) 28, Cove, AKM.
 Barred: (1) 19, Cove, AKM.
 Chuck-will's-widow: (1) 3, Cove, AKM.
 Nighthawk, Common: (1) 9, 12, Cove, AKM.
 Swift, Chimney: (1) 1, 27, Cove, AKM.
 Hummingbird sp.: (1) 7 days, (2-4) 11 days (5) 28, Cove, AKM.
 Kingfisher, Belted: (1) 4, 5, 30, Cove, AKM.
 Flicker, Yellow-shafted: (1) 29, Baytown, NB.
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: (1) 23, 26, Cove, AKM.
 Red-headed: (1-5) every day, Baytown, NB.
 Kingbird, Eastern: (1-3) 6, 15, 19, 28 (4) 2, 10, Cove, AKM.
 Flycatcher, Great-crested: (1) 18, Cove, AKM.
 Empid, sp.: (2) 13 (1) 18, Cove, AKM.
 Wood Pewee, Eastern: (1) 4, 20, 26, Cove, AKM.
 Flycatcher, Olive-sided: (1) 9, Cove, AKM.
 Vermilion: (1) 25, 26, 27 (3 birds) Cove, AKM.
 Swallow, sp.: (110+) 4, 10215 Chatterton, DHH.
 Cliff: (1) 30, Cove, AKM.
 Martin, Purple: (4) 4 (10) 9, 10215 Chatterton, DHH; (1) 12, 23 (2) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Chickadee, Carolina: (1) 30, Cove, AKM.
 Catbird: (1) 14, 11926 Broken Bough, MA & RM; (2) 18 (1) 19, 20, Cove, AKM.
 (1) 12, Baytown, DL.
 Thrasher, Brown: (1) 18, 10215 Chatterton, DHH: (1-3) 16-30, Baytown, NB:
 (1-8) 18-30, Cove, AKM.
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-Gray: (1-10) 6 days (25-30) 13, 27, Cove, AKM.
 Vireo, White-eyed: (1) 28, Baytown, NB.
 Red-eyed: (1) 12, 10215 Chatterton, DHH: (1) 20, Cove, AKM.
 (1) 1, Baytown, DL.
 Warbler, Nashville: (1) 24, Baytown, NB: (1) 27, 11926 Broken Bough, MA & RM.
 Yellow: (1) 27, Cove, AKM: (1) 1, Baytown, DL.
 Mourning: (1) 10, 10215 Chatterton, DHH: (1) 14, Clay Road, MA & RM.
 Yellowthroat: (1) 20, Cove, AKM.
 Chat, Yellow-breasted: (1) 18, Baytown, NB.
 Warbler, Wilson's: (1) 12, 10215 Chatterton, DHH.
 Canada: (1) 14, Baytown, NB: (1) 14, Baytown, DL.
 Redstart, American: (1) 20, Cove, AKM.
 Oriole, Orchard: (5) 1, 8, 10, Baytown, DL.
 Baltimore: (6) 11 (1) 12, 15 (15) 13, Cove, AKM: (1-5) 1, 8, 10, 12, 14, 28,
 Baytown, DL.
 BULLOCK'S: (1) 30, Baytown, NB.
 Tanager, sp.: (1) 16, 10215 Chatterton, DHH.
 Bunting, Painted: (1) 19, Cove, AKM.
 Dickcissel: (1) 13, Cove, AKM.
 Sparrow, Seaside: (16) 5 (4) 20, Cove, AKM.

Contributors to Clearing House:

MA & RM	Mary Ann and Robert Moore	NP	Noel Pettengell
DHH	Dan H. Hardy	AKM	Arlie K. McKay
NB	Nettie Busby	DL	Dorothy Lefkovits
W & LM	Wallace and Lyvonda Mebane		

COMING EVENTS

- October 26 OG field trip to Anahuac Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 9.00 A.M. at the intersection of SH 65 and SH 61. Bring drinking water and lunch. Will look for the Masked Duck, Fulvous Tree Duck, and maybe some rails. Leader will be Steve Williams.
- November 10 Audubon Wildlife Film, presented by ONC and Audubon Society. Meet at 6:00 PM at Suzanne Cafeteria, 2912 South Shepherd. The film will be "Small World," presented by wildlife photographer Fran William Hall of Northfield, Minnesota. Mr. Hall brings to the screen some very unusual and fascinating sequences in the daily lives of some of our smaller creatures, particularly insects.
- November 15 Overnight field trip to Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Saturday and Sunday, November 15 & 16. Bring water, food, garbage bag, and camping equipment. The Ornithology Group will have an exhibit in the new shelter. Contact Gladys Galbreath, phone 523-5805, to volunteer help.
- November 22 November field trip to Sheldon Reservoir, Meet Sat., Nov 22, at 8:00 A.M. on Fauna Road at the south ramp of the reservoir. Bring picnic lunch. Leader will be Alan Wenger.
- December 27 Another reminder of the Christmas count. A big turnout is needed to insure a successful count, so try to plan to take part.

