

N. P.



THE SPOONBILL

Volume III Number 6

OCTOBER 1954

 * "It probably is safe to say that never in *
 * history have 24 birds attracted the nation- *
 * wide attention that the world's last sur- *
 * viving Whooping Cranes are receiving this *
 * year during their annual journey from up *
 * near the Arctic Circle in Canada to the *
 * Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas." *
 * —HOUSTON POST, Sept. 28, 1953 (Paraphrased *
 * and revised). *

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FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

Oct. 7, 8:00 P.M. Business Meeting 5815 Schuler
 Oct. 24, 9:00 A.M. Field Trip Smith Point
 Nov. 10, 8:00 P.M. Business Meeting 5815 Schuler

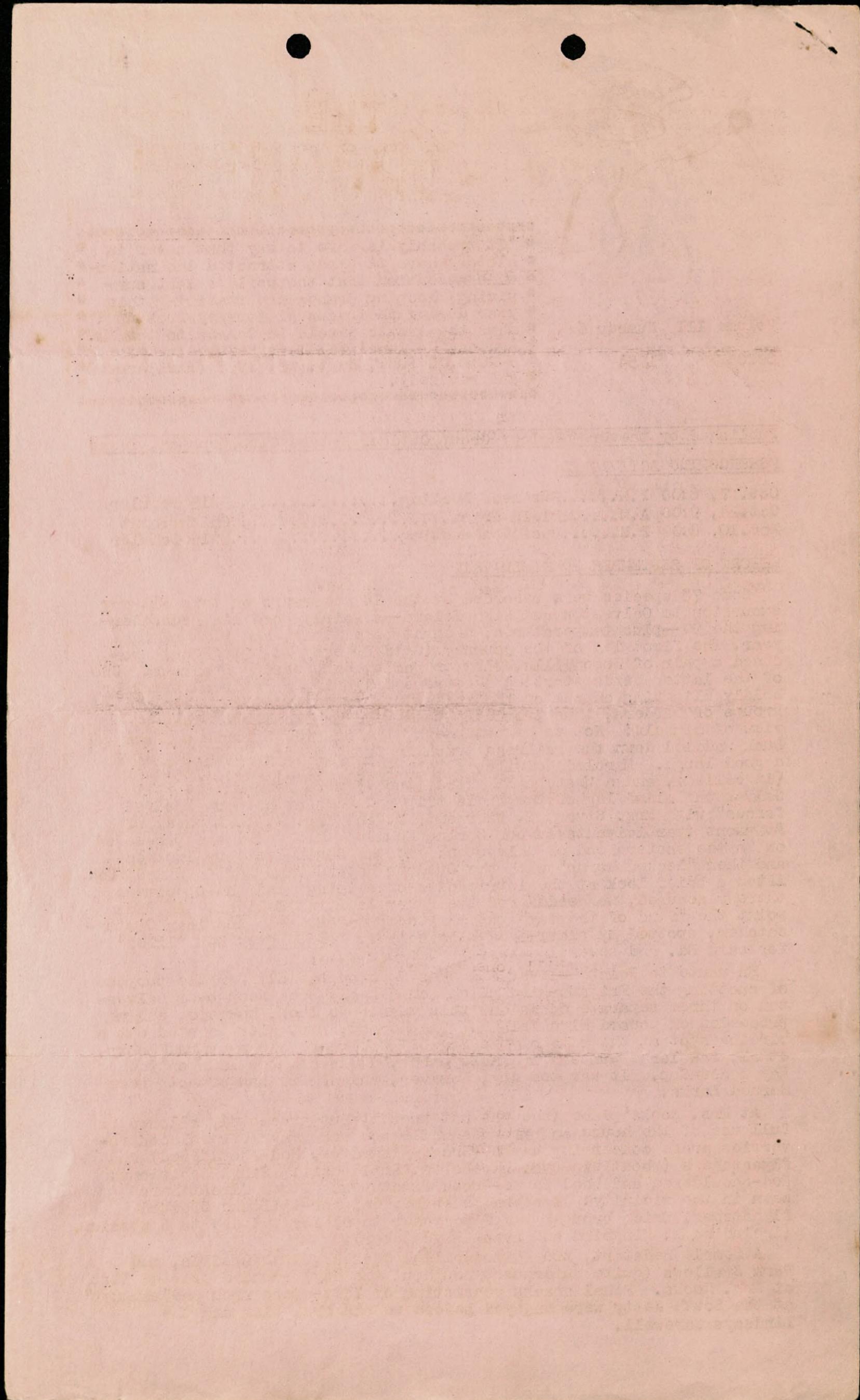
REPORT OF SEPTEMBER 19 FIELD TRIP

Some 78 species were recorded by the 14 observers on this all-day excursion to Galveston and High Island—a fairly good list considering the 90—plus temperatures, drought conditions, and time of the year. The first leg of the journey (Gulf Freeway to Galveston) produced a pair of Spoonbills, Clapper Rails, and Seaside Sparrows. One of the latter birds startled observers following a railroad track by boldly alighting on one of the rails in between two fairly close groups of birders, thus providing them with an excellent close-up view of himself! Not to be outdone by the Seaside Sparrow a Black Duck waddled down the railroad track in front of us, which provided a good laugh. Marbled Godwits, a Yellow Warbler, Least Flycatcher (it called), and a Western Kingbird (two ?) were seen on the west Galveston Island leg of the field trip and then at noon we "joined forces" with Mrs. Stuart T. Wier and Mr. and Mrs. B. H. Lindsay of Beaumont (participants in our Spring Roundup this year) and proceeded on to the eastern end of Galveston. At the South Jetty we lunched and then "locked horns" with the Outdoor Nature Club Marine Expedition. After a brief look at the intricacies of seining and the specimens thereby secured, we headed for the ferry to Point Bolivar. At this point the "find of the day" put in its appearance—an American Oystercatcher, spotted by sharp-eyed Ella Wolfer. (Ed. Note: New "lifer" for said Ed. and several others in the party...)

En route to Point Bolivar all eyes were on the sky for the purpose of spotting the Frigate-bird which had already been seen over Galveston on three separate occasions this year. No luck, however, and we proceeded on toward High Island. On the way, Mrs. Wier pointed out a birding spot at the site of the Sun Oil Co. where she and Mrs. Hooks, et al, saw large numbers of shore birds, ducks and the like on the May 2 Roundup. It was too dry, however, and all we saw of note were Horned Larks.

