



THE SPOONBILL

Volume 6 No. 1

~~April~~ 1957
MAY

 *
 * Sometimes goldfinches one by one will *
 * drop *
 * From low-hung branches; little space they*
 * stop, *
 * But sip, and twitter, and their feathers *
 * sleek, *
 * Then off at once, as in a wanton freak; *
 * Or perhaps to show their black and golden*
 * wings, *
 * Pausing upon their yellow flutterings. *
 * - John Keats *

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FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

- June 6 - Thursday - Ornithology Group combination picnic and business meeting to be held in Hermann Park at 6:30 p. m. All members and friends are invited to bring a picnic lunch to the large pavilion in the picnic area, southwest section of Hermann Park.
- June 9 - Sunday - Monthly Ornithology Group field trip to Galveston County Park and Dickinson area. Meet at Thornhill's Cafeteria just off the freeway at 11:30 a. m. Trip leader will be Lecta Stilwell.

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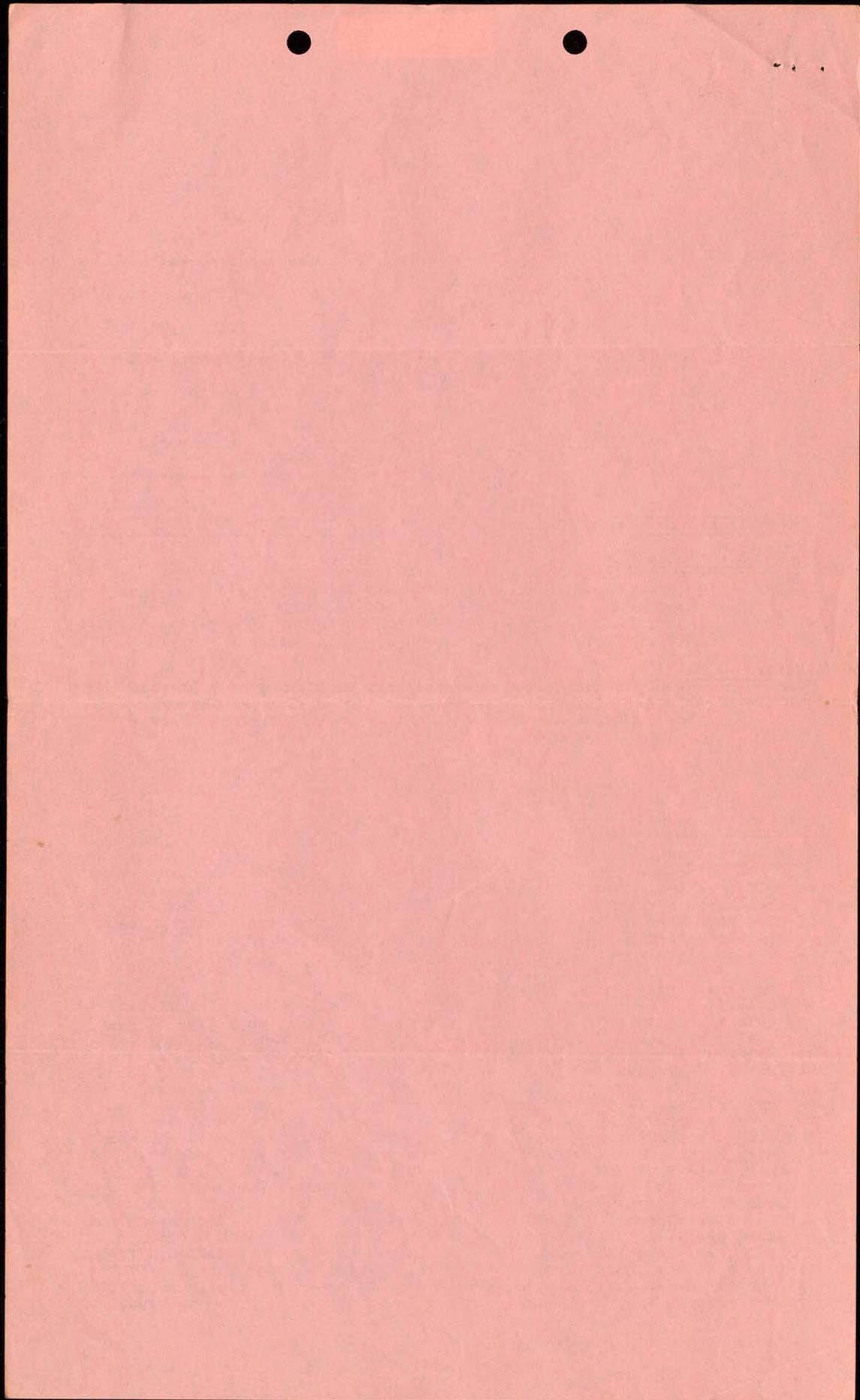
ORNITHOLOGY GROUP REPORTS

1957 Spring Count- Noel Perely

Up to this date only 6 out of 15 parties have sent their records to me at 3010 Prospect, Houston 4, Texas. However, there have been several unusual birds seen this year and out of these few parties 211 definite species have been reported. We have an excellent chance of beating last year's record and placing high in the nation. The June "Spoonbill" will carry a complete report of the 1957 Spring Count.

