



THE SPOONBILL

VOLUME VIII NO. 10
FEBRUARY 1960

 FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT OF NATURE
 PHOTOGRAPHY will be held in Hamilton, Ontar-
 ic April, 1960. Entries close March 25. The
 Hamilton exhibition April 11 - Niagara Falls
 exhibition April 14 - London exhibition Ap-
 *ril 19, 1960. To be eligible as a Nature *
 Slide a transparency should portray a por-
 tion of nature. For entry forms or informa-
 *tion write: John B. Giles, Exhibition *
 *chairman, Hamilton Naturalists Club, Main *
 Post Office, Box 384, Hamilton, Ontario, Can
 ada. Postage is five cents. Further infor-
 mation in this issue of SPOONBILL. Could be
 some of the excellent slides done by our mem
 *bers may win an honor award. *

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

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

- February 24 Museum of Natural History film-lecture program. Eric Pavel on "Venezuela" Prudential Auditorium at 8:00 p.m.
- February 28 ORNITHOLOGY GROUP FIELD TRIP to Sheldon Reservoir. Meet at Sears parking lot on Wayside and Harrisburg at 7:30 a. m. Leader: Vic Emanuel.
- March 8 Regular meeting of ONC. Mr. and Mrs. A. V. Emmott will speak on "The living museum."
- March 13 ONC field trip to the Little Thicket Sanctuary. Leader: Armand Yramategui.
- March 14 Dr. Ernest P. Edwards will bring his exciting film on "Motmots and Mayas" to the Lamar Senior High School at 8:00 p.m. for another Audubon Screen Tour. You'll be impressed by the perfection of the photography and the warmth and subtle humor an unassuming fellow like Buck can put into a lecture. Real proud, too.
- March 26 & 27 ORNITHOLOGY GROUP week-end field trip to George West. This is the most. Birds and wildflowers like man, the craziest. Details next issue.

FIRST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

This is sponsored by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, and entries close on March 25. Conditions of entry are: 1. All entries must be the work of the entrant (processing of transparencies excepted) 2. A maximum of four colour slides may be entered and may be either 2"X2" or 2 3/4"X 2 3/4" 3. Slides must be clearly marked with title, makers name and address, lettered to conform with entry form, spotted in the lower left-hand corner, and mounted in glass if possible. Slides bound in glass over ready mounts are ineligible. 4. The entry fee is \$1.00. Cheques or money orders should be made payable to the Hamilton Naturalists Club. Please add exchange to cheques. 5. It is recommended that the entry form, self-addressed labels, and a dollar bill be mailed in a transparency box with the slides, suitable packing material between the slides, and at least one layer of corrugated paper around the box, and forwarded by First Class mail. 10. The level of illumination

intensity for projection shall be 15 foot-candles incident light, as measured at the centre of the screen. 13. Exhibitors mailing from countries outside of Canada should declare the value of the slides as \$1.00, and not insure for in excess of that value.

For additional forms, or information, write:

John B. Giles
Exhibition Chairman, Hamilton Naturalists Club
Main Post Office, Box 384
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

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SCHOLARSHIP GIVEN CARL H. AIKEN, III.

Recommendations from Dr. W. D. Davis, head of Wildlife Management Department at A. & M, and Dr. Bauldoff, professor in the same department, resulted in Carl's receiving a scholarship given by the Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D. C. It is given for one year and can be renewed each year. It is a wildlife journalism scholarship, paying \$200 each semester. Carl is therefore now on a five year curriculum with a double major in wildlife biology and journalism. Only one scholarship is given each year to an A & M student in wildlife management or agriculture. The main factor in selection is grade average. We are all pleased for Carl, but think it no less than such an excellent ex-editor of "The Spoon-bill" deserves.

This seems an excellent time to include two of Carl's specimens of wildlife journalism, forerunners of great things to come, as all who know Carl believe.

REDWINGED BLACKBIRD -- by Carl Aiken

During the nesting season, most species of birds set up a territory. The boundary of this territory may extend for several yards around the nest or for only a few inches. Practically every species defends this area to some extent - attempting to keep other birds, mammals, reptiles, etc, out. Some species, like the shrikes and mockingbirds are very persistent in their defense. Others rely upon sound or imitations to distract enemies from the nest. Some appear to have no defense at all.

Among the birds that defend their territory is listed the redwinged blackbird. In my opinion, this small dweller of the marshes is the most fearless and persistent of the defenders in its habitat. The female will often leave the nest with nothing more than an alarm note, but the male rarely gives up without a fight.

During the month of June, 1959, I saw this bird (7½X9½ inches in length) drive hawks, egrets, herons, anhingas, flycatchers, crows, and kingfishers from its territory. One pair that had their nest in a common buttonbush (*cephalanthus occidentalis*) became disturbed when a little blue heron entered their territory to fish. The male had been singing from a nearby willow but quickly left his post to annoy the intruder. He dove several times at the heron, sometimes seeming to hit it and sometimes hovering above its head and calling loudly. In less than a minute the heron left for quieter fishing grounds.

