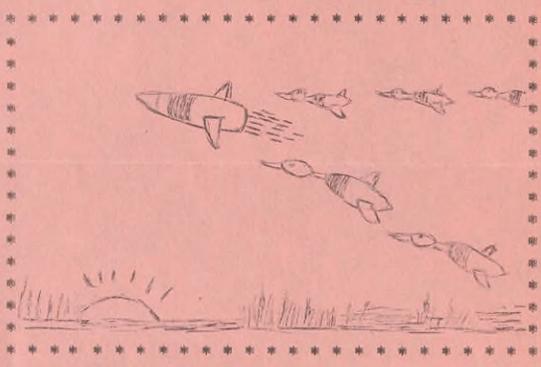




THE SPOONBILL

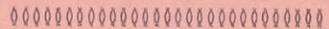
VOLUME VII No. 7
NOVEMBER 1958



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

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

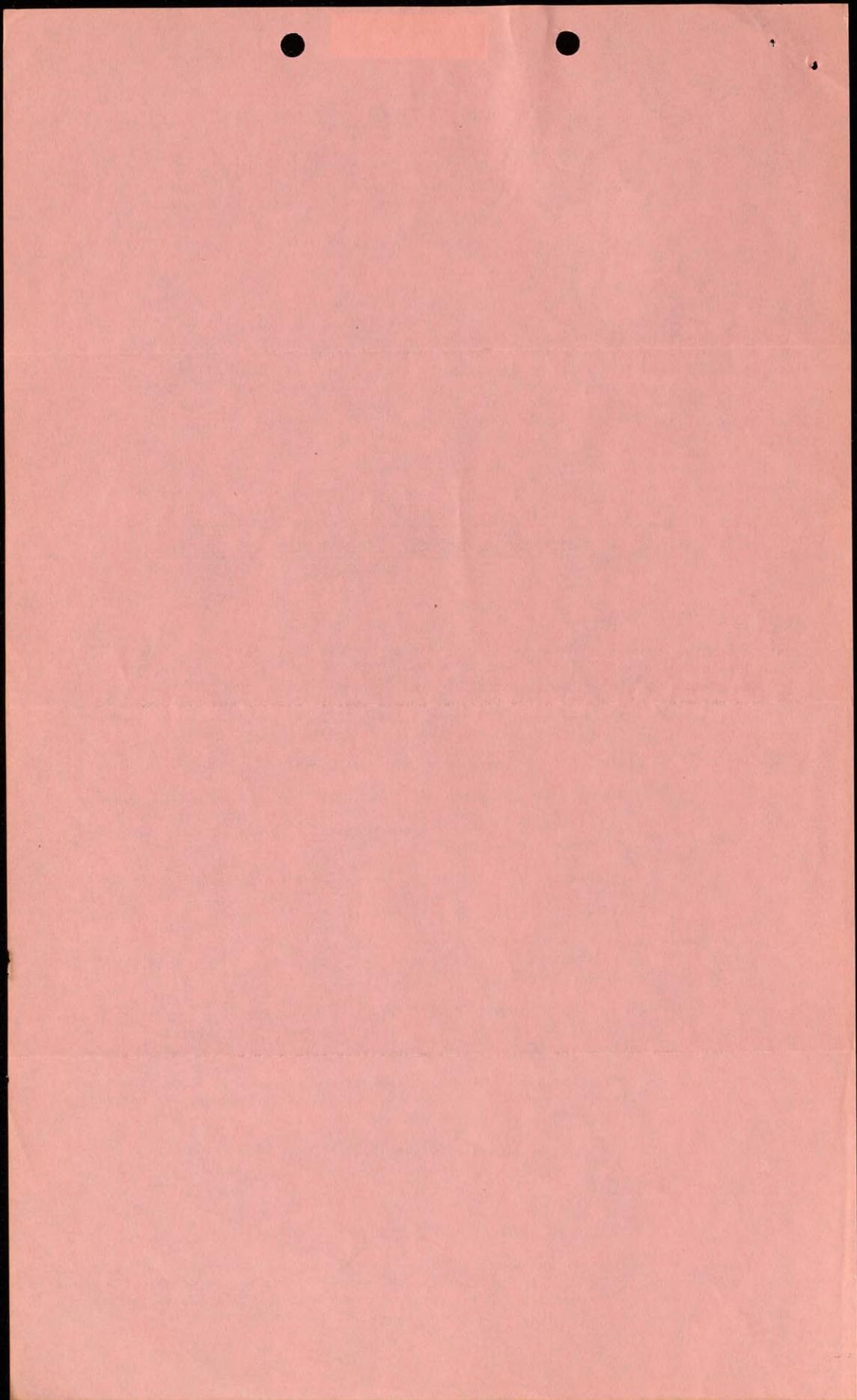
- November 15 Outdoor Nature Club field trip to Seabrook, Texas. Mr. Robert Hofsteder of the Texas Game and Fish Field Laboratory for the Galveston Bay area will lead the trip. Meet at the Laboratory at 9:30 a.m.
- November 28 & 29 Texas Ornithological Society field trip to Rockport. Look for more information within the body of the Spoonbill.
- December 2 Audubon Screen Tour: Rocky Mountain Rambles with Mr. Emerson Scott.
- December 4 Thursday. Regular bi-monthly meeting of the ORNITHOLOGY GROUP to be held at the River Oaks Garden Center, 2503 Westheimer, at 8:00 p.m. There will be a program and announcement of plans for that big, big day: The Christmas Count!
- December 9 Regular meeting of the Outdoor Nature Club at the Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive at 8:00 p.m. Dr. Ernest P. Edwards will speak on "Tropical Nature Trails" so be sure to be there. It will be a good un!
- December 15 Another of the interesting lectures provided by the Museum of Natural History in the Prudential Auditorium at 8:15 p.m. Karl Robinson will speak on "Brazil"
- December 21 ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. Please note change of date from that listed in your ONC Yearbook. This is a really big thing so keep that date open. Full information will be given in the December SPOONBILL.
- Every Thursday There will be a 15 minute program over KUHT, Channel 8, on "Your Texas Wildlife" The programs are now being heard fifteen minutes earlier than formerly: 7:45 p.m.



ORNITHOLOGY GROUP REPORTS

O. G. FIELD TRIP, OCTOBER 12- --REPORTED BY JOSIEPHINE WILKIN

It was a very chilly Sunday morning and by 7:15 most of the 27 birders were back in their cars anxious to begin their "battle with the birds" at the Battlerounds. The peeps outsmarted us at our first encounter by keeping just out of identification range plus keeping the sun to their backs. Other birds not so eager to fight it out were listed as:



avocets, dowitchers, flickers, black-bellied plover, skimmer, spoonbills, black-necked stilts, sharp-shinned and red-shouldered hawk, a covey of bobwhites, plus some of the more common species. Along the ship channel, we listed two spotted sandpipers; and a large flock of white pelicans put on a spectacular show in this lovely setting with a beautiful blue sky for a background. A show similar to this was repeated several times at various locations throughout the trip. Linda Snyder, one of our more avid birders, living near this area, had previously consented to do some scouting, along with her son Clinton, and to see if her husband, J. A. Snyder, could make arrangements with the Humble Company for us to explore their property on the Baytown side of the tunnel, which he was able to do. Only two stops were made enroute to the tunnel and at these stops the Cooper's hawk, wood peewee, catbird and blue grosbeaks were added.