Weather and Migration- Vic Emanuel

On April 21, San Jacinto Day, Carl Aiken and I made a spring migration run from San Jacinto Battleground to Galveston, Texas. This time of year is usually the peak of spring migration and we certainly hoped this day would be no exception. Starting at 6:00 we found few migrants (only a Black-thr. Green Warbler) but numerous waterbirds including many Spoonbills and a nesting Yellow-cr. Night Heron. At Miller Road we saw several Orchard Orioles, Yellow and Tenn. Warblers, Lincoln's, White-thr., and White-cr. Sparrows. At the Baytown Tunnel we added more waterbirds including two Red-br. Mergansers, a Black Tern, White Pelicans, and many Avocets. Further down the coast were more migrants including Hooded, Kentucky, and Prothonotary Warblers, Catbirds, Gnatcatchers, and an Ovenbird. The only species added at Kemah was a Summer Tanager so we hurried on to Galveston hoping to have more success there. At 12:00 we reached Offats Bayou to discover 3 Common Loons, 2 Red-br. Mergansers and an Eared Grebe. At the golf course we saw only Black-bellied Plover and Horned Larks. Proceeding out S Road we turned to the right toward a fishing camp on West Bay. Here we found White Ibis, a Gull-billed Tern, a Whimbrel, and another Red-br. Merganser. We returned to S Road and continued on to Mulberry Grove. This area was inundated with migrants on the previous



weekend, but now it was almost devoid of migrants. All we could locate was one Tenn. Warbler, one Redstart, a few Indigo Buntings, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and a Baltimore Oriole. However, while walking down the road toward the marsh flats we found a Prairie Warbler, a lifer for both of us. At this time we noticed some dark clouds building up across the bay. We returned to the grove for lunch and while we were eating I saw a bird flitting in a nearby bush. It proved to be a Blue-winged Warbler. Later I saw another small bird nearby which, on closer inspection, proved to be a Black-poll Warbler. We then noticed that in almost the same tree were: Blue-winged Warblers, the Prairie Warbler, and the Black-poll Warbler. As we inspected the rest of the grove we saw what a change the threatened bad weather had made; Redstarts were more numerous as were Tenn. and other warblers. A few drops of rain fell and we witnessed an amazing phenomenon. Looking southward a tiny black speck would fly overhead and then plunge headlong into the grove. A wave of Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, a wave of Tennessee and Redstarts, a wave of Indigo and Painted Buntings, more Y.-billed Cuckoos and Bay-br. Warblers, and many Gnatcatchers. Others came in singles: a Chestnut-s. Warbler, a Gray-ch. Thrush, and a male Scarlet Tanager. A grove of trees which was lifeless an hour ago was now alive with migrants. We had witnessed a perfect example of the effect of adverse weather on Gulf Coast migration. We reluctantly left the grove to inspect other parts of the island. On the beach we found 60 Knots among the Willets and Sanderlings. At Kempner Park we added a Wood Thrush, a Red-eyed Vireo, a Cerulean Warbler, Inca Doves, 3 Dickcissels, and 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. We ended the trip at the jetties where more waterbirds were seen, bringing the total for the day to 128.

Hermann Park Birding

On April 14, Noel Perely observed a total of 64 birds in Hermann Park. Starting at 5:30 a. m. and ending at 1:45 p. m. he got Blue-winged, Cerulean, and Worm-eating Warblers which brought his total to 16 warblers for the day. On April 21, 1956, he saw 66 species, including 17 different warblers.

A Hazard to Birds

Mr. Jacobs at 5925 Westheimer reported that an Olive-backed Thrush flew into the plate glass window at his home. The bird was found stunned and lying in a flower bed. It was placed on a woodpile where it remained about an hour, then slowly recovered and flew away. Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs have discovered that although plate glass windows are an aid to bird-watchers, they have proved a definite hazard to the birds. After several tragedies and near tragedies, Mrs. Jacobs found that the birds do not fly into these windows when the curtains are drawn.

