



THE SPOONBILL

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PUBLISHED BY THE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, OUTDOOR NATURE CLUB, HOUSTON, TEXAS

KNOCK, KNOCK! HOO-HOO'S THERE! By Margaret Jones

After our guide put us in an area at Welder Refuge (on the OG field trip March 26) in which we found the Olive Sparrow, I asked if he had any owls staked out. Since the Barn Owls sometimes use nesting boxes that have been put up around the shores of one of the lakes, he took us there, though he didn't really believe they were yet using them. Wading through high weeds down the slope to the box, I found it to be above my head, with the entrance hole much too high to be looked into, except with a step-ladder. So I reached up and rapped smartly on the side of the box, once, heard nothing, and rapped again. Well, I thought Vesuvius was erupting, with much wild lurching inside, and when that owl's face appeared in her doorway, there was some wild lurching on my part, as I stumbled backward, yelling "It's here, it really is here!" Everyone flocked down the slope and got a good look at her as she looked us over. Then her eyes very slowly closed, and she very slowly sank out of sight, and no amount of rapping would bring her up again for the benefit of the photographers among us. But we thanked her for letting several of us add her to our life list.

BALD EAGLE AND OSPREY SURVEY

We received the following letter from James U. Cross, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, asking for aid in a survey of Bald Eagles and Ospreys in Texas.

"The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is continuing its survey to determine the population, density, and nesting trends of the American Bald Eagle and American Osprey in this State. We would like to solicit your cooperation and aid in the completion of this study. These data will allow the Department to establish population levels on Texas fish hawks and eagles. We also hope to determine the nesting success of these endangered species so that future problems that might arise with these birds can be carefully monitored.

Enclosed you will find a form on which we would like for you to share your knowledge of observed birds and existing nest locations of these species. The data that we desire consists of the (1) exact location of observed birds, (2) exact location of active or inactive nests (county and directions to the nest site), and (3) a brief description of the nesting site (species of tree, alive or dead, whether the area is forested or open, etc.). Such descriptions will enable us to locate these nests in future years. Nest sites reported in this survey will be subsequently visited to determine more specific information.

Additional forms can be obtained from this office (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, John H. Reagan Building, Austin, Texas 78701). We appreciate your cooperation in helping us continue this survey."

LETTER FROM JOE M. HEISER, JR.

Hole-nesting home seekers got a break on March 2 (Texas Independence Day) when Hardy Fields and Army Emmott placed twenty-four bluebird boxes in the Willis-New Waverly area. Hardy and Army are former members of the Outdoor Nature Club. They are active in other personal conservation works for which there is no longer any provision in the frozen organizational set-up of the ONC.

NEWSLETTER, CORNELL UNIVERSITY LABORATORY OF ORNITHOLOGY

During 1971, the seventh year of the North American Nest-record Card Program, we are pleased to report the largest number of contributors to the Program since its beginning. Well over 1,000 individuals sent us nesting data last year, with almost 22,000 nest-record cards for that period. We also have more Regional Centers helping with the Program. However, coverage is still particularly poor in Iowa, New Hampshire and Wyoming. If any of you know of a person or group that could help with our Program in these parts of the country, please let us know.

Dr. David B. Peakall attended a Study Conference in England in December and a meeting in Switzerland with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to discuss the possibility of developing a world-wide monitoring system based on the nest-record card programs. Considerable progress was made towards obtaining a uniformity in the information to be collected on each nest and the mode of analysis.

We are pleased to report that several researchers and students have made use of our nesting data last year. We were able to assist in the study of certain species, including Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks; Groat-horned, Long-eared and Barn Owls; Eastern, Black and Say's Phoebe; Cassin's and Western Kingbirds; Barn and Cliff Swallows; Scrub Jays; and Common and Fish Crows. Also nesting information for several geographical sections of the country has been requested. In connection with such requests we would like to note that our information is filed by species. Therefore it is both easier and quicker to extract data from the computer on a species basis rather than for geographical regions. Since geographical data require a computer search of all cards on every species, we have been postponing such requests until all species (including many minor ones with only a few cards) are completely processed. Then we anticipate doing regional sorts once or twice a year when all such requests will be handled at the same time.