I also had an opportunity to watch a flock of crows feeding near a redwing's territory. The male sat silently in a dead bush about four feet from the nest. The crows were startled by something and flew away - all but one passing clear of the redwing nest. This one bird must have been seventy-five feet above the ground when it passed over the nest, but the male redwing promptly followed in hot pursuit and chased the crow until they were both out of sight.

The habit of pursuing invaders for such a long distance seems to be exaggerated in the redwing. I have seen them follow marsh hawks for several miles and red-shouldered hawks for several yards. A scissor-tailed flycatcher settled on a power line above one's nest and immediately received a vivid display of red and black as the male redwing hovered in front of it. This initial shock was followed by some very harsh squawks from the defender so the flycatcher left. The redwing was still not satisfied and drove the bird from two more successive perches, each one about five hundred yards from the first.

Despite their harshness toward other birds they show no great alarm when other redwings enter their territory. This can be proven by simply watching some of the large nesting colonies along our coast. Here birds often nest within a foot of each other, thus making defense of each individual territory a greater problem. Friendships seem to be won and lost every minute by the birds but none are chased far from the invaded nesting site.

The redwing's love for harassing and fighting (which is often even displayed in the winter) doesn't seem to be aimed at humans any more than it is at individuals of its own species. This may be somewhat of a blessing, as any bird enthusiast who has investigated a marsh heavily populated with redwings can tell you.

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COLOR AND PATTERN OF BIRDS -- by Carl Aiken

What is the reason for birds being so brightly colored and in so many different patterns?

I was asked this question a short time ago by a person who obviously had no great interest in birds but was amazed because he had discovered some wild birds with striking color combinations. I must admit I could give the individual no satisfactory answer.

The question was thought-provoking and I began to work on solving it for myself. Just what is the reason for birds being colored so brightly? At first you might think color would aid them in identifying their own species but this is a shallow answer to the situation. In many species of birds males and females are colored differently which would serve to separate rather than bring them together. This answer doesn't appear to jive with the idea of evolution either.

Camouflage is an important consideration which brings us closer to the truth. We can easily see how birds must evolve to blend with their surrounding if they are going to be safe. It seems, however, if this were entirely the answer all of the males would be camouflaged to fit their environment. Such is not the case and, therefore, we have not explained the brightly colored, often gaudy, birds that inhabit our woodlands.

I feel that bright colors as well as drab colors may help to protect a bird. Drab colors would aid by camouflaging as previously mentioned but bright colors help in an entirely different way. Let me explain by a hypothetical example.

Put yourself in the place of a small, conservative sparrow. You are quietly feeding in a low shrub when you become aware of another bird near you. When you cock your head to get a look at your neighbor a chill of terror runs through every bone in your body. There, about six inches above and behind you is a cardinal. His shocking color broken only by partially blackened face, is quite enough to send you into flight. You don't even take time to notice the shaggy red crest or the large orange bill.

This example might be exaggerated considerably but it illustrates the point. It's not at all hard to see how the colors of an oriole, tanager, or grosbeak could frighten another bird. The colorful patterns in many of our warblers, which are so beautiful to us, could be used to great advantage in defending nesting and feeding sites. Think for a moment of the shock a Blackburnian warbler could inflict with his vivid head pattern. Imagine the fright another bird would experience if it were suddenly confronted with an aroused painted or indigo bunting. I don't think an American redstart or a hooded warbler would have any trouble in presenting a frightening picture either.

Actually the smallest birds in the United States use vivid colors to protect themselves. Several times I have noticed Costa's hummingbirds dart straight toward me, stop a few feet from my face, and display a shimmering metallic gorget and forehead. After every performance I was left in a mild state of amazement and shock. I can well understand how a bird must feel when attacked by one of these "knights in shining armor."

Hummingbirds as well as other birds fluff up their feathers to make themselves appear larger and display their colors better. Costa's, ruby-throated, and Lucifer hummingbirds are especially noted for this. Keith L. Dixon points out that the black-crested titmouse stiffens its crest to offer a more awesome appearance to enemies. The black forms a contrast with its body and is more effective than the uniform gray would be.

Bold and/or intricate patterns serve as a means of defense for birds. The harlequin quail, bridled titmouse, bobwhite, lark sparrow, and black-and-white warbler are good examples of birds that depend upon pattern rather than vivid colors. Such patterns give many of our birds a demon-like appearance which is just as effective as color.

Color and design, coupled with such things as crests, head plumes, modified tails, and size, are very important factors in the natural security of birds. Maybe we have taken the beautiful colors and patterns of our birds for granted too long. Maybe we should stop and ask ourselves why they are found in such a style of dress.

SPECIAL NOTICE --- DEDICATION OF THE MAC RAMSEY MEMORIAL BENCH

All Ornithology Group members and other friends of the late Mac Ramsey who would like to participate in the setting up and dedication of the memorial bench in his honor at the Little Thicket Sanctuary, please meet at the camp ground on Saturday, March 12, at 9:30 a. m. If you have a station wagon and can help transport parts of the bench, or wish to help in some other way, please contact Jimmy Murray at Un 1-8837.

If you have any native plants, shrubs or trees that are attractive to birds, bring them along. The Ornithology Group is making native plantings in the area of the Mac Ramsey Memorial Bench designed to make the area inviting to birds. And people, too.

