



THE SPOONBILL

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Other names for the Common Snipe: Wilson's, English, American, Meadow, Marsh, Bog or Gutter Snipe, Jacksnipe, Shadbird, Alewife-bird.

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

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, AUGUST 5, 1971 by Louise Rogers

Chairman Sarah Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:35 P.M.

The minutes of the June 6, 1971, meeting were approved as read.

The Treasurer's Report for June 1 through July 31, 1971, was accepted. It showed receipts of \$159.02, disbursements of \$138.48, and balance on hand of \$208.05.

On behalf of the editors of The Spoonbill, Miss Gordon asked that all articles be in by the 7th of the month. Write-ups of birding trips and vacations would be welcomed, and more information for the Clearing House would be helpful.

Word was received from Cat Ridge that plans are coming along for the TOB meeting in Houston over the Thanksgiving weekend. Field trip leaders will be OG members. Registration will not be necessary for OG members who want to go on the field trips, but they must pay the registration fee if they wish to attend any of the evening meetings or banquets.

Three new members and five guests were introduced by Avis Brister.

It was reported that the Purple Martins have moved from west University to the Meyerland Shopping Center.

The Clayton B. Gilman's have added to our library a copy of Peterson's Guide to western Birds.

Sarah Gordon called attention to an article in the Post which said that the Canadian Government has purchased Bonaventura Island off the Gaspé Peninsula as a bird sanctuary. She expressed the wish that we could think of some way to save South Deer Island for the same purpose.

There being no further business Frank Hsu showed his slides on the Galapagos Islands. Outstanding were his close-ups of the wildlife, many taken at arm's length.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

NOTES FROM NOEL PETTINGILL

I received a newsworthy letter from Ted Parker III of Lancaster, Pa., which reads, in part, as follows:

"Just writing to thank you for the helpful information you sent me in May. The Big Day information on Galveston Island was particularly helpful. In three days we saw 31 species of shorebirds in the Galveston-Bolivar area. The pond at 6-mile road (Ave. 1) was very productive with three Hudsonian Godwits, one BALD'S SANDPIPER (5/21), and many others. There were five BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS at Anahuac (near headquarters) on 5/22. Four Fulvous Treeducks circling Buckhorn Lake (east of Sheldon Res.) on 5/23 might have been unusual for that locality. We heard several Swainson's warblers in areas near Sheldon Reservoir. Our final total for trip was 263 (including Big Bend and Rio Grande Valley)-9 days."

Glad to see that Bald and Golden Eagles are making a comeback in west Texas. I also read that Brown Pelicans are now breeding successfully again in Louisiana, where they have been "introduced" (so ironic for the State bird!) as well as in Corpus area and that ibises are

also reproducing along the Texas coast with no sign of DDT-affected eggshells. There's hope for the various big birds' survival for future generations after all!

Re Red-breasted Merganser reported in June Clearing House (June 11): The Red-breasted Merganser apparently wasn't crippled as it flew and dove. Only other summer records I know of are June 13, 1939, and June 17, 1967 (by the OG at Galveston) for UTC area.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR MEXICO BIRDING

Birds of Northeastern Mexico is an annotated checklist by L. Irby Davis covering the region from the Rio Grande southward to Tamazunchale east of San Luis Potosi and Saltillo. A map identifying good birding areas accompanies the text, with an introduction describing birding routes for one to several day birding itineraries south from Brownsville. Over 550 birds are listed, all of which are annotated by habitat and range, and most of which are further discussed as to variety of common names, field marks, voice and region specifics. Many voice comparisons are made to aid the observer to distinguish birds with confusing or similar voice characteristics in the field. The 81 page book is edited and published by Mabel Deshayes, 215 Marshall Street, Houston, 77006, April, 1971. Price is \$2.00 prepaid.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Miss Anna Beth Rack
3703 Purdue Street
Houston, Texas 77005

Miss June Rushing
4014 Sue Ellen Street
Houston, Texas 77017

ELECTRONIC BIRDING

Melba Drake sent along some information which is very interesting and could be quite useful: Mr. Allan Cruickshank reports in the American Birds, incorporating Audubon Field Notes, on the 71st Christmas Bird Count that 1970 was the year of the use of the tape recorder as an important means of finding elusive species. He said scores of compilers emphasized use of the tape recordings of bird calls and songs. Tapes were found to be particularly helpful in spotting such secretive birds as owls and rails.