The Nest-record Card Program occasionally gets requests from contributors for duplicate copies of their completed cards. In the past we have filled such requests for many persons and groups. However, with increasing numbers of incoming cards and requests for research purposes, and a tightly operating budget and staff, we are no longer able to make duplicate copies of cards either by xerox or by hand, since original cards frequently contain observations that cannot be categorized into the standard computer form and since errors occasionally occur in the computer process, we need one original card on file for each nest recorded. Thus we cannot return originals after we have the data in computer form.

We feel, however, that any contributor desiring such, rightfully deserves a copy of his or her observations. Therefore, we can offer the following alternative solutions to the problem: (1) we will send extra blank nest-record cards so the contributor (or someone who can help) can make second copies and keep one set. If you do this, please send us either the originals or very-carefully double-checked copies, since these form the basis of scientific analyses and should contain no errors. Or, (2) we will provide, at no charge, duplicate computer cards (with the data printed along the top of the card and with accompanying lists of codes) to a contributor or regional program. If you want these, we need to know in advance so the cards can be duplicated before they are filed with thousands of others. Once filed, retrieval of particular cards is a costly process. The purpose of computers is to enable the handling of large amounts of data such as we are now dealing with in this Program. Thus the easiest way to provide duplicate data is to let the computer do it. These duplicate computer cards will be provided free of charge in recognition of the contributor's service, on which the entire Nest-record Card Program relies. Other requests for data, which usually involve observations of many people, will be charged for the costs of providing those data.

CLEARING HOUSE, March, 1972

Loon, Common: (1)29, Lake Charlotte, DHH.
 Grebe, Pied-billed: (1)2,29, (3)16, Cove, AKM; (1)6,13, (2)5, (3)10,16, Cove, D&CP.
 Pelican, White: (6-50)4 days, Cove, D&CP; (100+)15, (250)no date, Cove, AKM.
 Cormorant, Olivaceous: (3-6)15,16,29, (10)2, Cove, AKM.
 Anhinga: (175+)no date, Mont Belvieu, AKM; (98)21, Cove, D&CP; (75+)21,22, 1601
 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 HERON, GREAT WHITE: (1)27, Galveston I. (S. side of FM 3005 W. of Spanish Grant),
 Party "B".
 Heron, Green: (1)26, Cove, D&CP.
 Nightheron, Black-crowned: (25+)2, (15+)15, Cove, C&DP.
 Yellow-crowned: (2)18, Cove, D&CP.

CLEARING HOUSE, Cont'd.