When we arrived at the Humble property, the unlocked gate was almost too good for most of us birdwatchers to believe. For years we had stood on the outside looking in; now here we were inside with small ponds and birds all around. The Humble Company had a photographer take pictures of the group to be used in one of the company magazines. There was little need to strike a birdwatchers pose as we were going through all the antics of the common birdwatcher while in the process of identifying peeps. In this general area the peeps were close enough, with the light in our favor, and as a result we tagged names on them as follows: least, semipalmated, solitary, stilt, western, and white-rumped sandpipers which gave us a satisfactory as well as a victorious feeling. Also seen were the barn, rough-winged, and tree swallows, green and black-crowned night herons, common gallinules, marsh and Swainson hawks.

By this time, the weather was quite pleasant and we drove along-side the ship channel to a spot called "The Point." At this place, and as soon as an early lunch was consumed, we resumed our birding. There were a large variety of birds in the marsh and on the mud flats. Added to our list were: wood ibis, seaside sparrow, ringed plover, and a flock of blue and snow geese seen overhead.

It was now past one o'clock, time for a half day trip to come to an end. We drove back to the highway, locked the gate behind us, and each went his own way. Those that came home by way of Miller Cut-Off Road, added the yellow-throated vireo. Others not content to end the day without a warbler found the redstart at Charlton Park, plus the phoebe chimney swifts, and white-eyed vireo.

The grand total for the trip was 81 species. Those present were: Jerry Baker, Walter and Bess Barbare, Lula Brand, Alice Filkins, Ronald Fowler, Clayton and Eva Gilman, Henry and Louise Hoffman, Carrie Holcomb, Darris Massingill, Edna Miner, Jimmy Murray, Hazel Newton, Norma Oates, Charlotte Reindl, Carolyn Simmons, Robert Simpson, Thelma Smith, Drew, Clinton, Linda and J. A. Snyder, Leota Stillwell, Jerry and Nancy Strickling, Katrina Thompson, Josephine Wilkin, Ella and Helen Wolfer.

We sincerely thank the Snyder family and the Humble Company for their cooperation which enabled the group to visit the excellent birding area at the Baytown Tunnel.

OUTDOOR NATURE CLUB FIELD TRIP TO PORT ARANSAS - - - - - REPORTED BY NORMA OATES

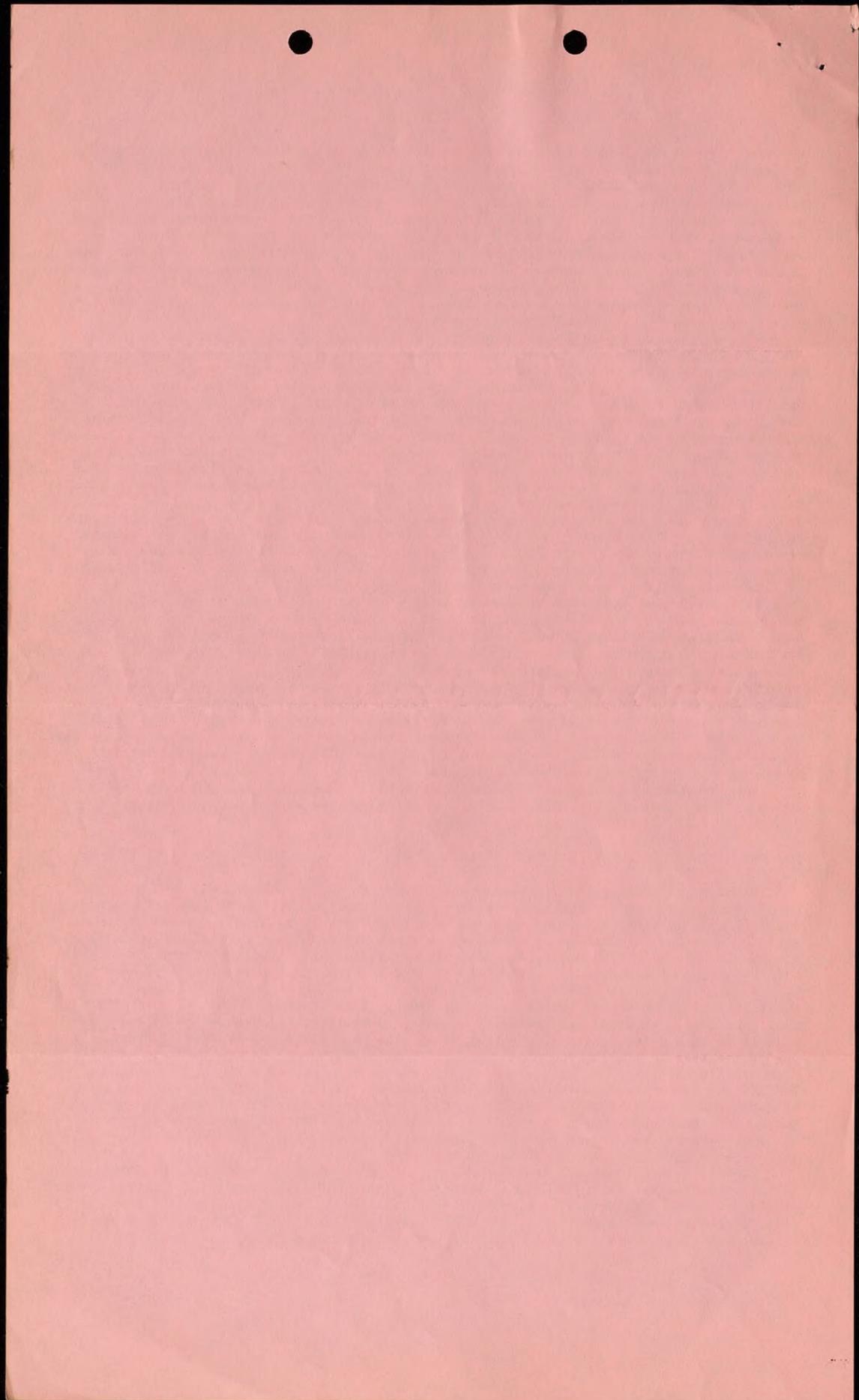
About thirty-five persons attended the October 18 and 19 Outdoor Nature Club field trip to the University of Texas, Institute of Marine Science at Port Aransas, Texas. The Saturday morning program included a short talk by Dr. Howard T. Odum, Director of the Institute, in which he outlined its scope and purpose and explained some of the research projects in marine science. There was a tour of the various buildings of the school and the collection of shells and plant specimens were offered for the group's inspection.

Another interesting feature was the operation of a fish trap which was lowered into the fast-moving current of the Intracoastal Canal. After leaving it there for thirty minutes, the trap was raised and two staff members identified the catch which included two species of eel, as well as squid, shrimp, crabs and many different species of fish.

Unusual birds seen in the vicinity of the Institute were a Peregrine falcon and two pigeon hawks.

Picnic lunches were spread on the beach near a dilapidated old pier used as a perch by dozens of brown pelicans. A flock of about fifty knots interrupted our lunch when they landed on the beach nearby. Other birds found along the water-edge were two unconventional oystercatchers who fed on dead fish (instead of oysters) and let some of the party with cameras get close enough to take photographs.