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COMMENTS ON THE 1959 HOUSTON AREA CHRISTMAS COUNTS -- Submitted by Victor L. Emanuel

The first Christmas count made in our area was made on December 25, 1913 at Houston by George Finlay Simmons (who later wrote "Birds of the Austin region" 1925, University of Texas Press). On this date Simmons reported 34 species and 308 individuals including 118 tree swallows and 2 red-breasted nuthatches.

Counts were made at Houston in 1914, 1924, 1930 and 1932; since 1939 at least one count has been made in our area every year, with the exception of 1945. The early counts ran around 40 species and had around 3 observers. In 1939 the first large scale Houston area Christmas Census was made by 21 observers who recorded 93 species. This record stood until 1946 when 20 observers racked up 97 species. With the exception of 1950, 1955 and 1956 all Houston area Christmas counts since 1946 have either tied or topped the previous years count. Christmas counts were made at Cove by Arlie McKay in 1937, 1938, 1946, 1941 and 1942. In 1920 Mr. McKay recorded 120 species to set the all time high record for a single observer in Texas. (This record still stands)

Most Houston Christmas counts through 1956 were made in an area including Sheldon and Baytown. Since 1956 Houston Christmas counts have been made in an area including Baytown and Cedar Bayou and east into some of the area covered on previous Cove Christmas counts. Since 1957 Christmas Counts have been held at Freeport, the history of this fast growing count was given in the January issue of the Spoonbill.

The statistics of the 1959 Houston and Freeport counts are given in the January issue of the Spoonbill, however these corrections should be noted (some wet and tired tallykeepers forgot to put down birds seen toward the end of this historic day):

Houston count:

- Party 3A - add longbilled curlew - 1, reduce the number of exclusives by 1 (rusty blackbird also seen by party 7)
- Party 4A - reduce number of exclusives by 2 (long-billed curlew also seen by party 3A, LeConte's sparrow also seen by party 7)
- Party 4B - add American goldeneye - 2
- Party 7 - reduce number of exclusives by 1 (American goldeneye also seen by party 4B)

Actually the lists of exclusives for each party don't tell the whole story this year. All parties worked hard (to bird at all on January 2nd was to bird hard). Several species which are "good" birds were seen by two parties and thus don't appear on the lists of exclusives. These include:

Woodcock - missed on 1958 count, a hard bird to get, seen this year by party 6A led by the Stricklings and party 7 led by Mrs. Snyder.

Wood duck - seen by party 1A led by the Barbabares and party 3A led by Trevor B. Feltner.

Red-headed woodpecker - again parties 1A and 3A canceled each other out as far as exclusives are concerned with a species missed in 1958.

Rusty blackbird - another hard one to find missed in 1957 and 1958 but found this year by parties 3A and 7.

Fox sparrow - a rare bird in our area, seen this year by parties 6A and 4B, the latter party led by Mr. A. K. McKay.

LeConte's sparrow - missed in 1958 seen this year by parties 7 and 4A, the latter led by Carl Aiken.

The following birds were recorded for the first time on ANY Houston Christmas count (and there have been 24 previous ones!) The party recording these rarities follows in parentheses: yellow-throated warbler (3A)

Bullock's oriole (6B)

- *yellow-billed cuckoo (6B) *This species (yellow-billed cuckoo) was the best bird seen on the Houston count in this writer's opinion since there is only one other winter record for Houston (January 18, 1951)
- long-eared owl (4A)
- burrowing owl (4A)
- hooded merganser (4B)
- indigo bunting (6A)

Other rarities of note but not new for a Houston Christmas count are least tern (6B) seen on two previous counts, green-tailed towhee (6A) - seen on a few previous counts and Oregon junco (3A) - seen on a few previous counts.

Birds of note seen on the Freeport count included:

Kentucky warbler (bird of the count) - one previous U.S. Christmas count record to this writer's knowledge, that being December 23, 1957 at Baytown on Houston Christmas count by Lawrence Tabony, this is also the only previous winter record in our area. Seen on this year's Freeport count by Carl H. Aiken.

Pigeon hawk - rare in winter in recent years.

Palm warbler - the count of 15 by party F2 led by Mrs. Snyder is incredible and unprecedented in our area, all were in one area.

Chuck-wills-widow - seen by Trevor B. Feltner. Only two previous winter records: December 20, 1957, Galveston, and December 1958, Cove.

Audubon's warbler - the Snyder party - few previous records.

Least bittern (party F4) - four previous records in our area.

Solitary sandpiper - (party F4 - "staked out" birds) three previous winter records. January 31 and February 21, 1942, Houston. December 13, 1941, January 18, 1959 at Cinco. Leota Stillwell found one in her Houston Christmas count area this year on a preliminary trip but the stake wouldn't hold (the ground was too wet perhaps).

Franklin's gull - seen by party F3 led by Steve Williams, few previous winter records.