- Bittern, American: (1)11,15,18, Cove, D&CP.
 Spoonbill, Roseate: (1)29, Cove, AKM.
 Goose, White-fronted: (18)4, (150+)9, (200+)10, Cove, D&CP.
 Snow and Blue: 6 days to the 9th, (NC)18,20, Cove, AKM.
 Ducks, Mallard: (2)20, Cove, D&CP.
 Mottled: (2)2,28, (3)9, (13)29, Cove, AKM.
 Gadwall: (2)2, Cove, AKM.
 Pintail: (2)29, Cove, AKM.
 Teal, Green-winged: (30)2, (200)9, (1)16, (50)29, Cove, AKM.
 Blue-winged: (3-13)3,20, (100+)29, Cove, AKM; (very many)23, Cove, D&CP.
 Cinnamon: (5)4, Katy-Hockley Road, DHH.
 Widgeon, American: (2+)2, (20+)29, Cove, AKM.
 Shoveler: (2-15)2,9,20, (50+)29, Cove, AKM.
 Scaup, Lesser: (11)10, (2)13, (1)15,20, Cove, D&CP.
 Bufflehead: (3)27, Texas City Dike, Party "B".
 Ruddy: (1)10,15,20, (2)13, Cove, D&CP.
 Merganser, Red-breasted: (1)15, D&CP. Cove,
 Vulture, Turkey: (1-2)2,10,28,29, Cove, AKM.
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: (1)3,17,25,26, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Red-tailed: (1-10)10 days, (14)8, Cove, AKM.
 Kriders: (1)8,29, Cove, AKM.
 Red-shouldered: (1)28,29, Cove, AKM.
 Broad-winged: (7)29, (1+)31, Cove, AKM; (4)31, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Marsh: (1)6 days, (2)3 days, (3-5)5 days, Cove, AKM.
 Falcon, Peregrine: (1,an escapee)6 days, (1)25, Cove, D&CP.
 Hawk, Sparrow: (1-2)5 days, to 17th and 22nd., (3-5)4 days, (6)2, (7)1,4, Cove, AKM.
 Prairie-chicken, Gr.: (11+)23, airstrip near Kemah, D&DL.
 Rail, King: (1)3,11,12, (2)10,16,17, (3)4, Cove, D&CP.
 Virginia: (1)12, Cove, D&CP.
 Sora: (1-2)10 days, Cove, D&CP.
 Gallinule, Common: (3)2,4, (1)26, Cove, D&CP.
 Coot, American: (5)29, Cove, AKM.
 Plover, Snowy: (5)31, Bolivar, Party "A".
 Wilson's: (1)27, Galveston I., Party "B".
 Golden, American: (3)8,14, (400+)15, (1)16, (100+)29, (9)31, Cove, AKM;
 (6)18, Cove, D&CP; (2)4, Clay Rd, DHH.
 Black-bellied: (1-3)7,12,16,18, Cove, D&CP; (1)16,29, Cove, AKM.
 Turnstone, Ruddy: (3)2, Cove, AKM.
 Snipe, Common: (4)17, no location, DM; (2)1, (1)8, (3)29, Cove, AKM.
 Curlew, Long-billed: (1)10,26, Cove, D&CP.
 Plover, Upland: (6)22, (2)24,25, Cove, AKM. (5)17, no location, DM.
 Willet: (15)1,(27)2,(1)16, (4)29, Cove, AKM.
 Yellowlegs, Greater: (1-9)2,9,31, (30+)29, Cove, AKM.
 Lesser: (3-20)2,9,14, (75+)29, Cove, AKM.
 Knot: (55)27, W. Galveston I., Party "B"?
 Sandpiper, Pectoral: (75+)29, Cove, AKM.
 Baird's: (4)31, Galveston, Party "A".
 Dowitcher Sp.: (5)9, (35)16, Cove, AKM.
 Stilt, Black-necked: (2)17,19,20, Cove, D&CP.; (14)29, Cove, AKM.
 Gull, Bonaparte's: (2)1,2, (12-13)25,29, Cove, AKM.
 Tern, Least: (2)27, Texas City Dike, Party "B".
 Sandwich: (35)27, Galveston (S. Jotty), Party "B".
 Dove, White-winged: (1)27, Galveston County Courthouse, Party "B".
 Mourning: (1)21,22,27,28, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Inca: (1)daily, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: (1)25, Cove, D&CP.
 Owl, Screech: (1)11, South of Dayton, AKM.
 Short-eared: (1)3,6,8,11,26, (2)12,13,16, Cove, D&CP.
 Chuck-will's-widow: (1)25, Cove, D&CP; (1)27, S/W Bell Station on John Ralston Rd.
 (W. of Sheldon Res.). Party "B" (heard Calling); (2)23, no location, DM.
 Swift, Chimney: (6)21, (2)22, Cove, D&CP; (3)22, (4)29, Cove, AKM; (2)24, 10215
 Chatterton, DHH;
 Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: (1)3,4,8,13, Cove, CP; (1 or 2)22,24,25, Cove, AKM;
 (1)7,23,25, (2)27,28,29, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Flicker, Yellow-shafted: (2)2, (1)4,10,14, Cove, AKM.
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: (1)29, Cove, AKM; (1)31, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: (1)16, Cove, AKM.
 Kingbird, Eastern: (1)27, Buckhorn Lake, (E. of Sheldon Res.) Party "B".
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: (1)28,31; Cove, AKM; (2)29, Houston Baptist College,
 P&PN; (1)23, near Komah, D&DL; (1)12, no location, DM.
 Phoebe, Eastern: (1)16, Cove, AKM.