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CLEARING HOUSE

April 8 - Miss Erna Giesecke reported a Red-br. Nuthatch on her feeding shelf at 1509 Courtlandt. It was also seen several times the following three weeks.

An Audubon's Warbler, which stayed at Rice Institute for five days, was reported by Hardin Craig Jr.

April 9 - A pair of Inca Doves in the old football stadium at Rice was seen by Emmett Brunson.

April 20 - Larry Semander found a Nighthawk, Golden-winged Warbler, and Vermilion Flycatcher at Kemah.

Joe Heiser reports that the following summer residents are now at the Little Thicket: White-eyed Vireo, Hooded Warbler, Crested Flycatcher, Painted Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Summer Tanager, Kentucky Warbler, Nighthawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Y.-billed Cuckoo, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed, and Yellow-thr. Vireos.

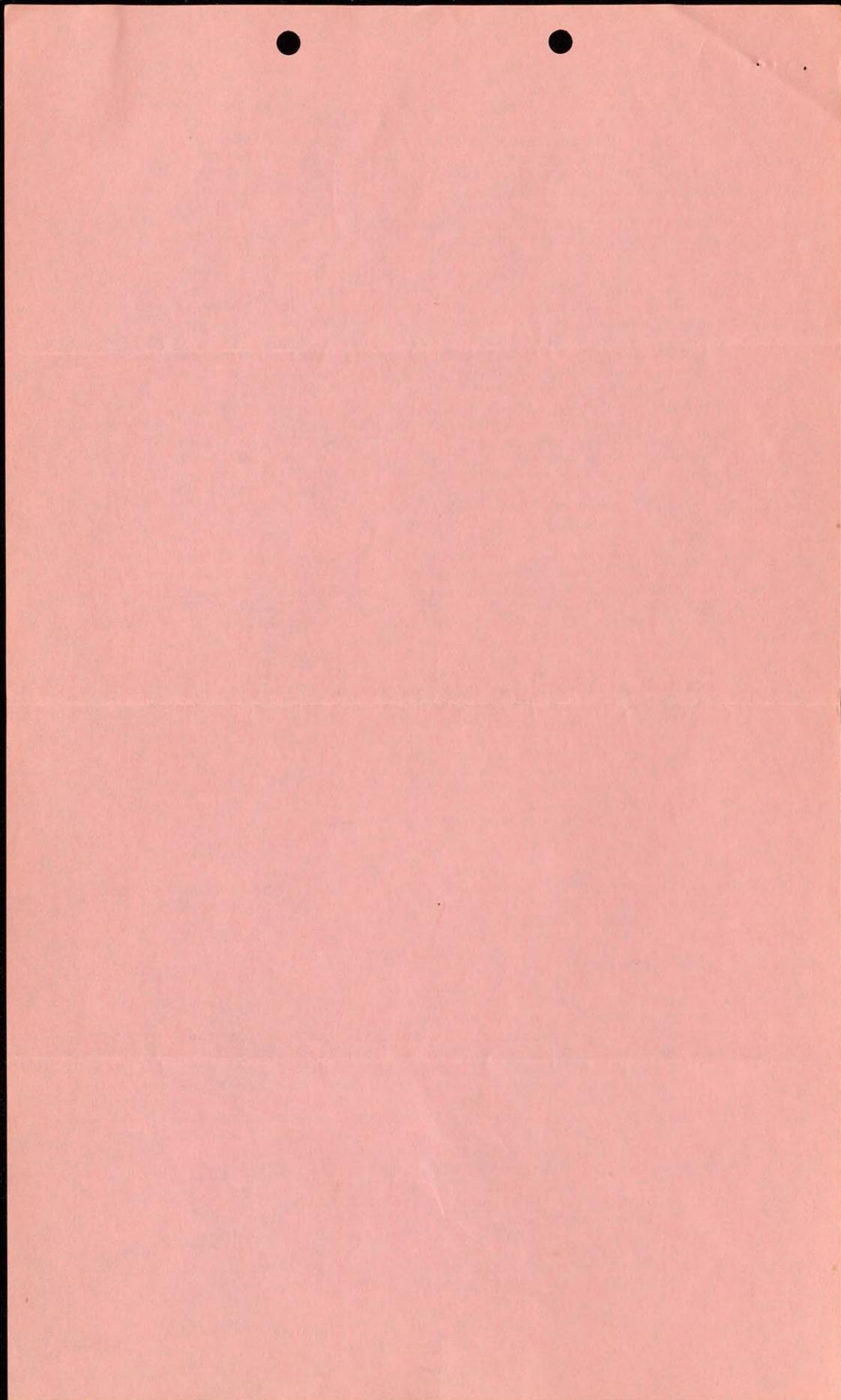
April 21 - Leota Stilwell found Dickcissels very numerous on Westheimer Rd. and about 10 Golden Plover, 12 Upland Plover, and many Nighthawks on the Clodine Rd.