During the afternoon a drive down Mustang Island produced a few birds, but because of the recent heavy rains, the ponds and marshy spots were flooded and shore birds were widely scattered over the wet fields. However, a large number of reddish egrets were seen feeding in the flooded areas with snowy and common egrets. Two avocets were observed in a pool near the road and farther down the Island, a red-shafted and a yellow-



shafted flicker stopped our caravan when they flew across the road and perched momentarily on a fence wire.

In Rockport the following day, an unusual find was a CALIFORNIA GULL which had been identified earlier by Mrs. Connie Hagar.

The biggest surprise of the week-end, however, was a flock of 40-plus cattle egrets found in a pasture a few miles north of Tivoli (on Highway 35, less than a quarter of a mile north of the bridge over the Guadalupe River). Many of the egrets were feeding near cattle not over a hundred feet from the highway and could be plainly distinguished without binoculars. Others, farther away, near a large flock of white ibis and snowy egrets, were identified with a 30X Balscope in addition to 9X35 binoculars.

* * * * *

WHOOPIING CRANE REPORT:

Here is a bit of information about the whooper from one of our Oklahoma members: Miss Bess Smith: "I have been working with the Whooper Network since its inception. Our latest news bulletin from Ottawa, Canada indicates that on September 21, N. S. Novakowski and T. W. Barry of the Canadian Wildlife Service made an observation flight over the Sass River area. They saw two pairs of adult whooping cranes, one pair with two young and one pair with one young. These were in an area twenty miles west by northwest of the Sass River. The Bulletin states further that this brings the total number of birds observed this year to five adult pairs and six young, however, they are making the reservation that there might be duplication in view of the fact that the birds are now flying.

* * * * *

T. O. S. THANKSGIVING FIELD TRIP:

Here is more information about the field trip, as promised:

Upon arrival at Rockport, please register at the Chamber of Commerce, on Highway 35 as you enter town from the north, and pick up information sheet. In registering, please write the name and address of each person on a separate card. The office will be open on Thursday, Thanksgiving day, for the convenience of TOS early arrivals.

A boat accommodating twenty-five people will leave Rockport at 7:00 a.m. Friday, November 28, and Saturday, November 29, for a trip along the Intracoastal canal, past the feeding grounds of the whooping cranes, and will return to Rockport about noon. The cost of the boat trip is \$2.00 per person. Reservations must be made in advance.

Anyone wishing to visit the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, which is approximately 35 miles from Rockport, will be welcome. The Refuge furnishes a map of the area and provides a balscope overlooking the feeding area of some of the whooping cranes.

Dr. Clarence Cottam, director of the Welder Wildlife Refuge, invites groups to visit the refuge (near Sinton) if the weather is good. Anyone wishing to go should notify Carrie Holcomb before Wednesday, November 26th.

On Friday and Saturday there will be leaders available for short trips in the vicinity of Rockport. Meet at the Chamber of Commerce at 7:00 a.m.

There will be a get-together Friday evening and pictures shown. Saturday evening there will be a dinner with possibly more pictures.

Here is a partial list of cottages to help you make your reservation: Del Camino Court, Forest Park Cottages, Fulton Family Cottages, Hunt's Motel, Mars Court, Oleander Court, Rod and Reel Motel, Sea Gull Cottages, South Beach Lodges, Yacht Basin Motel, and Holiday Lodge. Rates are approximately \$5.50 per single room or cottage.

* * * * *

STATE GAME WARDEN GETS THE BIRD - Taken from The Houston Post

Game warden Louis Clymer of Whitney spent much of the week-end taking care of a big white bird with a long bill, skinny legs, some black feathers on its wings and a band on one of its legs.

He thought it was one of the almost extinct whooping cranes which had been injured. Two men had found the bird and taken it in to Clymer.

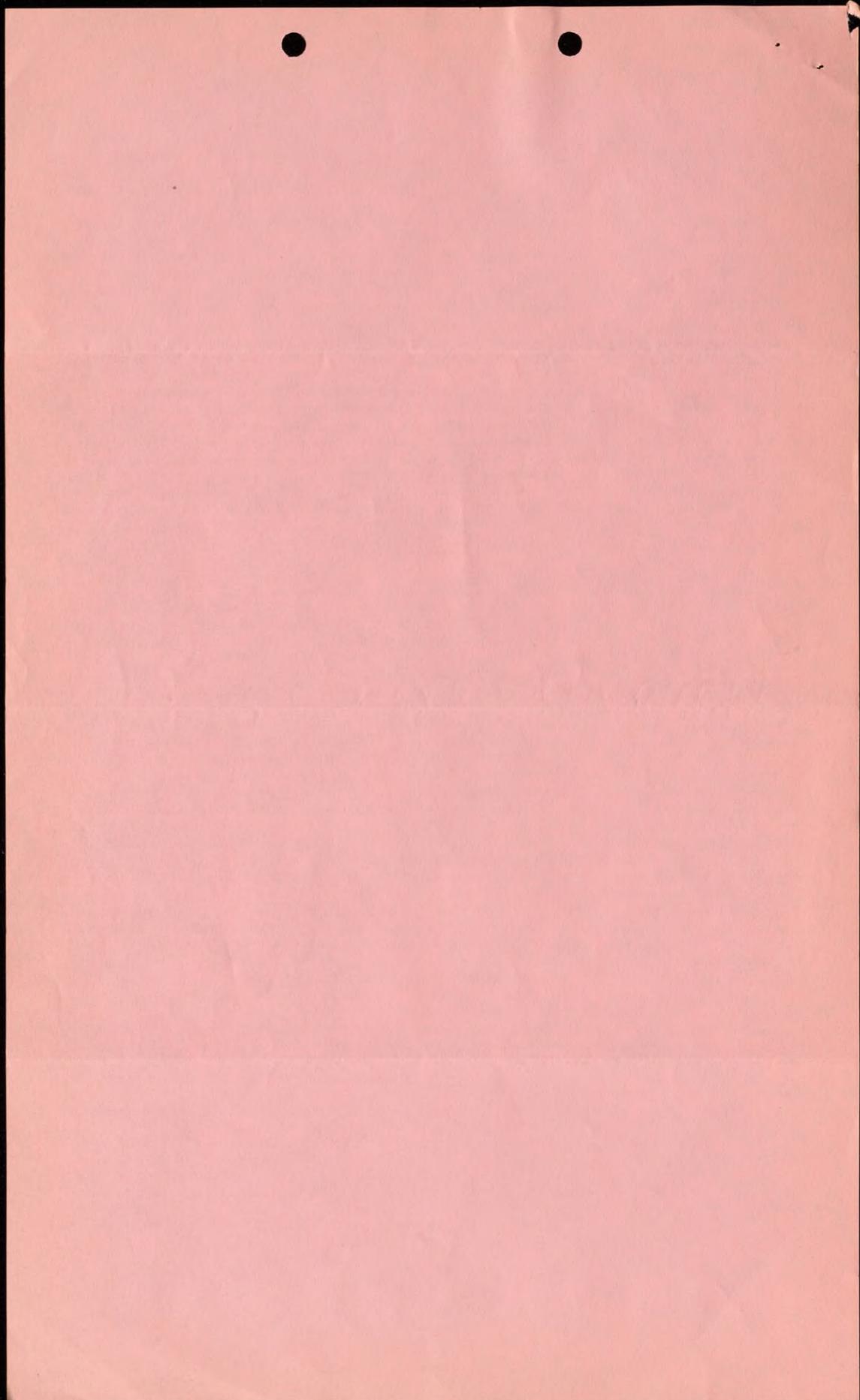
Elaborate plans were set up to fly the bird to the Aransas Wildlife Refuge on the Texas Coast where the big whoopers winter.