CLEARING HOUSE, Cont'd.

- FLYCATCHER, EPIDONAX: (1)27, Compton's Woods, N. of Seabrook, Party "B" (RHN only)
 Swallow, Troc: (NC)4,5, (100+)29, Cove, AKM.
 Rough-winged: (1)29, Cove, AKM.
 Barn: (1+)24,25,29, Cove, AKM.
 Martin, Purple: (20)1, 1006 Evergreen Dr., SE Houston, RLM & NP.
 Jay, Blue: (4)31, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Chickadee, Carolina: (1)4,16, Cove, AKM; (2)31, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Titmouse, Tufted: (4)31, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Nuthatch, Red-breasted: (1)31, High Island, Party "A".
 Brown-headed: (1)31 White Memorial Park, Party "A".
 Wren, Long-billed: (3)11, Cove, D&CP.
 Short-billed Marsh: (2)1, (1)15, Cove, D&CP.
 Mockingbird: (1)30, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Catbird: (1)16, Cove, AKM.
 Robin: (2-10)1,7,22,24, (50+)8,10,30, (25+)4; Cove, AKM.
 Thrush, Hermit: (1)16, Cove, AKM; (2)6,15, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: (2)2,22, (1)26, Cove, AKM; (10-12)4-31, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: (1)2, Cove, AKM.
 Pipit, Water: (1)2, (2)9, (3)29, Cove, AKM.
 Waxwing, Cedar: (15-30)3,4,6,12,19, Cove, AKM.
 Vireo, White-eyed: (1)2, Cove, AKM; (1)18, 7702 Westview, P&PN; (1)27, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Solitary: (1)2, Cove, AKM;
 Red-eyed: (1)27, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Warbler, Black and White: (1)1,24, Cove, AKM; (1)5,7,8, 10215 Chatterton, DHH;
 (1)18, 7702 Westview, P&PN; (1)6,15,20,21,24,26, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL; (1)12, no location, DM.
 Prothonotary: (20+)31, High Island, Party "A".
 Swainson's: (1)29, Kempner Park, Galveston, DHH et al; (1)31 High Island, Party "A".
 Worm-eating: (3)27, Compton's Woods & Galveston I. (2 birds) Party "B".
 Orango-crowned: (2)2,24, Cove, AKM.
 Nashville: (1)27, Galveston I. (Menard House), Party "B", (NP only)
 Parula: (1)7, 10215 Chatterton, DHH; (1)8, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL;
 (1)12, no location, DM.
 Myrtle: (1-9)1,3,4,9, (40+)no date, (10+)16, Cove, AKM; (3)31, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
 Yellow-throated: (1)7, 10215 Chatterton, DHH; (2)12, no location, DM.
 Waterthrush, Louisiana: (1)29, Kempner Park, Galveston, DHH et al;
 Kentucky: (1)31, High Island, Party "A"; (2)27, SW Bell Station on John Ralston Rd. (W. of Sheldon Res.) and Galveston I. (33rd. St. and Ursuline Ave.), Party "B".
 Hooded: (1)17,21, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Wilson's: (2)31, High Island, Party "A"; (1)1-31, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 TANAGER, WESTERN: (1)27, Galveston I. (same site and bird as on Feb. 20.) Party "B"
 (1)6, 10102 Holly Springs, JR.
 Grosbeak, Black-headed: (2males)4, at feeder, 512 Inwood, Baytown, J>.
 Finch, Purple: (4+)1,2,3, (1)22, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
 Siskin, Pine: (20+)every day, 10102 Holly Springs, JR.
 Towhee, Rufous-sided: (1)2, (my first in several years) Cove, AKM.
 Sparrow, Le Conte's: (5+)1, Cove, AKM.
 Henslow's: (3+)1, Cove, AKM.
 Sharp-tailed: (2)27, Galveston I. (S. Jetty) Party "B".
 White-crowned: (4)1, Cove, AKM.
 Lincoln's: (1)2, Cove, AKM.
 Swamp: (1)1, Cove, AKM.