CLEARING HOUSE, JULY, 1971

Pelican, White: (24)22, Cove, AKM.
Frigatebird, Magnificent: (2, incl. 1 imm.)3, West Beach, Galveston (13-mi. Rd.), NP.
Heron, Green: (1)26, Cove, AKM.
Egret, Reddish: (5)22, Cove, AKM.
Nightheron, Black-drowned: (9)22, Cove, AKM.
 Yellow-crowned: (1)17, 21, Cove, AKM.
Bittern, Least: (2)22, Cove, AKM.
Ibis, White-faced: (5)31, Cove, AKM.
Spoonbill, Roseate: (10 ±)22, (1)31, Cove, AKM.
Duck, Mottled: (2)22, 31, (3)28, Cove, AKM.
Teal, Blue-winged: (5)31 (early), Cove, AKM.
Vulture, Turkey: (1)3, 26, Cove, AKM.
 Black: (2)31, Cove, AKM.
Rail, King: (2)13, (5)23, (1)24, Cove, AKM.
Plover, Black-bellied: (1)22, Cove, AKM.
 Upland: (4)31, Cove, AKM.
Sandpiper, Spotted: (4)22, Cove, AKM.
 Solitary: (1)31, Cove, AKM.
Willet: (1)22, Cove, AKM.
Yellowlegs, Greater: (12)16, (50 ±)17, (1)20, 22, Cove, AKM.
 Lesser: (8-14)17, 22, 29, 31, Cove, AKM.
Sandpiper, Pectoral: (15)17, (5)21, 24, (30)31, Cove, AKM.
 White-rumped: (2)22, my 2nd fall record, 1st was Oct. 15, 1942, Cove, AKM.
 Least: (NC)17, 22, 31, Cove, AKM.
 Stilt: (5)17, (2)24, Cove, AKM.
 Semi-palmated: (NC)17, 22, Cove, AKM.
Tern, Gull-billed: (1+)22, Cove, AKM

Tern, Caspian: 4 days, Cove, AKM.
Black: (1)19, (19-22)22,31, (3-5)26,27, Cove, AKM.
Skimmer, Black: (7-11)21,22,31, Cove, AKM.
Swift, Chimney: (1)24, Cove, AKM.
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: (1-3)15 days from 8th, Cove, AKM.
Woodpecker, Pileated: (2)31, Cove, AKM.
Red-headed: (7+)31, Cove, AKM.
Kingbird, Eastern: (2)6,13, (1)7 days, Cove, AKM.
Flycatcher, Great-crested: (1)1,2, Baytown, D&DL.
Empidonax: (2)31, Cove, AKM; (1)29, Baytown, D&DL.
GNATCATCHER, BLUE-GRAY: (2)29, Baytown, DL.
Warbler, Black-and-white: (1)29, Baytown, D&DL.
Oriole, Orchard: (1)20,31, Cove, AKM; (3-10)7 days, 5th-29th, Baytown, D&DL.
GROSBEAK, BLUE: (1)26,27, (2)28, Cove, AKM.
Bunting, Painted: (1)21, Cove, AKM; (1)31, Baytown, DL.
Dickcissel: (1)7,10,31, Cove, AKM.
Sparrow, Seaside: (5)22, Cove, AKM.