Then Warden Swede Johnson of Johnson County strolled in. He declared it wasn't a whooper at all. Just a white pelican.

It wasn't even crippled, Clymer related dolefully. "He was just pooped out flying."

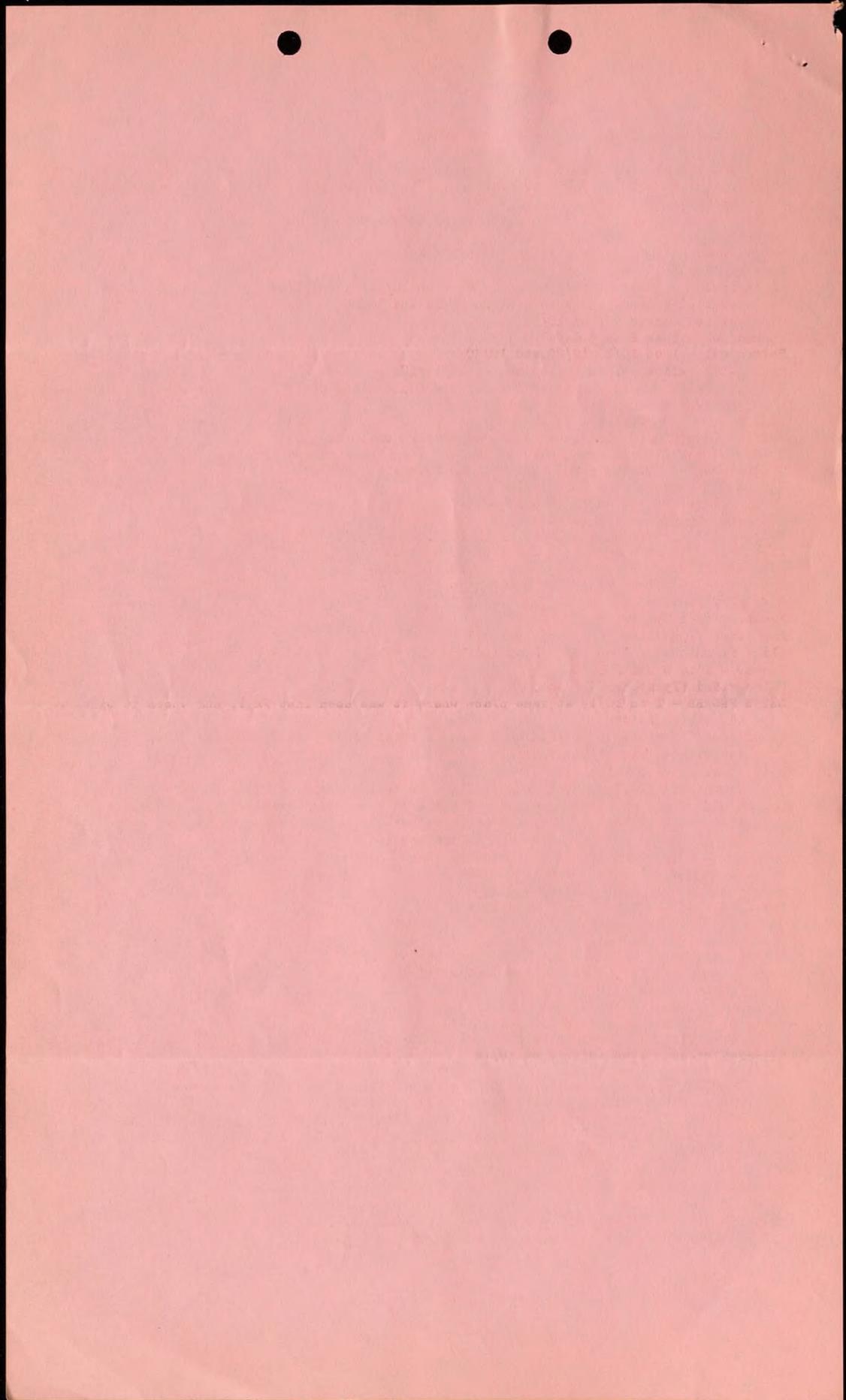
"I babied that bird something awful," said Clymer. "I was afraid that if it was a whooper, and he died on me, they might fire me."

"That rascal ate a half gallon of minnows last night and it didn't even faze him. He bit me too. If I'd known he wasn't a whooper, I might have back-handed him."



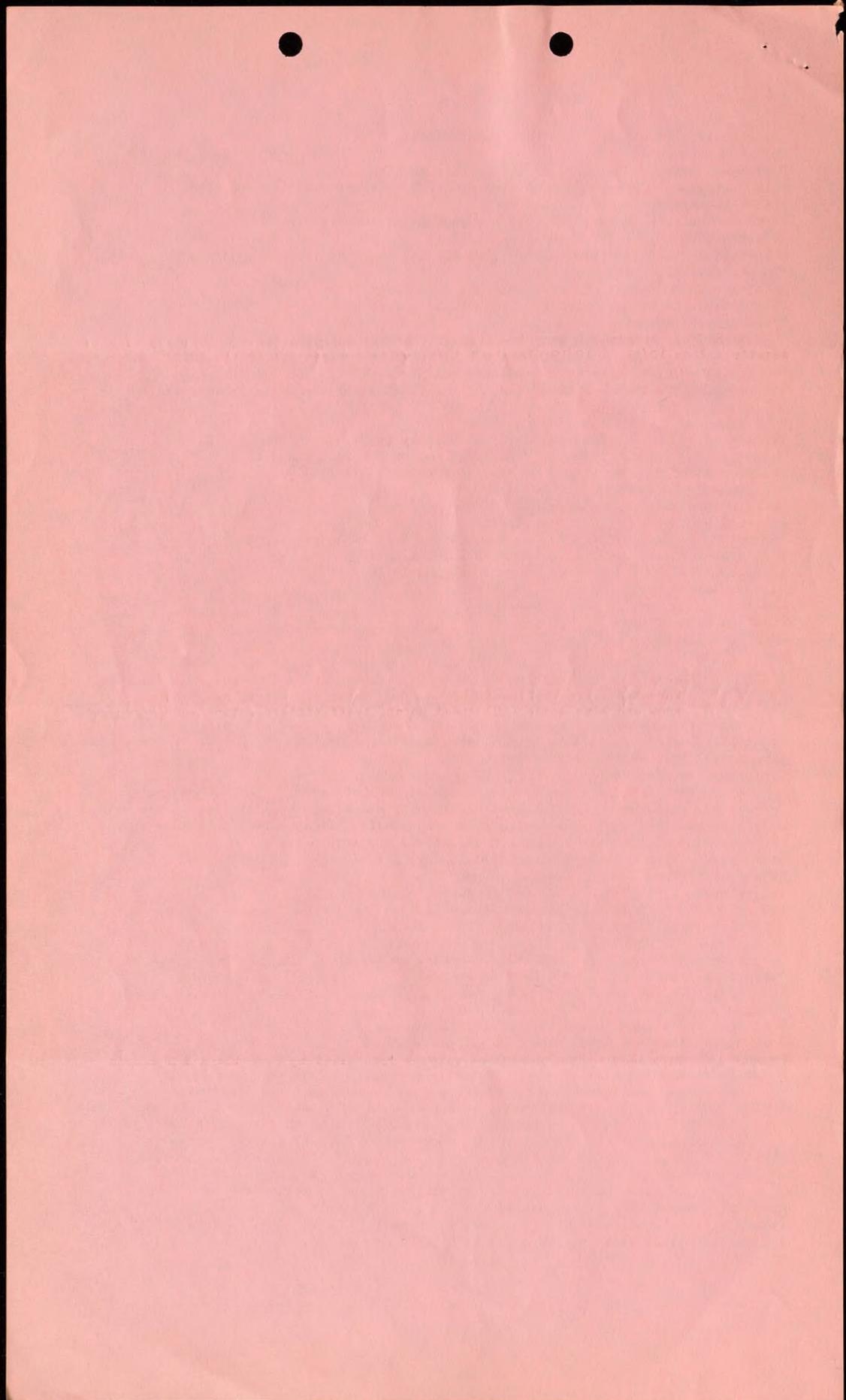
ARLIE MCKAY REPORTS FROM THE COVE:

- I observed 183 species of birds in October, of which 105 were observed October 12.
- White pelican - first, 1500 estimated October 3, about 3,000 October 21. They have been increasing for several years, and there seems to be more than ever this year.
- Brown pelican - none since March 2 (1) and November 23, 1957 (1) Sol Winburn had 3 near his home last winter, but none this fall. There are far too many whites and too few browns. Why?
- Double-crested cormorant - up to about 40 October 31.
- Anhinga - 2 October 1, 3 October 3, 4 10/11 and 10/29, 5 10/30, and 2 10/31
- Cattle egret - my first 10/11, with a widely scattered herd of cattle, and mixed with snowy egrets. They were just off highway 73 on the south side, just east of Lost River bridge. I saw them again with the same cattle just west of Trinity bridge on 10/19. As they were going south to roost, I counted 80; then they mixed and I lost count when I lacked only about five finishing the count. I saw them again 10/25 and did not try to count them thinking it was the same flock. Later that day I saw two flocks of about 23 and 30, in my pasture with the cattle at my brother Arnold's fishing camp; also a small flock across Old River Lake from there then two more flocks flying down the lake, which may have been some of the same birds; but the first four were not. I estimate that there were over 100 that day. Since then, they have been staying in both places.
- Reddish egret - 1 to 2 on six days, 10/3 to 10/31.
- Green heron - 1 on 10/5
- Yellow-crowned night heron - 1 10/5
- American bittern - 1 10/31
- Wood ibis - 65 est. 10/2, 225 est. 10/3, 9 10/30. All were migrating.
- White-faced ibis - 3 10/25
- White ibis - unusually common up to about up to about 500 or 600 11/1. However, they winter by hundreds on the ranches south of Anahuac.
- Spoonbill - frequent up to about 80 10/31.
- Fulvous tree duck - 4 10/12, 3 10/31
- White-fronted goose - 3 10/1, 40 10/11, 73 10/18
- Lesser Canada goose - 6 10/12
- Greater Canada goose - 1 10/18, 4 10/29
- Snow and blue geese were migrating October 5 to 10th. Some large flocks are from 80 to 90% blues, very unusual.
- Mallard - first, 26 plus 10/12, up to 1500 est. 10/31
- Mottled duck - frequent. Up to about 40 10/31
- Gadwall - unusually common for this area, first 4 plus 10/11, about 2000 10/31
- Pintail - less than in September, but up to about 2500 10/31
- Green-winged teal - peak of 1,000 plus 10/18
- Blue-winged teal - down from last month. Peaks of 200 est. 10/11, 100 est. 10/29
- Shoveler - this and the gadwall seem to be the only ducks above par. About 500 10/31
- Wood duck - 2 on 10/31
- Readhead - 3 10/13, the earliest ever by 1 day. The same three 10/18
- Ring-necked duck - 1 on 10/18. One day earlier than ever before.
- Sharp-shinned hawk - all hawks are below par. 2 on 10/12. Never before so scarce.
- Cooper's hawk - 1 on 10/12, 10/16, 10/25. 2 on 10/29
- Red-tailed hawk - 2 on 10/29, 1 on 10/31. Of the first two, one's underparts were all white. It was seen again 11/1 and it's head was nearly white. It may be of the Kri-der race.
- Red-shouldered hawk - not so much. Down 1 to 4 on 13 days.
- Broad-winged hawk - only 2 believed to be of this species for the Fall season.
- Marsh hawk - scarce. 1 to 3 on 12 days.
- Osprey - first 2 on 10/2, 1 to 3 on eight days to 10/25 (1)
- Caracara - 1 on 10/29
- Pigeon hawk - 1 on 10/11 and 10/25
- Sparrow hawk - peak of 24 on 10/12
- King rail - 1 on 10/12 and 10/31.
- Clapper rail - 1 on 10/19 and 10/25
- Common gallinule - 2 on 10/11, 3 plus on 10/12, 5 on 10/19, 2 on 10/25
- Coot - peak of 3,000 est. on 10/31
- Semipalmated plover - 2 on 10/12 and 10/25
- Golden plover - 1 on 10/25. Two days later than ever before.
- Snipe - from 10/8 (4). Peak on 10/18 (44)
- Long-billed curlew - 1 on 10/11, 19 on 10/12, 8 on 10/12
- Spotted sandpiper - 1 to 2 on 6 days to 10/29
- Pectoral sandpiper - 2 on 10/18



ARLIE McKAY'S REPORT FROM THE COVE (continued)