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS:

AKM	Arlie K. McKay	D&CP	Dennis and Chuch Peting
DHH	Dan H. Hardy	P&PN	Paul & Phyllis Nimmons
Party "A"	Mike Braun, Orlyn Gaddis, Dan Hardy, Linda Snyder	JR	Jane Robinson
RLM	Robert L. Mills	J>	John & Gloria Tveton
Party "B"	Ben Feltner, Dr. Richard H. Neuman (of Los Angeles) Noel Pettingcoll	D&DL	David & Dorothy Lofkovits
		DM	David Marrack

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES

From Dan Hardy: "Big Day" Note: On March 31, 1972, the party of Mike Brawn, Orlyn Gaddis, Dan Hardy and Linda Snyder recorded 160 species (including Rock Dove). We were aided by a cold front on the previous day. Fifteen species of warblers were recorded. The route followed was Chambers/Galveston Counties; Lake Charlotte-White Memorial Park-Anahuac Refuge-High Island-Bolivar-Galveston. BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: Seen in field near seawall 7 miles west of 61st street. Seen by Dan Hardy and Orlyn Gaddis. The four birds were large "peeps" with brownish faces and breasts. The wings extended beyond the tail to a pronounced degree. This gave the Baird's a heavy, droop-winged appearance.

From Noel Pettingell: A total of 152 species (plus Rock Dove) were recorded on March 27 by Party "B" (BF 146, RHN 151, NP 144, Rock Dove excluded from all totals), thus exceeding the previous Upper Texas Coast record for March by one party: 134 species recorded by 4 observers on March 27, 1959, along the same Houston to Galveston Island route as that followed by the 1972 group.

From Jane Robinson: I neglected to report a Western Tanager to the Clearing House and was reminded by the report in the last Spoonbill. I saw a female Western Tanager in my yard (10102 Holly Springs, Houston, 77042) on January 14, 22, 25, 26 and on March 6. I did not record the bird at all during February and now am not sure whether this was negligence on my part or if I didn't see it in February. I saw the bird closely and for a long time. It bathed in my bird bath on several days. It had yellowish wing bars and definitely a pale tanager bill. Every day during the month of March I had a flock of Pine Siskins in the yard. By March 31 the number had dwindled to 6. Early in the month I had seen as many as 20 at a time.

Two species were put on the Rare Bird Alert during March and early April. A Hermit Warbler was seen in Brannon's Woods at High Island on March 30 by Guy McKaskie of California, one of the top U.S. birders, and then was seen by several birders over a period extending at least through April 3. The almost extinct Eskimo Curlew was reported by David Marrack April 1. This bird is also reported to have been seen by several others. It was also missed by quite a few other "lookers".

From the Lefkovits: Our male Wilson's Warbler spent the entire winter with us and was still here as late as April 10. No previous records were shown on the field check list for this bird during February and March. We have had Wood Thrushes, Kentucky and Hooded Warblers making good use of a bird bath set on the ground in the woods behind our house.

REDDTAIL HAWK NESTING

from R.J. Fleetwood

The bird checklist for the upper Texas Coast indicates that the red-tailed hawk is occasionally seen during the summer months, but it is not shown as a breeding bird of the area.

A nest was found on April 9, 1972 in a large liveoak tree on the Retrieve State Farm, Brazoria County. The nest was approximately 48 feet from the ground.

The tail on the hawk was red, with the upper part white. The alarm note was that of "escaping Steam".

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS:

Somewhere in our vicinity some baby Tufted Titmice are resting in a fur lined nest. A coon sleeps in the hollow of a tree in our back yard and a Titmouse plucked him for three days, going away each time with a mass of fur in her bill. If the fur was fastened fairly secure she would brace her feet and tug with no objection from the coon.