On highway 146 between Kemah and Texas City a Prairie Chicken was seen by Vic Emanuel and Carl Aiken.

April 24 - A male Black-chinned Hummingbird was observed by Mrs. Chas. W. Hamilton feeding in her yard in West University Place.

April 25 - Charlotte Reindl saw Painted Buntings and Chestnut-sided Warblers at Woodland Park.

April 27 & 28 - The Louisiana Ornithological Society held its annual meeting in Cameron, Louisiana, on the weekend of April 27 & 28.



Highlights of the field trips were several CAPE MAY WARBLERS and at least two Hudsonian Godwits. Reported by Horace Jeter and James Stewart of Shreveport, Louisiana.

- April 29 - Two male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were observed by Mr. and Mrs. Max Jacobs in an elm tree in their backyard at 5925 Westheimer Rd.
- April 30 - A Worm-eating Warbler and Yellow-pr. Chat were seen at 4127 Drummond by Klela Klaische.
- May 5 - Near Bellaire Blvd. and Buffalo Speedway a Pileated Woodpecker, Chuck-will's-widow, Magnolia, Canada, Chestnut-s., and Golden-winged Warblers, Indigo and Painted Buntings, Redstarts, Catbirds and a Philadelphia Vireo were seen by Vic Emanuel, Klela Klaische, and Carl Aiken.
- Dickcissels were numerous in the fields along Westheimer Rd. - Etha Goffman
- A Yellow-shafted Flicker, Least Bittern, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-br. Merganser, Ruby-cr. Kinglet, and Nashville Warbler were seen by Edna Miner, Sue Harris, Luta Buchanan, Mabel Kaiser, and Myrtle Phillips.
- May 6 - Josephine Wilkin, Dr. Stearns, and Charlotte Reindl reported a Black-thr. Green Warbler, Crested Flycatcher, Veery, Wilson's and Canada Warblers.
- May 7 - A House Wren has been singing at the home of Edna Miner (2206 Brun) for the past week.

Grosbeaks

- The first Blue Grosbeaks were seen on April 13, both at Cove and in the Houston area. At Cove 25 were seen this first day whereas only 4 were reported from this area. Eight were reported on May 5, at Galveston.
- The first Rose-br. Grosbeaks were found at Galveston on April 21, when two were seen. April 29&30, were good days for these birds for 7 were seen by John O'Neill and 8 by McKay at Cove. The best record so far, however, was on May 5, when Norma Oates, Carrie Holcomb, and Leota Stilwell, got 20 at Galveston.
- On the spring count a Black-headed Grosbeak was seen by Noel Perely, Vic Emanuel, Carl Aiken, and Ronald Fowler, at Mulberry Grove in Galveston.