TRAVIS AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL VISIT UGC.

It was interesting to note in the October bulletin of the Travis Audubon Society of Austin that they are planning a field trip to this area November 1 & 2. Sat., Nov. 1, they will start a trip through the Anahuac Refuge at 8:00 A.M. The following day they will bird in the Galveston area.

STUDY OF FRANKLIN'S GULL

Another item of interest published in the Travis bulletin was a letter to Mr. Fred S. Webster, Jr., of Austin from Joanna Burger, Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455. She is a graduate student working on the ecology of the Franklin's Gull. In an attempt to ascertain the migratory route of immatures, she color marked 300 of them (orange, blue, black and purple) at Agassiz National Refuge in northern Minnesota. The wing markers are 1½ inches in diameter and are supposedly very easy to see.

She needs to be informed of any sightings of these birds and would appreciate the help of anyone who sees them. She needs date, color, location, flock composition (number of adults and immatures) and any other pertinent information.

WATCH TOWER SUGGESTED

We received a letter from Carter H. Miller, Baytown, who has participated in some of the "Baytown Birders" activities, and which might be of general interest to birders of this area. As most of you may know there is an area near the Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel which is rich in water birds and is used as a rookery. However, viewing is rather difficult. Mr. Miller wrote to the state highway department suggesting that a tower be erected near the tunnel for viewing the rookery and the bay. The letter was referred to J. R. Singleton, Executive Director of the Parks and Wildlife Department. Mr. Singleton's answer stated that the Department is presently not financially in a position to consider the feasibility of the project, but that the suggestion will be filed for later consideration as a possible future outdoor recreation project. We think this is a suggestion that bird groups might work toward in the future.

BANDING OF MOTTLED DUCKS

Just before news deadline we received the latest issue of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department News, and it included some very interesting information on banding of mottled ducks.

With a helicopter and three tender-mouthed Labrador retrievers, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists this year banded a record number of mottled ducks.

Using the new technique 425 ducklings and 78 adult mottled ducks were banded, compared with a previous record of 107, which took a three-week effort. Only 30 hours of actual flying time and six days were used for the operation this year.

The helicopter technique goes like this. A helicopter containing a pilot, a dog, and a bander flies low over the water until ducks are spotted. The ducks are herded into marsh grass and the copter lands so the bander and dog can disembark. The copter returns to base to pick up another team while the dog catches the ducks and the bander bands them.

Waterfowl biologist Charles Stutzenbaker says the ducks banded are flightless because they are either ducklings or adults in their summer molt.

The mottled duck is being studied so better management practices can be applied. It is a native Texan. Unlike its near relative, the mallard, it does not migrate north to nest but spends its whole life along the Texas and Louisiana coasts.

Stutzenbaker says banding is important because it helps biologists calculate the annual mortality of ducklings, trace movements, and determine the distribution of the kill.

Hunters are asked to return the bands to the Department when they kill a duck wearing one.

Stutzenbaker says the helicopter covered quite a bit of territory and made a good observation platform. A surprisingly high number of blue-winged teal were found nesting in the marshes.

The only problem with the new technique involved the Labrador's enthusiasm for catching ducks and the large number of ducks to be caught. Normally the dogs work only in cool weather, so when one dog pulled out all the stops, he suffered from heat prostration and had to be treated by a veterinarian.

NOTE FROM EDITORS

There is an Indian legend that if the sand picture artist paints a perfect picture, he will never paint another, so there is always a deliberate mistake made somewhere in the picture. Since the editors have a great deal of respect and admiration for the Indians we have adopted this legend of theirs, hence our mistakes in the Spoonbill. We would hate to think we would never put out another Spoonbill.

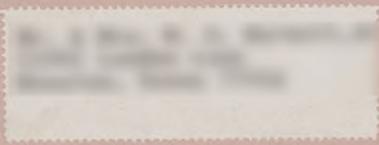
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