Last summer Marilyn Crane and I were in Galveston and saw a gull sitting quietly. As we approached we found her completely immobilized with monofilament fishing line. It had cut into her legs so deeply they were bleeding and it seemed to hurt her when we untangled the line; however, she lay quite still. When free, she flew away to join the other gulls.

Mrs. Linda Snyder has a Caracara that was caught in a wolf trap up near Bronham. Its' two middle toes had to be amputated on one foot but does not interfere too drastically with its grasping power.

NEWS OF ARMAND BAYOU

Armand Yrametegui, the man, was honored in a commemorative ceremony on Armand Bayou in Bay Area Park Sunday, April 16. Formal signs were placed designating Armand Bayou. An address was given by Robert Vines, well-known naturalist and author and director of the McAshan Botanical Center. Mr. Vines was a close friend of Armand and reminded those present of the qualities of the man who did so much for conservation in the State of Texas and who brought an appreciation of nature to so many people.

"Every citizen of Texas should be interested in the private fund drive to save Armand Bayou and to preserve an original part of Texas for posterity in a park for all America to enjoy," the Rev. Ben Skyles, Chairman of the Preservation of Armand Bayou Committee, said recently.

Armand Bayou winds for 12 miles through a unique wilderness area where three habitats coexist, the Southern green forest, the Gulf coast prairie and the salt marshes still existing in their natural state, with a rich variety of wildlife and vegetation. It is a highly productive estuary, one of the few Gulf coast bayous virtually untouched by man, and can become a haven for nature lovers, hikers, canoeists, artists, conservationists and school children to observe a part of God's world unspoiled.

Many organizations are in full support for a park on Armand Bayou, but Federal, state and local government funding will not be enough to secure the almost 4,000 acres needed to save this area. "Private help from citizens all over Texas is urgently needed to save Armand Bayou," stated Rev. Skyles.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission has made a survey of Armand Bayou and recommended it highly as a state park.

Money contributed to save Armand Bayou will go to buy land and will not be used for any other purpose, according to Mrs. David B. Smith, chairman of the funding committee. "If every citizen, civic, school and church group sent in a small contribution, Armand Bayou can be saved and a beautiful park established for all to enjoy," Mrs. Smith said.

Persons or groups wishing to help save this part of America for the future may send their tax-exempt contributions to the Save Armand Bayou Fund, Box 2000, Pasadena, Texas 77501. The Fund will be administered by the Armand Yrametegui Memorial, Inc., a tax-exempt organization set up to purchase park land as a memorial to the late curator of the Burke-Baker Planetarium. Persons or groups who donate to save Armand Bayou will have their names placed on permanent record at the park site in recognition of saving this unusual bayou for generations to come.

COMING EVENTS

Tuesday
May 9 Regular ONC meeting at 8:00 P.M. at Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive. Program will be "Wild Flowers of Texas" presented by Mrs. Edna Fielding. Also at this meeting reports will be given of the activities of the various groups during the past year.

Sat. & Sun.
May 20 & 21 ONC field trip with the intriguing title of "Scratching the Devil's Backbone" led by Clayton Gilman. See Nature Notes for details.

Sunday
May 28 OG field trip to explore a section of the Trinity River bottoms. We will meet behind the Dayton State Bank in Dayton at 8:00 A.M. The bank is on the north side of Highway 90 across from the high school. Marilyn Crane will lead the trip. Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Saturday
June 3 OG annual combination meeting and picnic will be at the Lefkovits home in Baytown, beginning at 3:00 P.M. Bring picnic supper, chairs, and probably repellent, as we don't spray for mosquitoes. Directions-- From Interstate 10 take N. Main exit to Baytown, go south 5 miles to Fayle St (5th or 6th traffic light). Turn left, cross Highway 146 (1st traffic light), go 3 blocks to 2nd stop sign, turn right on Woodlawn to 1601, 7th house on right. From Baytown-La Porte tunnel stay on Highway 146 to 3rd traffic light at E. Fayle, turn right and proceed as above.

THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE

Beginning with the next issue of the Spoonbill a new administration will take over. The editor will be Mrs. Alan G. (Maxine) Wenger, 14302 Lantern Lane, Houston 77015. All Spoonbill communications except Clearing House material should be sent to her. The Clearing House will be compiled by Dan Hardy, 10215 Chatterton, Houston 77043. The present editors give up the job with mixed feelings. It is a time-consuming job, but it has been pleasant because of the acquaintances made and the cooperation and kindnesses of a great number of people.

As a result of this change, all reports for the "Big Day" spring count should be sent to Dan Hardy at the above address. The count area is the same as the Upper Texas Coast check list area. List all birds seen in Harris, Chambers, Galveston, Fort Bend and Brazoria counties. Compiling the reports is much easier if they are sent on Field Check Lists. This is a count of species only, not numbers of birds. Include route covered, hours spent in the field, car miles, foot miles, boat miles and names of those in the party.

NEWS FROM TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT BULLETINS

Texans will have an opportunity to hear and be heard about proposed game and fish law changes for 1972-73 when public hearings are held throughout the state during May. The statewide hearings are the first step toward setting of coming hunting and fishing regulations, TP & WD Executive Director James U. Cross points out, and is the citizen's forum for comments, questions and opinions. Cross adds, "I sincerely urge all interested Texans to attend these local hearings, toward our goal of setting the most reasonable game and fish laws in the best interest of sportsmen and our bountiful wildlife resources."

Times and locations for hearings in this area include; Harris County, in Houston at Southwest Drug Bldg, May 4, 10 am; Jefferson County, Beaumont, County Courthouse, May 1, 10 am; Hardin County, Kountze, County Courthouse, May 1, 2 pm; Montgomery, Conroe, County Courthouse, May 2, 10 am; Liberty County, Liverty, County Courthouse, May 2, 2 pm; Fort Bend, Richmond, County Courthouse, May 2, 2 pm; Brazoria, Angleton, County Courthouse, May 2, 8 pm. No hearings were listed for Chambers or Galveston Counties.

A modest colony of pheasants is thriving in the Texas panhandle, and so far this spring has all the earmarks of a good production season for the birds, according to the TP & WD, with help from mild weather, a good standing crop of holdover birds and an expected good wheat crop.

As usual, cover is the vital factor for the birds in the Panhandle flatlands, where most of the available acreage is plowed for agricultural production. Department wildlife specialists recommend that landowners leave as much weedy cover as possible for the birds during nesting season. A variety of trees, shrubs and other plants are used by pheasants for food and cover. Some of the more popular cover are Russian Olive, red juniper, fruit trees, wild plum and multiflora rose.

The Chinese Ring-necked Pheasant was brought to this country from Asia, and it has spread across a vast area of North America. Texas biologists hope the bird will continue to thrive and expand its range in the state.

Two problems in waterfowl management--the "short-stopping" of ducks and geese at mid-continent, and the setting of Texas waterfowling seasons--have been promised "new policy" thinking at the federal level. Migratory birds will be encouraged to continue south, and Texas hunters may also be handed seasons starting later in 1972 but ending 10 days to two weeks later in 1973.

TP & WD James U. Cross said that he was pledged the new courses of action on the controversial issues during a Washington, D.C., meeting in February with Nathaniel P. Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. The new policy will insure that migratory birds do not lose those instincts to continue south to the traditional Louisiana and Texas Gulf Coast wintering grounds.

Litter is not only unsightly, but some of it is also a threat to wildlife, according to TP & WD officials.

For example, fishermen with backlashes in their monofilament may think that because the line is practically invisible, it is alright to discard it along the shore. But to ducks, monofilament looks tasty, and when they eat it, the line gets stuck in

their throat. This leads to starvation for the unfortunate duck.

Equally bad is the surplus paper from the quick-developing cameras. The chemical on the paper is toxic and has been fatal to many species of wildlife.

Cans and food containers are dangerous to wildlife. Small animals after left-over bits of food sometimes get their heads stuck and then starve to death. Broken glass is a hazard to both humans and animals.

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