Buntings

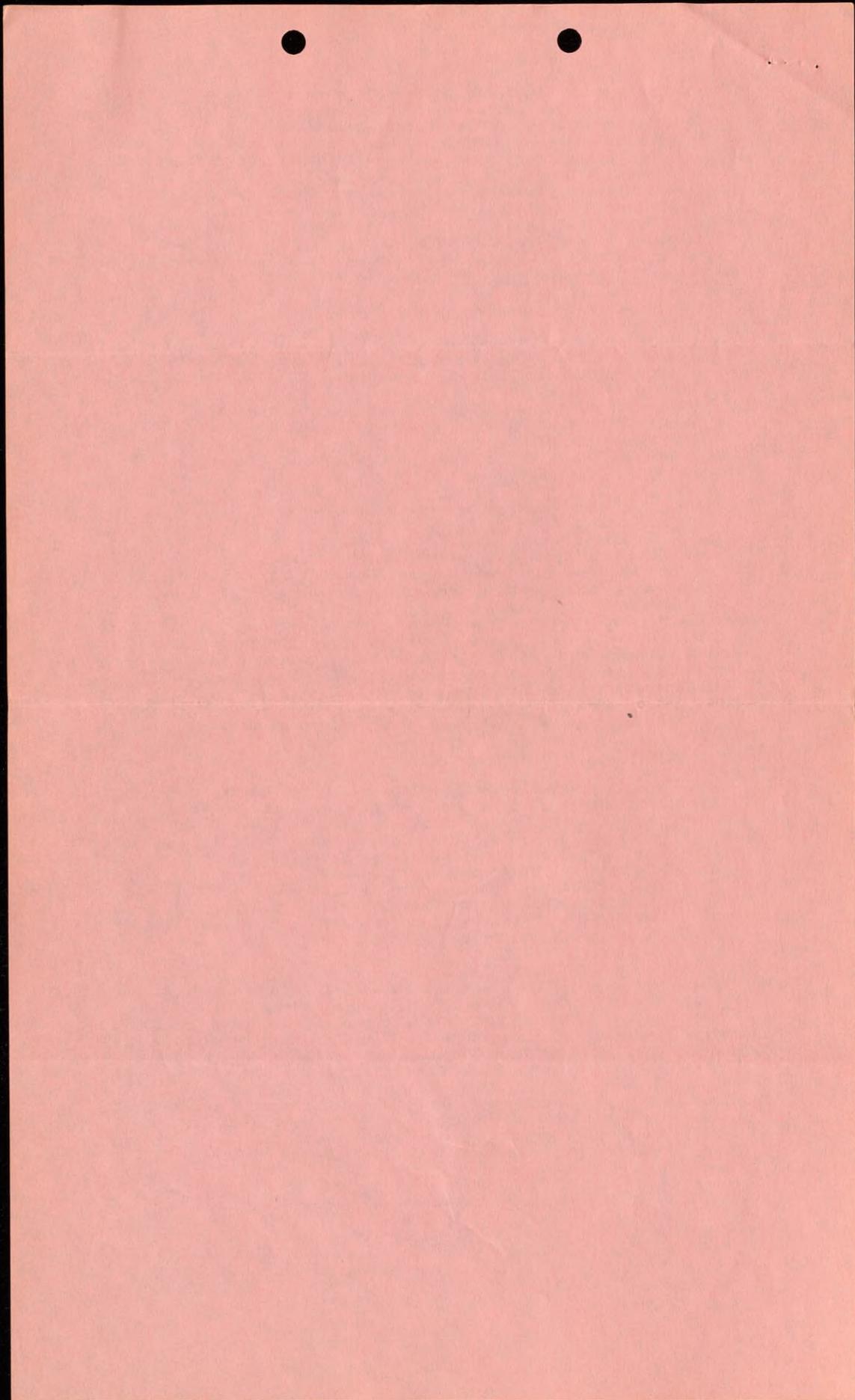
- One Indigo Bunting was seen at the Little Thicket on March 13, by Joe Heiser. The first good wave hit Houston on April 7, when Noel Perely found 7 near Hermann Park. Three days later Mabel Kaiser reported 10. On April 14, Norma Oates, Leota Stilwell, and Carl Aiken saw 40, and on May 5, 1000 were seen at Galveston by Carrie Holcomb, Leota Stilwell, and Norma Oates.
- Painted Buntings made their appearance at Cove and Houston on April 13. On the 14th, ten were seen at Galveston by Leota Stilwell, Klela Klaische, Norma Oates, and Carl Aiken. On May 5, only one was seen at Galveston.

Thrushes

- The first Gray-cheeked Thrush was seen in Hermann Park by Noel Perely on April 14. One or two have been seen on every trip since.
- On March 19, Ronald Fowler reported 2 Hermit Thrush near his home. Noel Perely also got the first Swainson's Thrush at Hermann Park on April 14. They were first seen at Cove on April 21. On May 5, Leota Stilwell, Carrie Holcomb, and Norma Oates saw 25 or more at Galveston.
- The Wood Thrush was first reported on April 13, when 1 was seen. The last report was on May 6, when one was seen at 5908 Charlotte.
- April 28, the spring count, was the first report for the Veery in this area this year. However, on May 5, Norma Oates, Leota Stilwell and Carrie Holcomb saw 6 at Galveston.