At Mrs. Hooks' place (she was not present but graciously allowed us full use of the house and grounds while she was away) several controversies arose concerning hawks (Broad-winged vs. Red-shouldered) and flycatchers (Wood Pewee vs. Phoebe vs. Empidonax). Final decisions: Red-shouldered and Wood Pewee—both immatures. Other flycatchers seen in the vicinity: Eastern Kingbird, Scissor-tail and Crested Flycatcher, which brought the flycatcher total for the day to 6 species (including W. Kingbird and Least Flycatcher).

A female Redstart, two Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Hummingbirds, and Barn Swallows (quite numerous throughout the day) rounded out the list at Mrs. Hooks. Final snacks consisting of left-overs from the "banquet" at the South Jetty were enjoyed before we bid Mrs. Wier and the Lindsays farewell.



On the return ferry trip to Galveston our efforts to locate a Frigate-bird amongst the myriad Brown Pelicans was again to no avail, although we did add one more bird to the list—Cormorants.

Upon our arrival in Houston we had covered over 200 miles and spent over 15 hours afield, but already we were planning a repeat trip to High Island in the not-too-distant future...

Those who attended were: Jerry Baker, Ethel Hansen, Maurine Jarrell, Mr. and Mrs. B.H. Lindsay, Don Melstrom, Jimmy Murray, Norma Oates, Noel Pettingell, Mac Ramsey, Leota Stilwell, Mrs. Stuart T. Wier, Josiephine Wilkin, and Ella Wolfer.

OCTOBER 24, (SUNDAY) - FIELD TRIP TO SMITH POINT

Meet: 9:00 A. M. Humble Company Camp, Smith Point. This is a regular monthly field trip of the Outdoor Nature Club, and as it is "right up our alley" the Ornithology Group should back this trip 100%. Mrs. Helen Myatt will be leader—subject: "Migratory Birds." The birding should be good along the way so it is suggested you get an early start (about 6 A.M.).

After the time is "spent" there, and if you are still eager to bird we can band together for the best birding route (depending on time) on the return trip to Houston.

CLEARING HOUSE

LUNAR WATCH A SUCCESS

Twelve observers watched an estimated 650 to 750 birds cross the face of the full moon from 7 P.M. Sept. 11 to 5:30 A.M. Sept. 12. This unique bird-watching venture is a valuable aid in plotting the migration routes of birds and all who participated are to be highly commended for a tedious all-night job well done...