Dunlin - from 10/25
 Dowitcher - peak of 400 plus on 10/31, both species
 Stilt sandpiper - 5 on 10/25, 60 plus on 10/29. Latest dates before were 1024 and 30.
 Buff-breasted sandpiper - 7 on 10/4
 Stilt - 9 on 10/4, 4 on 10/25. Latest ever before October 20.
 Avocet - 9 on 10/18, 32 on 10/31.
 Ring-billed gull - scarce. About 40 on 10/31
 Franklin's gull - only 1 on 10/12
 Black tern - 50 plus on 10/2, 9 on 10/4, 2 on 10/11, 1 on 10/12
 Yellow-billed cuckoo - 3 on 10/4, 1 on 10/12 and 10/25
 Black-billed cuckoo - 1 on 10/11
 Horned owl - 1 or 2 on 5 days
 Barred owl - 1 on 10/1, 10/25 and 10/30
 Goshawk-wills-widow - 1 on 10/11 another in 10/12
 Whip-poor-will - None. A fresh feather was found along one of the roads used by Humble
 Baytown refinery on 10/8 to 10/10
 Nighthawk - 7 on 10/10, 2 on 24th
 Swift - 23 on 10/12. (Last here) 22 at Baytown on 10/20
 Hummingbird - 1 to 10 frequently to 10/18. 1 on the 25th and 28th.
 Yellow-shafted flicker - from October 3. Peak of 33 on 10/19
 Red-headed woodpecker - 1 on 10/12
 Downy woodpecker - 1 on 10/12 and 10/26
 Pileated woodpecker - 1 on five days
 Sapsucker - 2 on 10/11 and 10/19, 1 on 10/21, 4 on 10/25 and 10/30
 Kingbird, Eastern - 1 on 10/3 and 2 on 10/4, 1 on 10/5
 KINGBIRD, WESTERN - 1 on 10/5, 2 on 10/10 and 10/12
 Scissor-tailed flycatcher - to October 30 (2)
 Crested flycatcher - 1 on 10/5 and 10/11
 Phoebe - from October 5
 Empidonax flycatcher - 1 to 3 to 10/11
 Alder flycatcher - 1 on 10/5, 2 on 10/11
 Peewee - 1 to 8 until 10/25
 Olive-sided flycatcher - 1 on 10/4
 SAY'S PHOEBE * 1 on 10/19 at same place where it was seen last Fall, and where it wintered
 the winter before
 Vermillion flycatcher - 1 to 8 on 8 days, a total of 24 this Fall, many of which have
 established winter territories.
 Cliff swallow - to October 1
 On October 12, I saw the largest flock of swallows ever, 1,500,000 estimated; and on
 October 18, I saw an albino swallow. I think it was a barn swallow, but it was with sev-
 eral tree swallows that were diving at it repeatedly. It appeared to be pure white.
 The titmouse is very scarce and chickadees not much better.
 House wren - from October 4, 1 to 4 on 10 days.
 Marsh wren - 1 on 10/25. Usually common
 Sedge wren - 1 on 10/5, 10/18, and 10/30
 BEWICK'S WREN - only 1 on October 21 and 31.
 Catbird - 1 to 8 frequently to 10/31, 16 on 10/11
 Wood thrush - 1 on 10/11
 Hermit thrush - 1 on 10/12 and 10/18, another on 10/30
 Ruby-crowned kinglet - 2 to 8 from October 11
 Water pipit - 1 on 10/18
 Sprague's pipit - 2 on 10/18, 3 on 10/19
 Starling - from 10/3, below 100 until 11/1
 White-eyed vireo - 1 to 5 until 10/19, 1 on 10/30
 Red-eyed vireo - 1 on 10/4, 2 on 10/12
 Solitary vireo - 1 on 10/19
 WARBLER: Black-and-white - 1 Oct. 4, 8 on 11th, 2 on 10/12; Tennessee - 1 10/4 and
 10/19, 3 on 25th; orange-crowned - one 10/11, 2 on 25th, 26th, 1 on 10/31; Nashville -
 1 October 4, 125 plus or minus 10/11, 15 + on 12th, 8 plus on 19th, 15 + 25th; parula -
 1 10/1, 5th, 11th, 12th, 25th, 2 10/19; magnolia - 2 10/4, 5, 1 10/11, 4 10/12, 1 10/19
 myrtle - 2 10/31; black-throated-green - 1 10/11, 10/12, 10/26; yellow-throated - 1 on
 10/12; bay-breasted - 1 October 11; pine - 2 October 26 (not migrants) palm - 1 10/12;
 2 on 10/25; northern water thrush - 1 on October 4 and 5; yellow-throat - 1 to 12 fre-
 quently; chat - 12 on 10/11; hooded - 2 on 10/12; Wilson's - 7 on 10/4, 1 10/5 and 10/11;
 Canada - 1 on 10/5; redstart - 1 October 5, 4 on 12th, 1 on 18th. 80% to 90% of vireos
 and warblers seen this Fall were not identified or counted.



Brewer's blackbird - 8 on 10/29. Seen on same date two other years, but never earlier.
 Common grackle - 1 on 10/18, 150 est. on 10/29
 Summer tanager - 2 on 10/5, 1 on 10/11
 Rose-breasted grosbeak - 2 on 10/11, 1 on 10/12, 1 to 5 10/18
 blue grosbeak - to 10/12, then 2 on 10/25
 Indigo bunting - about 60 on 10/5, 125 est. October 11th down to about 10 October 30,
 1 on October 31st.
 Painted bunting - 1 on 10/4, 2 on 10/11
 Dickcissel - to October 12th (11)
 TOWHEE - 1 on October 26th

SPARROWS: Savannah - very few from October 18; sharp-tailed - 3 10/12, 5 10/18;
 Seaside - 2 on 10/11, 1 10/19; lark - 1 10/5; white-crowned - 1 10/11, 10/12, 10 plus on
 10/25, 1 on 10/30; white-throated - 2 on 10/25, 1 10/26, 2 10/29; Lincoln's - 1 to 5 from
 October 12th; swamp - 1 to 5 from 10/19; song - 1 10/30.

ARLIE MCKAY

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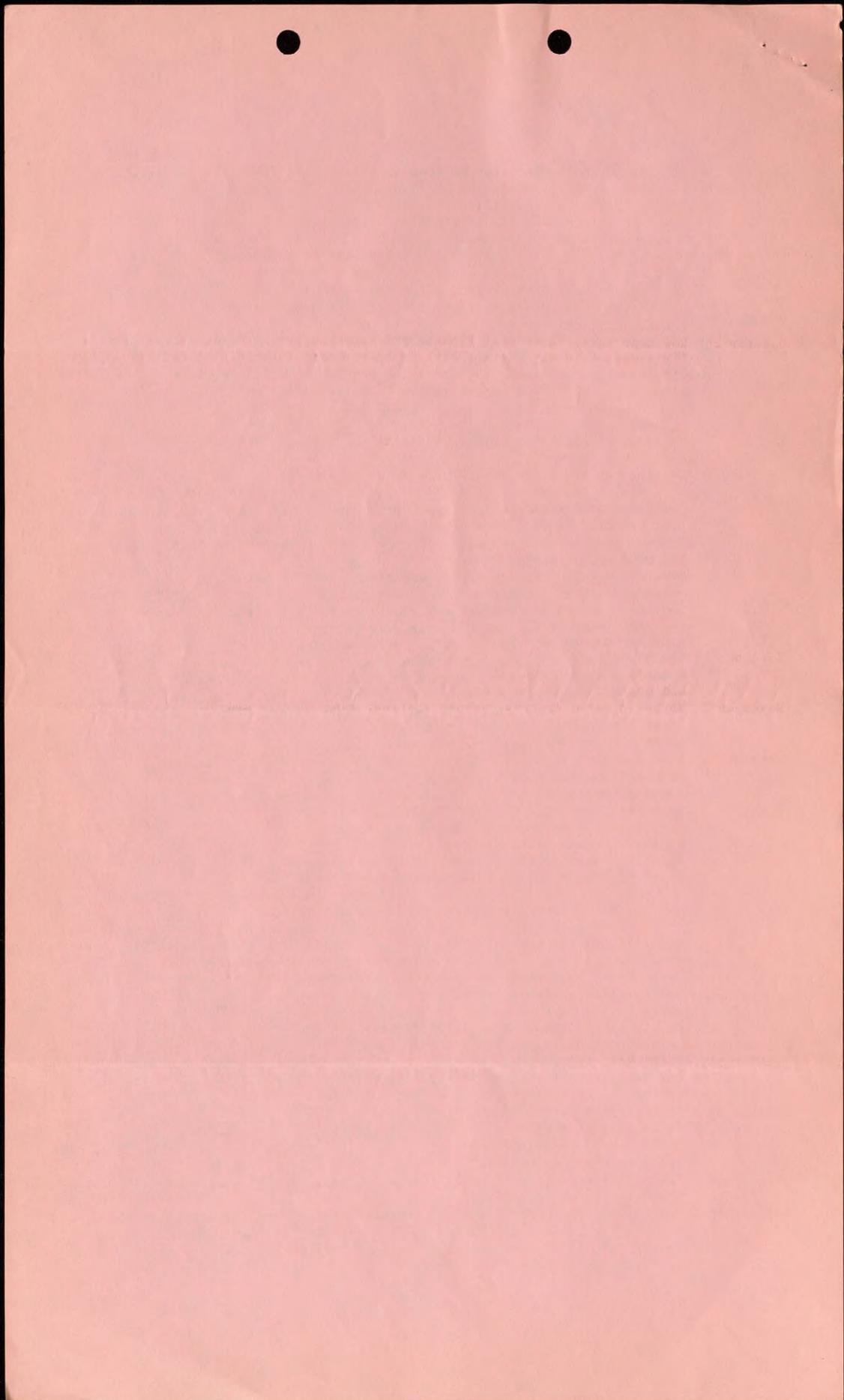
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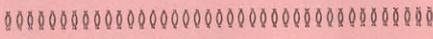
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CLEARING HOUSE:

- October 4 Hundreds of scissor-tailed flycatchers seen at the traffic light in LaGrange at 6:00 am. by Mrs. Jesse Haver. They were all over the ledges of the buildings and window sills. After they left LaGrange they ran into another group of hundreds of birds.
- October 5 Seen by the Stricklings in the Sugarland area: 1 Nashville warbler, 1 orange crowned warbler, 15 Wilson's warblers, 1 ruby throated hummingbird. They also saw about 15 or 20 blue-gray gnatcatchers in one small huisache bush.
 Vic Emanuel reports two blue-gray gnatcatchers on the Rice campus, also at West boulevard. Two black-and-white warblers and an epidomax flycatcher
 Observed by Linda and Clinton Snyder in Baytown, La Porte, Cedar Bayou area: parula warbler, redstart, yellowthroat, yellow-breasted chat, yellow throated vireo, yellow-billed cuckoo, bobwhite, barred owl, avocet (400) snow and blue geese (50) green heron, least bittern, olivaceous cormornat, coot, roseate spoonbill (6) scissor-tailed flycatcher (2) eastern wood peewee, catbird (2) white-eyed vireo, blackburnian warbler (1) indigo bunting.
- October 6 Observed on Rice Campus by Vic Emanuel: one blue-gray gnatcatcher.
- October 7 Mrs. Vic Emanuel told Vic she had seen a big bird running across the road at Alief and Wesleyan. It had a sort of crest and long tail. How do you like that? A ROADRUNNER in big H.
 25 stilt sandpipers seen by the Snyders.
- October 8 Red-tailed hawk - the Snyders
- October 10 12 ring-necked ducks, 8 common gallinule, long-billed curlew, and horned lark observed by Ralph Peterson and John Neill.
 A flock of about a hundred broad-winged hawks noted by the Snyders.
- October 11 Joe Heiser observed a ROADRUNNER in the Little Thicket.
 Seen by the Snyders: Nashville warbler, parula warbler, yellow-throated warbler, yellowthroat, indigo bunting, 50 plus blue grosbeak, white-crowned sparrow, 6 catbird, ruby-throated hummingbird, 200 plus swallows including barn, tree, bank and rough-winged, 200 avocets, 50 plus dowitchers, 3 black necked stilt, 1 green heron, 2 gallinule, 4 coot, 2 pied-billed grebe, 2 gadwalls, 2 black duck.
 One catbird noted by the Hoffmans
- October 12 Observed by the Snyders - 4 house wrens
- October 13 From Carl - "Two peregrine falcons were circling over the A & M campus early in the morning. Possibly driven in by the recent norther, and might be feeding off scissor-tails and mourning doves.
- October 14 Last chimney swifts seen by the Snyders - five of them
- October 15 Observed by the Snyders: 2 magnolia warblers, 2 black-throated green, 2 Tennessee, 2 redstarts, ovenbird, 4 catbirds, 4 house wrens, barn, tree, bank and rough-winged swallows, stilt sandpiper, solitary sandpiper
- October 17 Joe Heiser reporting from the Little Thicket: ROADRUNNER, house wren, ruby-crowned kinglet, many brown thrashers.
- October 18 Observed by the Stricklings and Hoffmans in the Memorial area: bluebird, bob-white, 6 yellow-shafted flickers, 5 red-shouldered hawks, sparrow hawk, wood peewee, phoebe, 4 sapsuckers, brown thrasher, parula warbler, about 10 pine warblers, Carolina and winter wren.



- October 19 Observed by Ralph Peterson and John O'Neill: 12 reddish egrets, 6 osprey, caracara, peregrine falcon, 10 piping plover, RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, Sprague's pipit, INCA DOVE, bay-breasted warbler.
- October 20 Brown pelican, 5 dunlin, 25 least sandpiper, least bittern, last scissor-tail flycatcher seen by the Snyders.
- October 22 Here's a note from Carl Aiken at College Station: This morning from about 2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. thousands of geese flew over A & M College. It was raining and they were flying just a few feet over the dormitories. The noise was pretty loud and woke men up all over the campus - something that is extremely difficult to do.
- October 25 Now hear this! A ***GRAY KINGBIRD*** reported by the Snyders. We quote "This was obviously not a shrike or an eastern kingbird, but definitely had flycatcher actions and was identified by its gray head with darker mask, very stout bill and lack of white in the tail. This may not be too strange since we are right on Galveston Bay and have had strong easterly winds for two weeks." This is the second record for Texas.
Seen in Memorial area by Hoffmans: 6 ruby-crowned kinglets, 1 redstart, about 24 pine warblers.
- October 26 Observed by the Snyders: RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, Chuck-wills-widow "We were quite startled to have seven 'great brown moths' swoop over us as we were walking down a lane at dusk"
Observed by the Hoffmans in their yard: 35 pine warblers, 6 myrtle warblers, 1 yellow-billed cuckoo, 1 ruby-crowned kinglet, 1 solitary vireo.
Observed by Leota Stillwell and the Hoffmans in west Harris County and Logansbaugh Lake area: red-winged blackbirds, coot, cormorants, cowbirds, dickcissel, dowitchers, pintail ducks, a flock of about a hundred FULVOUS TREE DUCKS, flickers, 21 scissor-tailed flycatchers, blue, snow and white-fronted geese, marsh red-shouldered, red-tailed and sparrow hawks, great and little blue herons, phoebe, Savannah sparrow, 2 starlings, about twenty-five green-winged teal.
- November 1 The Snyders write: "This was a day for hawks. Standing in our yard we watched a sharp-shinned, sparrow hawk, broad-winged, red-tailed, red-shouldered hawk and osprey. Also saw a magnificent adult bald eagle soaring overhead.
- November 2 White-throated sparrow, vesper sparrow, song sparrow and CLAY-COLORED sparrow (identified by stripes and facial patch plus notched tail) and 500 plus blue geese - reported by the Snyders.
- November 3 Also reported by the Snyders: myrtle warbler, Lincoln sparrow, BURROWING OWL, (two of these) 2 PIGEON HAWKS, about 2000 plus snow and blue geese, 7 marsh hawks - six in one field!
- November 7 Hold your breaths for this one! A ***CLARK'S NUTCRACKER*** was seen at Cedar Bayou by Linda Snyder and her two sons. They tried to get someone to photograph it and had no luck, so they drove ten miles to the Cove to get Arlie McKay and he saw it also. It was last seen at about 5:00 p.m. when it flew high into the air and disappeared. All field marks seen by all 4 observers.