April 1957 Report from Mr. Arlie K. McKay - Cove Area

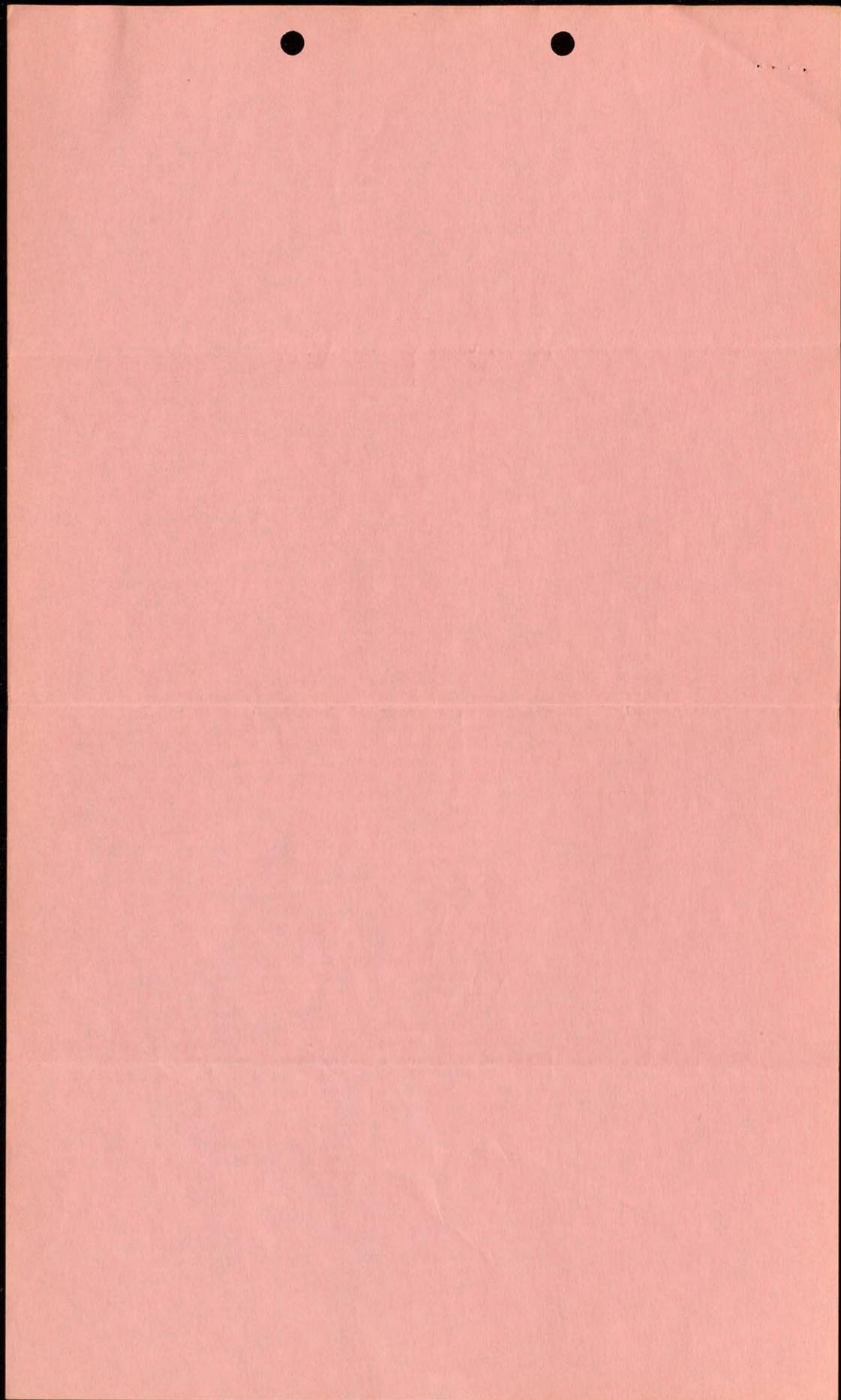
Mr. McKay reported that he counted 192 species of birds in the month of April. He counted over 100 on five separate days and 126 on April 28.