The drop in the number of individuals recorded on the Houston count is largely due to the horrible weather on the count day. Also several species were missed or recorded in numbers which do not represent their true status in the area this season. Among those species are the following:

Ring-necked duck - missed on the count but present in abnormally high numbers throughout the area and seen in the count area before the count by Arlie McKay. On January 14 Mr. McKay saw 150 $\frac{1}{2}$ ring necked ducks in the Christmas count area (a new record high count for his area).

Groove-billed ani - only one was seen on the count; Mr. McKay spotted this one. He saw a bunch of leaves which looked like an ani, stopped to check it and saw it was not an ani, and then saw the ani a few feet away. The Houston count weather was not good weather for finding anis and records at Galveston and Cove before the count indicate that this was a good year for finding anis.

One of the big features of this year was the influx of golden-crowned kinglets. All parties but 2 and 7 recorded this species, which was missed on the 1958 count. A record number of ruby-crowned kinglets was also recorded but more observers were in the field than ever before.

Brown pelicans were missed for the third straight year, a fact that should alarm conservationists in the light of previous Christmas count records for this species.

The following chart gives number of ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets and brown pelicans for every Houston count since 1942, also number of observers. Note that some fluctuation in counts can be attributed to fluctuation in the number of observers, but often this is not the case; also remember that since and including the 1957 count, the area has included more bay area and less piney woods. These facts should be borne in mind in relation to the fact that golden-crowned kinglets prefer pine woods and are found there in greater numbers.

YEAR	NUMBER OF OBSERVERS	RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	BROWN PELICAN
1942	11	19	9	43
1943	10	53	27	5
1944	22	18	3	13
1945	no count made in 1945			
1946	20	26	3	1
1947	17	95	45	20
1948	16	78	1	156
1949	21	82	2	63
1950	22	60	2	320
1951	23	26	10	67
1952	36	145	43	210
1953	47	227	4	44
1954	40	183	15	34
1955	24	112	0	7
1956	35	86	10	15
1957	32	106	1	0
1958	40	175	0(1)*	0
1959	53	252	43	0

*Seen during count period but not on count day.

(The above data was gathered from Audubon Field Notes and Audubon magazine. All information in this article on numbers of observers and species for Houston and Cove counts is taken from Noel Pettingell's excellent work on locality history of Texas Counts). This years influx of golden-crowned kinglets is due to severe cold weather in areas north of us. (See January article for details).

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Stricklings on a superb job of handling their Houston Christmas Count area. They made several preliminary trips to their area and secured permission from landowners to cover almost all of their area. They wisely broke their party up into two parties and worked different parts of the area. Their work and planning paid off in a big way (16 exclusives between the two parties - 6A and 6B- in the area they organized, area 6) Their work and success should be an example to all of us: Break your area up into small areas and have parties cover these areas as intensively as possible.

Mr. Barbare did an excellent job of organizing and the record turnout of 53 observers in 12 parties is a tribute to his organizing ability - and the Snyder's hospitality!

Submitted by Victor L. Emanuel

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While the bouquets are being tossed, shouldn't we throw one Vic's way for making the dry statistics of our count come to life in such an exciting way. Maybe if the weather is as foul for the next Christmas count, we should all reread this report, and then go out and do or die for dear old OGXC. It's a real rabble rouser, ain't it!

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ARLIE MCKAY REPORTS FROM THE COVE:

I had hoped to report on December birding before now, but did not. Now it is time for the January report. Total for 1959 was 276 species. (Editor's note: Remember that this high count was obtained by intensive observation of a limited area!)

Common loon: 2 December 12; -HORNED GREBE: 5 on 12/12, 3 on 21st, 5 on 25th, 1 January 27; -eared grebe: 1 January 16; -pied-billed grebe: 1 to 4 on 5 days in December, 1 to 11 on 14 days in January; -white pelicans: peak of about 1000 on December 13; -double-crested cormorant: peak of about 30 12/28; -Mexican cormorant: 2 on 12/25; -water-turkey: 1 on 12/24; -white-faced ibis: to December 20 (12), peak of 150 estimated on 12/6; -white-ibis 11 on 12/19; -spoonbill: 125 est. on 12/12, 6 on 20th, 1 January 8, 200 on 1/16, about 12 on 1/20; -white-fronted goose: 3 to 24 on 5 days in December, 11 to 210 on 4 days in Jan. Canada goose: 65 on 12/17, 75 on 12/27; -snow and blue geese very common.

Ducks: mallard: 20 days in December, 20 days in January with a peak of 800 on Jan. 16. mottled: 9 or less on 15 days; -gadwall: 1 on 12/12, 4 days with peak of 20 on 12/16, in January 4 days with peak of 3000 on January 16; -pintail: 24 days, peak of about 2000 on January 13, first heard whistling on Jan. 8; -green-winged teal: 34 days, peak of 3000 on Jan. 16; -blue-winged teal: 1 to 3 on 6 days in December and 4 days in January; -shoveler: 2 on 12/12, 1 on 25th, 3 on 1/14, 7 on 1/16 and 24th, 20 on 1/30; -wood: 3 on 12/6, 5000 reported by Amos Tilton for several weeks in south Liberty county; -canvasback: 14 days with peak of 4000 on 12/12; -GREATER SCAUP: 1 found dead on Jan. 14; -lesser scaup: 25 days with peak of 2500 on Dec. 21; -ring-necked: Dec. 21, 25, 26th, Jan. 14 (150 est.), 16th (7); -goldeneye: 10 days, 31 on 2/20; -ruddy: 2 on Jan. 16; -hooded merganser: 2 on 12/21, 5 on Jan. 2, 1 on 1/31; -red-breasted merganser: 3 on January 31.