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS

AKM Arlie K. McKay
NP Noel Pettingell
DL Dorothy Lefkovits
D&DL Dorothy and David Lefkovits

Mr. McKay noted that with Cotton and Long Island Bayous dammed off and a barge bridging Old River at its mouth, tide water can enter only under the barge. As a result the marshes above the dam are nearly all dry.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

It is our feeling that the monthly Clearing House is a very valuable part of The Spoonbill. This one item sets it apart from bulletins of other nature and ornithology organizations.

One way it has been of particular value in the past is that the Field Check List of Birds of the Upper Texas Coast, which most of use, was compiled from Clearing House records, according to Margaret Anderson, one of the very able group who made up the check list.

Fred Webster of Austin uses sightings as reported in the Clearing House as part of his reports in the publication, American Birds incorporating Audubon Field Notes.

Although it is no great pleasure to type the Clearing House, and long ones get somewhat tedious, your editors feel that it is worthy of more widespread participation.

There are a very few faithful, regular reporters, but a number of birders who used to report either regularly or sporadically when we became editors more than two years ago no longer report their sightings except possibly during migration periods. We would like to see a resurgence of participation by both past contributors and those who have not previously taken part.

For those not familiar with it, the following is the method being used for listing rarities and accidentals in the Clearing House (based on 4th Edition UTC Field Check List):

- (A) CAPITALIZED AND UNDERLINED: Not on 4th Edition Field Check List (January 1, 1956-December 31, 1965)
- (B) CAPITALIZED ONLY:
 - (1) 1 to 5 records 1956 through 1965
 - (2) Out-of-season (No previous or only 1 or 2 records), as indicated by dot (.) on Field Check List
 - (3) Earlier or later than extreme date appearing in "Check List of the Birds of the Upper Texas Coast" by Stephen G. Williams (1962).
- (C) Lower case and underlined: Rare at any time of the year, or when observed, according to Field Check List

RECYCLING ALUMINUM INTO DOLLARS

The latest sale of aluminum scrap has netted the OG \$27.32. This project has turned out to be a very good source of income and has possibly forestalled a raise in dues and subscription rate.

MORE SLAUGHTER OF EAGLES

According to an article by the Associated Press a Wyoming helicopter pilot has testified before the Senate environmental appropriations subcommittee that he piloted a helicopter on eagle hunts last winter and saw more than 500 eagles killed. He said that sheep ranchers hired gunmen to kill the Golden and Bald Eagles because they were afraid the birds would kill newborn lambs.

The pilot knew where the eagle carcasses were buried, and a search for evidence of the slaughter was being made by Interior Department agents. Secretary of the Interior Morton called the alleged killings a "national outrage" and said evidence found would be sent to the Justice Department.

NOTES FROM TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE BULLETINS

A frustrating sight to many West Texas ranchers is the vast swarm of grasshoppers which arrive to strip the ground of needed livestock grasses. But right away the turkeys follow. Turkeys, say TP&WD biologists, may include the grasshopper to the extent of at least 90% of its diet from June through September.

At least 300 rare and endangered Mississippi Kites have used a site near Snyder in Scurry County for several years as a nesting area. The birds usually arrive sometime from mid-May to as late as July. One favorite nesting spot is a dense live oak thicket surrounded by hundreds of acres of mesquite. The kite population has remained fairly constant for several years.

TP&WD biologists have released 150 South Korean King-necked Pheasants in the vicinity of Waller and Katy. This is the first of a slated 400 bird release by the department's Tyler Management and Research Station. In Korea the birds are found in areas of high humidity and where rice and upland grain are grown, similar to the Texas release site.

Afghan white-winged Pheasants are being released in the Trans-Pecos area near Balmorhea. One group of almost 400 birds was released in July and 400 more were scheduled for August release.

There will probably be a diminished population of Mottled Ducks this year, according to Charles Stutzenbaker, manager of the J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area. The early summer drought hit the ducklings hard. There was very little water on the management area, and ducks concentrated on the few ponds, where predators also concentrated.