Am. Bittern: first 7 on April 3, last 1 on 21; Brewer's Blackbird: seen to April 21; Indigo Bunting: seen from April 21; Painted Bunting: from April 13, one day earlier than ever before; Caracara: 1 on April 14, 23, 29, 30; Catbird: seen from April 13; Chuck-will's-widow: first on April 11, 5 on the 13th., and 1 on the 14th.; Y.-billed Cuckoo: from April 20; B.-billed Cuckoo: 10 on the 28th.; Long-billed Gull: one on April 23; Hudsonian Curlew: from April 21; Dickcissel: seen from April 13, earliest ever by two days; Baldpate: seen to April 29, (500); Canvasback: 200 on April 7, singles into May; Gadwall: 40 on April 29; Am. Goldeneye: one on April 20; BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: one on April 2, an adult drake, observed at close range in good light, all field marks except head color clearly seen; Mottled Duck: frequent but below normal; Pintail: seen to April 29; Redhead: one on April 29, with slightly defective flight; Ruddy Duck: 23 on April 29; Lesser Scaup: about 500 on April 20, down to 15 by the 30th.; Shoveler: seen to April 29; Duck Hawk: one on April 25, 2 on the 28th.; empidonax flycatcher: 2 on the 13th. and one on the 14th.; Crested Flycatcher: one on the 11th., 2 on the 13th., and one on the 14th.; Scissor-tail: seen from April 4; Purple Gallinule: several on April 29; Gnatcatchers were seen to April 14; one Blue Goose and one Snow Goose were seen together on April 28 & 29; Eared Grebe: 4 on April 7, 15 on the 13th., and 2 on the 29th.; Pied-billed Grebe: 2 on April 7, and 1 on April 14; Blue Grosbeak: first on April 13; Rose-br. Grosbeak: 8 on April 29, and 1 on April 30; Bonapartes Gull: 1 on April 7, and 3 at Port Author on April 26; Marsh Hawk: last seen on April 27; Sparrow Hawk: last seen on April 11; Swainson's Hawk: first 5 on April 6; White Ibis: a flock of about 700 was seen on April 30; White-faced Glossy Ibis: common from April 7; Ruby-cr. Kinglet: seen to April 14; Red-br. Merganser: 15 seen until 20; Nighthawk: since April 15; White Pelican: common but less so toward end of month; Peewee: from April 20; Wilson's Phalarope: 2 on April 29; Sprauge's Pipit: 2 on April 23; Water Pipit: scarce by April 29; Black-bellied Plover: scarce; Golden Plover: 40 on April 1, and 2 on the 28th.; Upland Plover: common; Clapper Rail: a few the whole month; Sora Rail: 1 on April 20 & 30; Virginia Rail: 1 on April 28 & 30; Buff-br. Sandpiper: 29 on April 21; Solitary Sandpiper: 1 on April 3, and 2 on the 30th.; Spotted Sandpiper: 1 on April 14 & 20, and 5 on the 28th.; Stilt Sandpiper: 26 on April 28, and 750 on the 30th.; White-rumped Sandpiper: common from April 28; Sapsucker: 1 on April 13 & 14; Black Skimmer: seen from April 20; Snipe: one on April 28; Field Sparrow: seen to April 14; Lark Sparrow: 2 on April 1 & 30; Lincoln's Sparrow: to April 22; Sharp-tailed Sparrow: 1 on April 7 and 14, 2 on the 20th., and 30 on April 30; White-throated Sparrow: 2 on April 29; Spoonbill: average of 5 a day; Bank Swallow: seen from April 14; Cliff Swallow: from April 29; Scarlet Tanager: 1 on April 20, 5 on the 28th., and 5 on the 30th.; Summer Tanager: seen from April 13; Blue-winged Teal: peak of about 8000 on April 29; Green-winged Teal: last two on April 29; Black Tern: seen from April 24; Least Tern: from April 7; Gray-cheeked Thrush: from April 21; Olive-backed Thrush: from April 21; Wood Thrush: April 13 & 14 only; towhee: last 7 on April 28; turnstone: 6 on April 29; Veery: 2 on April 28 & 29; Red-eyed Vireo: seen from April 13; Y.-thr. Vireo: 2 on April 13, and 2 on April 30; Bay-br. Warbler: seen from April 27; Blackburnian Warbler: 1 on April 13, and regular from April 28; Black-poll Warbler: 1 on April 28; Black-thr. Green Warbler: from April 14; Blue-winged Warbler: 6 on April 13, and one on the 28th.; Canada Warbler: 2 on April 28; Cerulean Warbler: 8 on April 17, and 1 on the 28th.; chat: 2 on April 13, and 1 on the 19th.; Chestnut-sided Warbler: from April 17, earliest ever by one day; Golden-winged Warbler: 3 on April 13, and 1 on the 28th., & 29th.; Kentucky Warbler: seen from April 13; Magnolia Warbler: from April 28; Myrtle Warbler: one on April 14; Ovenbird: 2 on April 21, and 4 on the 28th.; Prothonotary Warbler: 3 on April 13; redstart: from April 13; Worm-eating Warbler: 18 on April 13, and 3 on the 14th.; Tennessee Warbler: from April 13; Yellow Warbler: seen from April 13; Y.-thr. Warbler: 3 on April 14, and 1 on the 21st.; Louisiana Waterthrush: 1 on April 20; Small-billed Waterthrush: frequent after April 13; no Whip-poor-will seen; Marsh Wren: April 7 and April 30; Sedge Wren: 1 on April 28; Common Bluebird: 3 on April 14; Maryland Yellow-throat: below parr; no House Wrens; no Yellow-cr. Night Herons.