Hawks: sharp-shinned: 1 on each of 5 December days and 3 January days; -Cooper's: 1 on each of 6 December days and 3 in January, and 3 on 12/20; -red-tailed: on 49 days, peaks of 33 the 26th for Dec., 21 on Jan. 14, 3 in dark phase (1 frequently); -Kreider's: only one seen a few times from Dec. 3; red-shouldered: on 30 days with a peak of 6 on December 19; -bald eagle: 1 on Dec. 12 another 12/13. Homer Harmon saw 2 on 12/26, 1 on Jan. 14, 1 or 2 Jan. 16; -marsh: peak for Dec. 42 on 27th, for Jan. 48 on the 14th; -caracara: 2 on 12/12, 4 on 12/18, 1 on 27th and 31st, 1 on Jan. 14, 2 on 1/17; -sparrowhawk: peaks of 55 on Dec. 22, 27 on January 14.

Sandhill crane: 1 flock of about 35 seen by Kendon Clark and Harley Maley on 12/29; king rail: 1 on 12/3, 2 on 12/6, 4 on 12/13, 1 on January 24; -clapper rail: 1 on 12/6, 12/20, 3 1/2 12/25, about 7 Jan. 2, 2 on 1/14; -SORA: 4 on 12/24, 1 on 27th, 29th, 1 on 1/10 about 6 on 1/11, 4 on 1/24; -gallinule, up to 2 or 3 on 6 days in Dec., none in January; coot: 4000 on 12/12, 130 on 25th, 400 on 1/2, 16th, 7 on 1/4, 11 on 30th.

Plovers: semipalmated: 4 on 12/12, 2 on 12/18, 9 on 12/20, 1 on Jan. 2, 10th, 13 on 1/21, 3 on 1/31; -black-bellied plover: on 16 days, peaks of 86 on 12/17, 37 on 1/14; -TURNSTONE: 3 on 12/12, 2 on 12/20, 5 on 1/21, 1 on 1/31.

Woodcock: 1 on 12/18, 1 or 2 on Jan. 1, 1 found dead south of Dayton Jan. 13; -snipe 13 days in Dec., 4 in Jan. with peaks of 176 Dec. 14, 25 Jan. 16; -long-billed curlew: most ever for winter on 15 days, peak of 135 on December 24.

Sandpipers: spotted: 1 on 12/25 and on 5 days in January, 4 birds; -willet: on 6 days in Dec., with peak of 20 on 12/6, 1 day in Jan., 3 1/2 on 12/14; -yellow-legs: in unusual abundance as reported by Homer Harmon and others; -greater yellowlegs: 23 days - lesser on 20 days; -dowitcher: 19 days with peak of about 90 on Jan. 14, fewer than usual; -sanderling: most ever in Dec., up to 11 on 12/20, only one in Jan., 1/2; -avocet: 2 on 12/12.

Herring gull: peaks of 11 on 12/23, 19 on 1/16; -Bonaparte's: about 4 on 12/17, 1 on 12/25, 2 on Jan. 2; -GROUND DOVE: 1 on 1/12; -ANI: 4 spent a period about my home, feeding with the cattle part of the time. All 4 were last seen 12/30, 3 were last seen 1/23, 2 stayed until February 1. In the count area I did not see any ani in December, but on January 2 I mistook a bunch of leaves for a bird that suggested an ani. I stopped the car and Vic and I did see an ani. I backed up to see the other one, but it was not a bird. Such would have been an unusual coincidence had it been a most common bird.

Owls: barn: 1 on 5 days in Dec., 1 on Jan. 1, 2 on 1/2, 1 on 1/9, 1/13, about 5 in all; -screech: 1 to 2 on 18 days; -horned: 1 or 2 on 12/3, 3 on 12/25; -barred, 1 on Dec. 21, 25, 28, 3 or 4 on Jan. 3; -LONG-EARED: 1 found dead 12/6.

HUMMINGBIRD: 1 seen by Mary Harmon in third week of Dec., and 1 by Buddie Williams in early December.

Vermillion flycatcher: 1 to 2 on 19 days, and 3 on 1/30.

Tree swallow: to Dec. 15 (2) the 1 on Jan. 8, 4 on 12/12, 75 on Jan. 28; -FISH CROW: several south of Dayton on Jan. 13; brown creeper: 1 on 12/13, 12/18, 2 on 12/25, 1 on 12/29 1 on Jan. 7, 21.

Wrens: ^{HOUSE} After a big fall showing only a few wintered, 1 to 3 on 17 days in December, 4 on Jan. 1, 2 on 1/12, 1 on 8 other days; -BEWICK'S: only 2, one stays about my house; long-billed marsh: 1 to 3 on 5 days in Dec., none in Jan.; -short-billed marsh: 1 on 12/12 3 on 12/27, 1 on Jan. 2, 2 on January 31.