A bill passed by the Texas Senate during the last session provides for the issuance of a falconer's permit by the Parks and Wildlife Department, directing that the department establish an advisory board of three experienced falconers to advise the department in the development of rules regulating the issuance of permits.

Other bills passed by the Legislature which should be of interest to conservationists and nature lovers include authorization for the Parks and Wildlife Commission to open seasons on wildlife in parks, forts, historic sites from time to time based on sound biological practices; authorizes the P&WD to issue permits for the capture of alligators and marine mammals for display in public and commercial aquariums; increases the membership in the Parks and Wildlife Commission to six members; establishes the Ingle-side Cove Wildlife Sanctuary in San Patricio and Nueces Counties and prohibits the hunting of any birds within the sanctuary.

Biologists say that there isn't a month in the year that doesn't find Mourning Doves nesting somewhere in Texas, depending on habitat and weather. One dove banded in Archer County in north Texas was taken by a hunter in Desconocido, Mexico, and five birds banded in Texas were found at extremes in Mexico. Eleven other birds banded by Texas game management officers were found in Oklahoma, Kansas and Iowa and one in Mississippi. Most doves, however, are killed by hunters within a few miles of the nest site, according to records of banded birds.

The Texas Parks and wildlife Department has been authorized to move its headquarters to the new McKinney Falls State Park near Austin. The State building Commission has been directed to provide assistance. The McKinney Falls site, which is not yet open to the public, is a 632-acre tract located seven miles from the State Capitol and just southwest of Bergstrom Air Force Base.

ON THE LIGHT SIDE

What's furry, has a red head, is blind and tiptoes? Answer: a squirrel.

Superintendent Jerry McCreless of San Jacinto State Park was startled to see a squirrel crossing a park road on tiptoes and with a red object covering its head. He caught the little fellow and removed the red paste can which was wedged firmly on its head. The squirrel was glad to be rid of the can, and appeared to be healthy. With his vision obscured by the can, the squirrel's careful and deliberate gait made him appear to be tiptoeing, McCreless said.

COMING EVENTS

September 26
Sunday OG field trip to Galveston, Steve Williams, leader, to look for shore birds and migratory species. Those attending will meet at 8:00 A.M. at the east end of the Galveston seawall. Be sure to bring lunch, and mosquito repellent would probably come in handy. This a repeat of a trip at the same time of the year in 1970 which was the most rewarding of the year in number of species, with a total of 123 being seen.

October 7
Thursday Regular OG meeting at 7:30 P.M. at the Ponds Recreation Center. The program, as described by our Program Chairman, Mrs. Margaret Jones: Develop a "hawk-eye" as Dr. Steve Williams gives a much-requested program on hawks. Those fortunate enough to have seen Steve's program on sparrows last December know that "Helpful Hints on Hawks" is a must for October.

October 23
Saturday A trip to Armand's Bayou for the October OG field trip. Mrs. Hannah Ginzburg will be leader. Mrs. Ginzburg has been one of the leaders in the fight to save Armand's Bayou in its natural state and in many other conservation projects. We will meet at 8:00 A.M. at the Bay Area Park on Bay Area Blvd. between Clear Lake City and Red Bluff Road.

OFFICERS

Chairman:	Miss Sarah Gordon, 1746 Wroxtton Court, Houston 77005
Vice-chairman:	Mrs. Harry L. (Avis) Brister, 2314 Saxon, Houston 77018
Secretary:	Miss Louise Rogers, 2315 Kipling, Apt. #77, Houston 77006
Treasurer:	Miss Melba Drake, 1746 Wroxtton Court, Houston 77005
Co-editors of The Spoonbill:	Mr. and Mrs. David (Dorothy) Lefkovits, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown 77520
Program Chairman:	Mrs. T. Paul (Margaret) Jones, 4902 Fern, Bellaire 77401
Field Trip Chairman:	Miss Marilyn Crane, 3601 Allen Parkway #214, Houston 77019
Mailing:	Miss Nell Ray, 1750 Wroxtton Court, Houston 77005
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