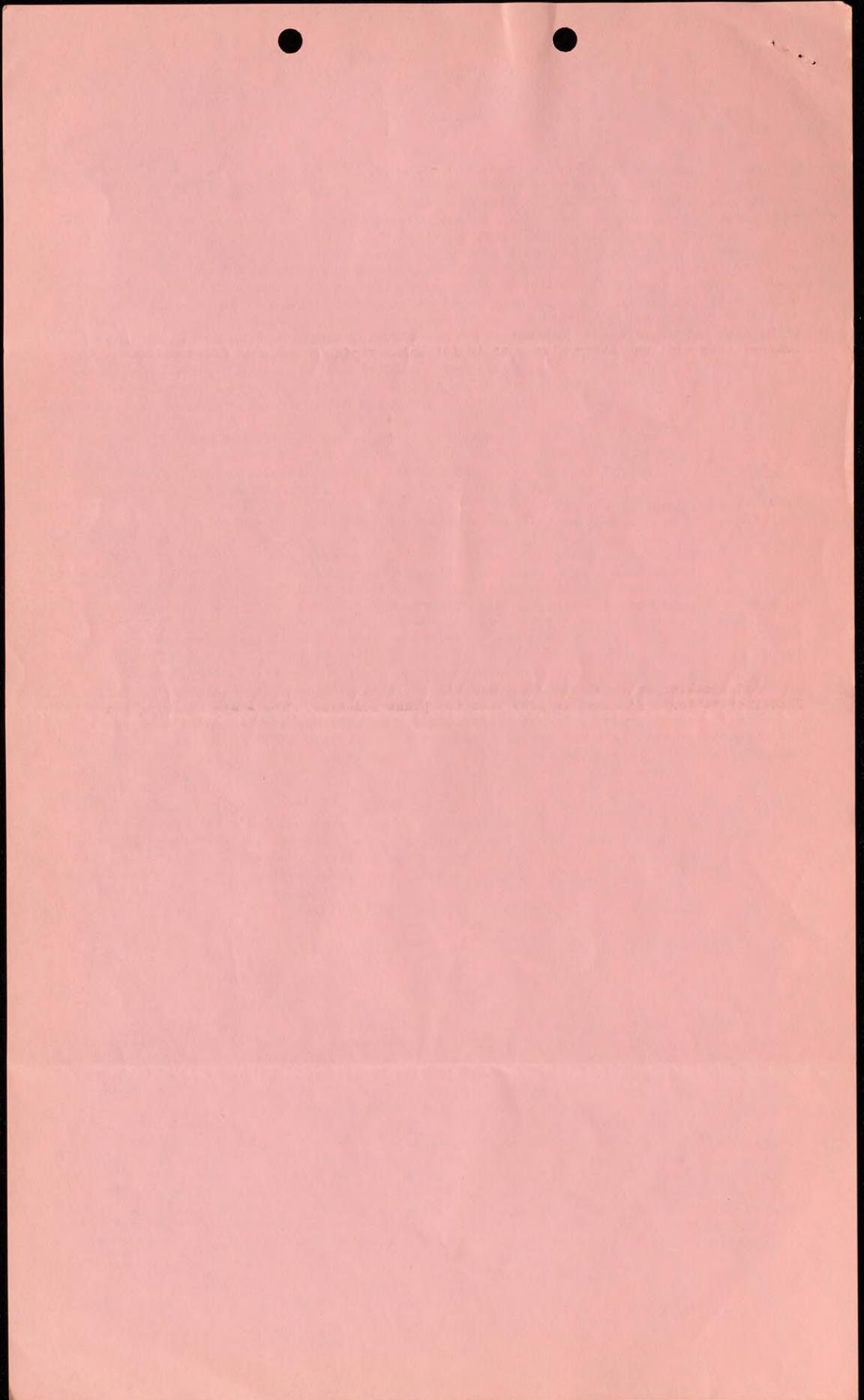
THIS IS THE STORY OF "BETSY"

Someone sent Carrie Holcomb this charming little story about their owl "Betsy" and we both thought others might enjoy it too!

"We got what proved to be a young, but fully grown barred owl we named Betsy. Until she was, so to speak, acclimated, we kept Betsy on the back porch, which was about the same thing as having an adult hen in the house. Betsy looked very like a somewhat rusty dominicker, too.

We fed her small chunks of raw beef, a diet on which she thrived. She at once picked an old chair back for her roosting place, backing herself up against the heavy brown curtain that we kept down to protect her against too much light.

She couldn't climb higher because of a wing, badly torn but not broken, that drooped below her other one after it healed, so that she flew a bit lopsidedly. But she flew! So well that within a fortnight she was able to freely navigate outdoors. At first she didn't like at all being on her own. For the first 6 or 7 days she went round and round the camp trying to find a place she could force herself in through, begging at windows and hanging on door screens. Finally, locating the vent for the attic fan (it was open and the fan not in operation) when she squeezed into the attic and from there flew down into the main room. After making a tour of the room, she settled on Buddy (the mocking-



bird) cage, with only the friendliest of intentions, of course. Buddy of course went into hysterics. I let her ride out to the porch on ly left arm, where the back door was propped open and shook her off into the yard.

Guess she forgave me, as well as accepting the inevitable, because she only whimpered like a puppy, (notes you have to be mighty good friends with owls to ever hear them make) and hid all day in the thickest and leafiest shrubbery close to the porch. At twilight she took off for a half hour's exercise then lit on the porch roof or near it and began demanding her rations. As many owls, barred, barn, swamp, screech, pygmy and elf as I have raised, Betsy taught us some things we had never known before. That the owl tribe ate leafy vegetables, cabbage, lettuce, spinach, turnip or mustard leaves we had learned long ago; but Betsy also went in for melon rinds, bread plain or toasted, raw turnip, celery, etc. Whatever you gave her she tried and there wasn't much she rejected. That owls adore bathing was not news to us either; but Betsy did more. She liked to hold a tidbit in one claw, while she balanced on the other, and daintily nibble at it. Water melon rinds were her favorites; she would devour a piece clear to the outer skin. No matter what the meal, after it she washed her feet, aside from frequent nightly or cloudy day plunges into our little garden pool. Incidentally, she greatly lowered our frog population to which the pool was home, and I once saw her with an already dead little ribbon snake. Either the birds were too quick for her or didn't interest her, but she just about caught up the many rodents that had also been coming to the basin to drink, various kinds of mice and rabbits. The dogs she ignored as they did her."

John O'Neill would appreciate getting your vacation check lists. It would give an interesting picture of what was seen in different parts of the country this summer.

And speaking of vacations, the Hoffmans would like to recommend that you include Bandelier National Monument in your vacation plans sometime. There are charming and convenient places to picnic or camp; the Lodge is attractive, and the meals good and not expensive. And there are birds, birds, birds everywhere and in the most convenient of places for observing.

THE SPOONBILL would like to hear from you. Not that other fellow, but you! This is not a closed corporation. It is a little paper representing the experiences of every single one of our members. What you have to say is important to us.

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