CATBIRD: 2 on 12/27; 1 on 12/28, 1 on Jan. 2, 3, 6 with no repeats; -thrasher: peak of 36 on 12/6; -robin: 1 on 12/13, 3 on 19th, etc., until middle of period, then thousands and still common; -hermit thrush: 1 on seven Dec. days, 2 on 12/25, 2 on Jan. 1, 2, 21st, 1 on Jan. 3rd and 12th; -bluebird: 8 days in Dec., 9 on 12/25, 2 to 4 on 6 days in Jan.; gnatcatcher: common until late Dec., scarce since; -golden-crowned kinglet: 1 to 10 on 7 days in Dec., 3 on Jan. 1, 2 on 2nd, 1 on 12th; -ruby-crowned kinglet: uncommon since first week of January; -Sprague's pipit: 1 to 3 on 13 days; -cedar waxwing: frequent (up to 15) to Dec. 19, 3 on 31st, 2 on Jan. 1, 20 on Jan. 2, no more; -WHITE-EYED VIREO: 1 on Dec. 18, blue-headed vireo: 5 on 12/18, 1 on 12/20, 26th, Jan. 1, 10th, 17th, 2 on January 31st.

Warblers: orange-crowned: this is one of the very few small birds more common than in the 1930's, 1 to 11 (Dec. 12) on 19 December days, and 1 to 7 (Jan. 3) on 18 Jan. days; myrtle warbler: 1 to 10 on 18 days; -pine: 1 to 25 on 24 days; -yellow-throat: 1 to 7 (Dec. 12) on 13 days.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Hicks Willburn had one at his place January 22. Had I seen it, it would have been a lifer for me. -rusty blackbird, 3 on Jan. 3, 4 on 4th; -Brewer's blackbird: common, up to about 1000 in one flock; -BULLOCK'S ORIOLE; 1 adult male on December 26; -*PAINTED BUNTING*: 1 on December 12, my first winter record; -common grackle more common than in last few years with peaks of 5000 on 12/23, 3000 on Jan. 8; -purple finch: 2 on 12/12, 4 on 12/23, 4 on 12/26, 7 on Jan. 12; -goldfinch: common in December but uncommon in January.

Sparrows: towhee: 1 on 12/6, 3 on 12/18, 5 on 12/25, 3 on Jan. 2, 1 on 1/31; -GRASS-HOPPER: 1 on 12.6, 1 on 1/31, 1/31; -LeConte's: 1 on 12/12, 12/25, 12/29; -SHARP-TAILED: 2 on 12/25; -seaside: 4 on 12/12, 1 on 12/18, 3 on 12/20, 4 on 12/25, 10 on Jan. 2, 8 on Jan. 14; -vesper: peaks of 100 on 12/12, 50 on 12/22, 50 on Jan. 1, 40 on Jan. 31; -lark: 2 on 12/12, 12/22, 1 on 12/25, 3 on 12/29, 6 on Jan. 2; -junco: 7 on 12/6, 2 on 12/29; -chipping: 1 on 12/6, 2 on 12/18; -HARRIS': 2 on 12/12, 1 on 12/22, 12/25, 2 on Jan. 1, 2, and 31st; -white-crowned: peaks of 225 on 12/12, 50 on 12/25, 25 on Jan. 21; song: 1 to 3 on 10 December days and 8 January days.

Submitted by Arlie K. McKay from Cove, Texas.

It was good to see Eva Gilman back in action after a long siege with a broken leg. A little bird, species unidentifiable, tells us that she will soon be out of her cast.

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The death of Mr. Milton C. Chandler of San Benito, Texas has saddened all of us whose lives were made richer by contact with this vital person. Vigorous and entertaining at 86, no trip to the Valley and no T. O. S. meeting was complete without him.

There is some consolation in the fact that he went as we would all like to go - with no incapacitating illness, among friends and good companions, and birding until the last minute.

He died of a heart attack while birding in Mexico with two of our young members who, unlike so many young people, were willing to share their pleasures with an older person; and, by so doing, made his last days happy ones.

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MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

- March 12 Dedication of the Mac Ramsey Memorial Bench at the Little Thicket.
 March 26 & 27 ORNITHOLOGY GROUP week-end field trip to George West. Call Jerry Strickling or Walter Barbara (Cy 4-2365) if you want reservations made for you at the Buenos Noches Motel.
 April 4 MONDAY - Regular bi-monthly meeting of the O G. We have been invited to meet again at the Fondren Library by Dr. Craig.
 April 24 Tentative date set for the Upper Gulf Coast Spring Bird Round-up.