CATTLE EGRET

On Saturday morning, April 20, around 9:00 a.m., Mr. and Mrs. Chas. W. Hamilton and Mr. Chas. Lincoln of New Jersey, discovered a Cattle Egret feeding with cattle in a field across the road from old Sheldon Reservoir. The egret was in good spring plumage with orange bill and buffy coloring



on head, breast, and back. Several Little Blue Herons were also feeding in the field but not in the vicinity of cattle. This individual was seen again in the same field on the afternoon of April 25. American and Snowy Egrets and immature Little Blue Herons were also feeding in the pasture, giving the observers an opportunity to compare size and coloring of the four species. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were among the first to identify the Cattle Egret found on Mustang Island in November 1955, and Mr. Lincoln is familiar with this species both in New Jersey and in Florida.

Reports from Rockport

April 22 - One American Goldeneye was seen at close range in a slough along Fulton Beach road and 7 Man-of-war Birds were seen circling over Rockport by Carrie Holcomb, Ruth Moorman, Thelma Smith, and Norma Oates.

April 28 - 50 Wilson's Phalaropes, 250 Indigo Buntings, Bullock's Orioles, and 5 species of vireos (Bell's, Blue-headed, Red-eyed, Warbling, and Philadelphia) were recorded by Miss Mary Donald, Mr. and Mrs. Joe O'Hearn, Mr. Karl Priede, and Mrs. Ivy Balsome (members of Milwaukee Bird Club and Wisconsin Audubon group) also Connie Hagar of Rockport.

April 28 - Mr. and Mrs. Chas. W. Hamilton recorded 141 species including Pink-sided Juncos, Least Grebes, Swainson's Warblers, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers.

Connie Hagar reported that Swainson's Warblers were recorded in Rockport on April 13, when 8 were seen, on April 17, when 6 were seen, and on April 28, when 2 were seen. Hudsonian Godwits were feeding in wet fields from April 10 to 25th. Knots migrated through Rockport April 17-19.

During the week of April 15 thru 23, from 3 to 7 Man-of-war Birds were seen in the vicinity of the yacht basin in the center of town, circling over the shore line.

Galveston - May 5, 1957 (Carrie Holcomb, Leota Stilwell, and Norma Oates)

A cold front moved into the area on May 4, causing temperatures to drop considerably. 96 species were recorded from 12:00 noon until 6:00 p. m. along "S" road and in the area around the Galveston Country Club.

Hundreds of cuckoos, both Black-billed and Yellow-billed were perched on fence wires and in low bushes along "S" road. The Y.-billed Cuckoos out-numbered the Black-billed by 10 to 1. Wood Peewees and empidonax flycatchers were also very numerous. Indigo Buntings and orioles were thick- sometimes 30 Baltimore Orioles might be perched in one small tree. Indigo Buntings traveled in flocks of a hundred or more, feeding in weeds and road-side flowers. Bay-br. Warblers were also noted feeding in the weeds with buntings and Blue Grosbeaks. Only one Painted Bunting was observed. Across the road from Galveston Country Club a flock of 25 or 30 Olive-backed Thrush and 6 or 8 Veeries were searching under the leaves for insects and grubs. Four Scarlet Tanagers, 2 Summer Tanagers, and 25 or more Catbirds were also seen in this area. Further down the Country Club lane, in salt cedar, prickly ash, oleander, and other shrubs the following twenty species of warblers were found: 6 Bay-breasted, 20 Black-and-White, 6 Blackburnian, 10 Black-thr. Green, 1 Blue-winged, 1 Chat, 8 Chestnut-sided, 5 Golden-winged, 1 Hooded, 1 Kentucky, 10 Magnolia, 1 Mourning (male in good plumage), 2 Myrtle, 1 Orange-cr., 5 Ovenbirds, 2 Prothonotary, 50 Redstarts, 10 Tennessee, 10 Yellow, 10 Yellowthroates, also 6 or 8 Red-eyed Vireos, 1 White-eyed and 1 Y.-thr. Vireo. One Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen in Mulberry Grove chasing small warblers. Eight Blue Grosbeaks and at least 20 Rose-br. Grosbeaks were seen, some of them perched on low fence wires or in the weeds and grass. Only 1 Golden Plover and 1 Upland Plover were found but a flock of 10 or more Spotted Sandpipers were seen near the pond at the old ball park. In another shallow pond 8 or 10 Stilt Sandpipers were feeding with Dowitchers and in the grass beside the pond, as well as on the golf course, flocks of Baird Sandpipers were feeding. A few Baldpates, 4 Ruddy and 4 Shovelers were still on the duck pond and at Offatts Bayou 4 Common Loons were observed - two in breeding plumage.

Important Notice

In as much as Ornithology Group dues are now due and payable, and many members will doubtless be mailing checks, Mrs. C. R. Mattei, Secretary-Treasurer, wishes to call attention to a change in address. Her address is now 3523 TANGLEY ROAD, HOUSTON 5, TEXAS.

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(Ornithology Group)
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