* * * *

- Sept. 3 - Sandhill Cranes reported near Angleton, 43 miles south of Houston (Brazoria Co.) by Mr. L.A.M. Barnette.
Robins (from the north)—about 50—reported migrating over Mr. Jule Schmidt's house at 1723 Esperanza St. in Houston... He also states that Purple Martins lingered until Aug. 18.
 (Ed. Note: We are very happy to be receiving reports from Mr. Schmidt once again and are pleased to hear that he is well on the road to recovery from a recent illness.)
- Sept. 4 - Olive-sided Flycatcher (2) seen at the Little Thicket Sanctuary (San Jacinto Co.) by many.
- Sept. 5 - Baltimore Orioles (2 pair) seen at Sanctuary by Ellen and Jimmy Greer.
- Sept. 6 - Following species noted by your editor on this date:
Canada Warbler Ralston Rd. (near Garrett) W of Sheldon Res. (Site of Swainson's Warbler—but none heard.)
Red-tailed Hawk (4) seen circling near Lockwood Rd. (NW of Sheldon Res.)
Spoonbill (one immature) seen feeding in NW corner of Sheldon Res. (S of Garrett Rd.)
Terns & Egrets seen at newly-created Lake Houston.
Sparrow Hawk (1) seen near Miller Cut-off Road (S of Battlegrounds).
Wood Ibis (14) seen in Tabbs Bay at Baytown end of tunnel.
Broad-winged Hawk (2 immature) seen at close range (while uttering call-note) at NW Jct. of Evergreen Pelly and Tri-City Beach Rd. SE of Baytown.
Baltimore Oriole (1 adult male and 4 immatures) seen in orchard between Cedar Bayou and Fisher Rd.
- Sept. 12 - Western Grebe (2 or more) reported by Mr. Charles McNeese (Pres., T.O.S.), Carrie Holcomb, and Ruth Stamm in a small lake 4.4 miles NW of Arcola along Texas Route 6 (NE Ft. Bend Co.).
 (Ed. Note: Visited lake on Sept. 14 but failed to find Western Grebes.)
- Sept. 15 - Geese (sp.?) heard by Mrs. Etta Coffman, 4707 Fannin in Houston.
- Sept. 19 - See Report on Sept. 19 Field Trip elsewhere in this issue.

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OMITTED FROM AUGUST "CLEARING HOUSE"

Aug. 7 - Blue-faced Booby seen by Frank Watson in the Gulf of Mexico some 22 miles SE of Freeport.

FOR YOUR INFORMATIONINDEX TABS FOR PETERSON'S EASTERN GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

OB Enterprises (P.O. Box 3097, University Station, Columbus 10, Ohio) now offers a complete set of printed index tabs for all 60 plates in Peterson's E. Field Guide for only 35¢—a bargain at twice the price. Your editor speaks from experience as his guide is now equipped with a set of these tabs which, we are happy to report, passed their initial field test with flying colors. Even should you already have your own guide indexed with homemade tabs it's still to your advantage to trim off the old ones and replace them with a set of OB's (as Ye Ed. did), inasmuch as they are so much more compact and readable, as well as inexpensive (you can't go wrong for a paltry 35¢!). The instruction sheet which accompanies the tabs recommends two rows of 13 each and a 3rd row of 4, but with a little "engineering" it's possible to fit all 30 tabs into two rows and yet still allow each to be clearly visible. Although not mentioned in the instruction sheet, strips of 1/2 inch-width Scotch Tape should be applied over each tab as you affix it to the plate (allowing about a 1/4 inch extension onto each side of the plate), so as to provide the tabs with added strength and durability.

Indexing your book will require a good two hours, but it's certainly well worth the effort—as you will soon discover on your next field trip whenever quick identification of birds via Peterson Guide is required... (See ad on P. 51 of Mar., -Apr., 1954 AUDUBON MAGAZINE.)

* * * *

THE FIRST SOUND BOOK ON BIRDS EVER PUBLISHED IN AMERICA

TEMPO, August 16, 1954 (Industry-New Gadgets):

"Bird soundbook captures the visual and audio beauty of 24 American songbirds with recordings and full-color photographs."

Full-page advertisement appears in AUDUBON MAGAZINE, May-June, 1954 (P. 139):

"Delightful and authoritative introduction to the whole wonder of birds." May be ordered from National Audubon Society, 1130 Fifth Ave. New York 28, N.Y.—if your local book or record store does not carry it (33-1/3 or 45 RPM—\$4.95 plus 25¢ to cover shipping costs).

* * * *

MAGAZINE ARTICLES OF INTEREST

HOLIDAY, (October) - "Audubon Society" by Donald Culross Peattie...