A NEW ORNITHOLOGY GROUP ROSTER FOR 1960 IS BEING PREPARED BY KATRINA THOMPSON. YOUR COPY WILL BE MAILED TO YOU SOON. PLEASE NOTIFY HER OF CHANGES OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

CLEARING HOUSE:

- December 12 Buck Edwards, Walter Barbare and the Hoffmans on pre-Xmas scouting trip saw the usual plus great numbers of bluebirds, bobwhite, Krider's and sharp-shinned hawks, great numbers of golden-crowned kinglets, Sprague's pipit, spotted sandpiper, 16 snipe, solitary vireo, 40 black vultures, red-headed woodpecker, Carolina, house and short-billed marsh wren.
- December 19 Observed by Peggy Smith in one hour within one or two blocks of "downtown Bellaire": 1 BULLOCK'S ORIOLE, 10 purple finch, 2 goldfinch, 1 thrasher, 1 orange-crowned warbler, 2 ruby-crowned kinglets, 1 chickadee, 2 white-thrtd sparrows, 1 robin, 4 bobwhite, 1 sapsucker, 2 red-bellied woodpeckers, 2 starlings, many myrtles - and one fat possum sunning on a garage roof.
- December 20 PALM WARBLER seen by Ruth Kershner and Margaret Corey on Dairy Ashford.
- December 21 Seen at Cinco Ranch by Norma Oates, Ruth Moorman, John O'Neill and Doug Stine: 200 sandhill cranes, 500 LAPLAND LONGSPUR, 4 FOX SPARROWS, 4 horned owls, 3 barred owls, 2 barn owls, 25 purple finches, 3 red-breasted nuthatches, 20 slate-colored juncos and chipping sparrows, 10 golden-crowned kinglets.
- December 22 Carl Aiken and JON at Cinco: 6 FOX SPARROWS, 14 sandhill cranes, 50 blue and snow geese, 25 white-fronted geese, 650 LAPLAND LONGSPURS, 2 slate-colored juncos, 10 purple finches.
- December 24 6 cattle egret seen by the Stricklings $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of Stafford on farm road 1092.
Observed by the Hoffmans in and near yard 33 species including creeper, brown headed nuthatch, purple finches, ruby and golden crowned kinglets, BULLOCK'S ORIOLE, chipping sparrows, red-headed woodpecker.
- December 26 26 species were seen by Margaret Corey in her yard, including a house wren.
- December 27 JON at Rock Springs: 6 brown towhees, 2 scrub jay, 3 white-necked ravens, 27 house finches, 2 golden eagles.
- December 29 JON, Doug Stine and W. V. Tingle at Armstrong, Texas: 1 Audubon's warbler, 6 yellowthroated warblers, wild turkeys, Say's phoebe, 2 vermilion flycatchers, curvebilled thrasher, pyrrhuloxia, 75 green jays.
- December 30 The same party at Armstrong Ranch: 25 Harris' hawks, 4 white-tailed hawks, 2 western meadowlarks, 3 ferruginous hawks, 2 horned owls, golden-fronted woodpeckers, ladder-backed woodpecker, 1 hybrid red-yellow shafted flicker (grey head, with red on back of head, red moustaches, orange wing and tail linings) roadrunner. At night (a lifer for JON) a burrowing owl.
Ruth Kershner at home: purple finches.
- December 31 Ruth Kershner and Margaret Corey at home: slate colored juncos.
1960
- January 8 Etta Coffman at home, 4707 Fannin, lots of waxwings in hackberry tree.
JON and W. V. Tingle at Barker, Texas: 14 barn owls, 5 king rails.
- January 9 Darris Massingill and Jerry Baker birding at Sheldon Reservoir and woods of Deussen Park: the usual plus bluebirds; gadwall, mallard, pintail, ruddy and shoveler ducks; purple finches, vermilion flycatcher, many goldfinches, little blue heron, many slate-colored juncos flocking with goldfinches, belted kingfisher, brown-headed nuthatches, 15 white pelican, chipping and field sparrows white-throated sparrows, brown thrasher, hermit thrush, myrtle and pine warbler, downy, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers, Carolina wren.
- January 10 Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Patten: 1 caracara about 5 miles n.w. of Rosenberg.
- January 12 Hoffmans birding at home: the usual plus both kinglets, juncos, 11 chipping sparrows, 30 purple finches, goldfinches, 2 downy woodpeckers chasing, phoebe myrtle and pine warblers, 2 bluebirds, sapsucker, DICKCISSEL on feeder.
Etta Coffman saw 20 or more unidentified hawks soaring overhead, circling round and haveling north. 9:30 a. m. at Wentworth and Main.
- January 13 Many waxwings seen by Etta Coffman at post office on Eagle and Crawford.
RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD seen by Darris Massingill at her home.
- January 14 LAPLAND LONGSPURS, water pipits, horned larks seen by Margaret Corey and Peggy Smith at cemetery on Westheimer.
- January 15 through February 8 - JON in his yard: 35 purple finches, flocks of cedar waxwings and goldfinches, 1 hairy woodpecker seen daily at feeder, 1 Lincoln sparrow on feeders, 1 chipping sparrow and 6 white-throats.
- January 16 Bill Risser reports white crowned sparrows and BEWICK'S WREN on Gore Road off Dairy Ashford.
- January 17 29 PRAIRIE CHICKENS observed by Peggy and Jack Smith on Fondren Road.
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Patten birding on south end of Galveston island: 25 or 30 brown pelicans, 100 black skimmers, 1 RUDDY TURNSTONE.
- January 23 WHITE-TAILED KITE observed by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Patten a few miles n. w. of Bay City on the highway.
- January 25 Bill Risser and Mr. Allston Goff birding at Sheldon saw a hybrid duck with a great deal of light color on wings, reddish head, body grayish, tip of bill

- January 30 was yellow; vermillion flycatcher, a big concentration of snows & blues (2000) Hoffmans at home: 2 field sparrows, 25 chipping, brown-headed nuthatches, 12 juncos, 1 creeper, pileated, downy, red-bellied and red-headed woodpeckers, 3 cedar waxwings; myrtle, 2 orange-crowned, 5 pine warblers; 3 ruby-crowned kinglets, numerous robins, 5 purple and 6 goldfinches
 Observed by the Stricklings, Doug Stine, Ralph Peterson and JON at Cinco: 3 FOX SPARROWS, 6 HARRIS' SPARROWS, 1 ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, 200 LAPLAND LONGSPURS, 3000 geese of all 4 species, 300 sandhill cranes on Westheimer. On the way back in a deserted house near Addick's dam, saw pair of barn owls and hundreds of rat and mouse skulls. Owls ready to nest.
 Walter Barbare, Vic Emanuel, Ben Feltner and Milton Chandler birding at Santa Ana observed the following: black-bellied tree ducks, least grebes, rose-throated becard, Alta Mira oriole, ground dove, Inca dove, white-fronted dove black-and-white warbler. Studied for about 20 minutes from a bird blind: chachalaca, green jay and long-billed thrasher. Also about 10 seedeaters at West Lake.
- February 4 70 gold and 1 purple finch, 2 field and 10 chipping sparrows, 5 pine warblers orange-crowned warbler, 1 ruby-crowned kinglet, 1 blue-gray gnatcatcher, blue birds, 15 juncos, DICKCISSEL still here. Hoffmans reporting.
- February 7 Vic and Carl observed 3 cattle egret south of Hockley on road to Logenbaugh. All four kinds of geese in fields with an unusual number of white-fronts. 21 purple finches observed by Henry and Mickey Aldrich in their yard. 1000 robins, 800 cowbirds, 50 redwings, 12 starlings all in John O'Neill's yard at the same time.
- January 31 Observed by the C. R. Matteis in their yard within a few minutes: sapsucker, starling, purple finch, goldfinch, robins, waxwings, white-throated sparrows, and brown thrasher.
- February 4 Leota Stillwell observed a large flock of cedar waxwings (50) flying over Rice Boulevard.
- January 24 Leota Stillwell observed 2 downy woodpeckers in her yard - not usual, she says.
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OVERNIGHT TRIP TO WELDER AND ARANSAS REFUGES - Reported by Walter Barbare

After a very interesting tour of the facilities of Welder Refuge by Dr. Cottam, some 26 hearty birders experienced more Christmas Count weather while birding the rest of the day. The next day at Aransas was equally uncooperative with the weather freezing and strong winds blowing. The birds cooperated more than the weather however with the following species seen: 127 species including the usual plus: Brewer's and red-winged blackbirds bluebirds, bobwhite, caracara, sandhill crane, long-billed curlew, ground dove, dowitcher, ducks: black, bufflehead, gadwall, goldeneye, mallard, mottled, pintail, ring-necked, ruddy greater scaup (?) lesser scaup, shoveler and American widgeon; reddish egret, both flickers vermillion flycatcher, gallinule, gnatcatcher, blue, snow and Canada geese, eared grebe, hawks: Cooper, Harris, marsh, red-shouldered and red-tailed, marsh, sparrow, Harlan's and white-tailed hawks; kingfishers, both kinglets, redbreasted merganser, barred and great-horned owls; brown and white pelicans, Says and eastern phoebe; black-bellied plover, sand-erling, dunlin, sapsucker, white-rumped shrike, snipe; field, grasshopper, lark, Lincoln, Savannah, song, vesper, white-crowned and white-throated sparrows; blue-winged and cinnamon teal; green-winged teal; Caspian, Forster's, gull-billed and Royal terns; spotted and red-eyed towhees, solitary and white-eyed vireos, myrtle, orange-crowned and yellowthroat warblers; Bewicks, house, marsh, long and short billed, wrens; pyrrhuloxia, and cardinals; the Rio Grande race of the wild turkey, golden-fronted and Texas woodpeckers, black-crested titmice, verdin, lark bunting, black-throated sparrow, and - what we came for - a magnificent close up view of the WHOOPING CRANE!
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Dr. Clarence "Single Couples" Cottam was as usual a gracious and charming host, even joining the other nuts birding in the rain we brought up from Houston despite the fact that he had other commitments for part of the day.
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Paul Miller is now a member of the "Hard Core". He birded at Welder in the rain nattily attired with a plastic vegetable bag on his head. Vedly, veddy chic!
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HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE IT?

- Becard - bĕk' - ěrd
 Pileated - pĭ' lĕ' āt' ěd
 Prothonotary - prō' thŏn' ō' tĕr' ĭ
 Empidonax - ěm' pĭ' dŏ' nāks
 Pileolated - pĭ' lĕ' ō' lāt' ěd

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