Highly recommended. It is an inspiring story of the Audubon Society in its struggle to convince the public of the need for conservation. It tells of Sanctuary wardens who faced hostility and even death to save from extinction the birds under their protection. The story outlines ways in which local bird clubs or nature groups help the National organization, the joys to be derived from watching birds, and of Audubon's wife, Lucy Bakewell Audubon, a school teacher who after her husband's death had as a pupil—Grinnell. (Ed. Note: This magazine may be hard to find, if you own one please pass it around.)

* * * *

READER'S DIGEST, (October)

"Microbes: Hard-working Friends of Man" by J.D. Ratcliff (P.130)

As the Honey-guide bird of Africa is able to digest beeswax biologists are studying it in hopes of finding what the wax digesting microbes are, believing when this is done tuberculosis might become readily curable.

* * * *

"Nature Man of the Marshlands" by Ben Lucien Burman

The author while talking to a botanist was told, "If you want to know about marsh flowers see Captain Frank."

Another naturalist advised, "See Captain Frank if you want to find out about marsh birds."

In order to be well informed he made a trip to the Louisiana marshes (Devil's Island) to visit this self-taught naturalist and tells of his experience in this article.

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SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, (September 20) "Here Come the Cranes"
(Excellent)

This describes the intensive nationwide campaign to "escort" the 24 known Whooping Cranes back to their wintering grounds at the Aransas Refuge near Rockport. The last paragraph of the article is most significant:

"Last year there was a gain. Twenty-one whoopers took off for the North in the spring and in the fall all 21 returned, bringing three gawky offspring with them. This fall more eyes than ever will be on the alert in the country's most unusual bird-watching program."
(F.S.—The Sept. 15 HOUSTON POST contained a similar article entitled "Help 24 Whooping Cranes Live, asks Audubon Society.")

* * * *

There are now 43 members of the Outdoor Nature Club registered in the Ornithology Group. Here is the May 1, 1954 thru April 30, 1955 membership list:

Miss Nel Amthor	Mrs. Darris Massingill (Coordinator)
Mrs. Jerry Baker (Secty.-Treas.)	Mr. C. P. McKnight
Mrs. Lucille Barnes	Mrs. Nell McKnight
Mr. Fred Brown	Mr. Leonard McWhirter (Projects)
Miss Luta Buchanan	Miss Helen McMullen
Mrs. Etta Coffman	Mr. Don Melstrom
Mrs. Betty Crowley	Mrs. Edna Miner
Miss Nance Cunningham	Miss Ruth Moorman
Mr. Conrad Deats	Mr. Jimmy Murray
Mr. Hardy Fields	Mrs. Norma Oates
Mr. John Frels	Mr. Noel Pettingell (Editor-Recorder)
Mrs. Ellen Greer	Mr. Mac Ramsey (Chairman)
Mrs. Ethel Hansen	Miss Charlotte Reindl
Mr. Joe Heiser	Mr. Jule Schmidt
Mr. Lee Huckle	Mrs. H. C. Simmons
Mrs. Lee Huckle	Miss Leota Stilwell
Mrs. Harriet Hunt	Mrs. Arthur Vuitel
Mrs. Winnie Hurst	Mr. Frank Watson
Miss Maude Hutton	Mrs. Josiephine Wilkin (Field Trips)
Mrs. Maurine Jarrell	Miss Ella Wolfer
Miss Mabel Kaiser	Mr. Armand Yramategui
Miss Blanche Kirk (pd.\$2.00)	

We acknowledge the following people who wish to receive our publication and have contributed \$1.00 towards its support.

Mr. Laymond Hardy, c/o Casa de Josefine Museum, Lake Wales, Florida
Mr. Arlie K. McKay, Rt. 2, Box 252, Baytown, Texas
Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, 2933 Berkshire Rd., Cleveland Hts., Cleveland O.

Please check the above list for your name. If it does not appear and you are a member of the Outdoor Nature Club, you may send your registration fee of \$1.00 (less than 19 years of age—50¢) to Mrs. Jerry Baker, 6430 Jefferson, Houston 23, Texas. Unless we hear from you, your name may be dropped from our mailing list.

* * * *

DID YOU KNOW

...That the Emperor Penguin keeps its egg off the Antarctic ice by holding it on its feet?

...That the male New Zealand Kiwi incubates its egg for 80 days without any help from the female—and losing half its weight in the process?

—READER'S DIGEST, Sept., 1954

...That the Fairy Tern often incubates its one egg high on the small, bare branch of a tree without benefit of any nesting material whatever?

—"Midway Islands" by F. C. Hadden

* * * *

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