



THE SPOONBILL

VOLUME XVII, NO. 8

DECEMBER, 1968

M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S

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

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR O. G. MEETING HELD DECEMBER 5, 1968

The December 5, 1968 meeting of the Ornithology Group was called to order by Chairman Wallace Mebane.

Visitors, Mabel Knotts and Gordon Walton, were introduced.

The minutes were read and approved. Sarah Gordon read the Treasurer's Report. The November 30, 1968 balance was \$160.14.

John Tveten reported on the Texas Ornithological Society meeting in Brownsville.

Marian Washburn, Program Chairman, reported that Professor Jed Ramsey of Beaumont will give the program at the next meeting.

Melba Drake, Chairman of the "Save the Spoonbill" Committee, reported her findings on binding estimates. Emmott Bookbinders would charge \$6.50 for each volume, approximately 1-1/2 inches thick, and Still's Book Bindery would charge \$8.00. Melba expressed her appreciation to the people who have helped her in locating missing issues and having others reproduced: Noel Pettingell, Jimmy Murray, Leonard McWhirter, Mary Sears and Sarah Gordon. Pat Ridge made the motion that we have all back issues of the Spoonbill permanently bound by A. V. Emmott Bookbinders Inc. The motion was seconded and carried. John Tveten asked that a vote of thanks be given to Melba for the good work she has done on this project and this was heartily seconded and passed.

Wally Mebane announced that the meeting place after the Christmas Count had been changed to Youngbloods in Baytown. The count is December 21 and every one is urged to participate.

Pat Ridge said that he had investigated getting a permit for collecting dead birds, such as those killed by flying into obstacles. A federal permit is fairly easy to obtain, but is contingent upon having a state permit which is difficult to obtain. Wally said that he had been in touch with the people at Gulf in regard to the birds killed by flying into the big sign, and that there is more to be found out.

The Nominating Committee consisting of Dick Miller (Chairman), Eva Gilman, and Louise Rogers, presented the following slate for consideration: President, Wallace Mebane; Vice-Chairman, John Tveten; Secretary, Katrina Ladwig; Treasurer; Sarah Gordon. It was pointed out by representatives of the Outdoor Nature Club that the Chairman would have to be elected at this meeting. Mary Sears moved that the nominations be closed and the motion was seconded and passed.

David Marrack announced two field trips for January to new areas for the group. On January 11 the group will meet on Route 60 at Dewalt - to Arcola and Sandy Point. On the 26th, meet on Route 512 off 288 to Brazoria. (*See changes in these plans under Coming Events).

A second item brought up by David Marrack was that for about 5 years there had been discussion of the desirability of forming a branch of the National Audubon Society in Houston.

It is felt that the use of a nationally known name will be advantageous in furthering conservation and solving pollution problems. The idea was proposed to the Board of the Outdoor Nature Club with the idea that the ONC would be the nucleus of the group. The Board felt that there was room for two groups in this area and the Committee to form an Audubon Branch has made plans for an organizational meeting on February 5. Further details will be in the Spoonbill and the Outdoor Nature Club newsletter. Mr. Charles Calison, Executive Vice-President of the National Audubon Society will be the speaker. Mr. John Spinks who is the Southwest Regional Representative of the Audubon Society will also attend. Wally Mebane expressed the opinion that he felt it was a good thing that a branch was being formed. There was a discussion of the membership. Those who are already members of the Audubon Society will be asked to affiliate with the Houston Audubon Society when their membership comes due. Pat Ridge commented that John Spinks was at the TOS Meeting in Brownsville and knew that the Houston group would look forward to meeting and working with him.

J. C. Faris, President of the Outdoor Nature Club, announced that the regular meeting would be held Tuesday night and that Bill McClure would give the program. On December 14 there will be a rally at Silsbee to discuss saving the Big Thicket.

Dirk Hagemeyer announced that the Audubon Society had asked Houston to protest the big push in sales of alligator items as this is an endangered species. Articles on the subject have appeared in the December issue of Readers Digest and in the September/October issue of Audubon Magazine. Most of the skins are from poachers - skins illegally obtained and sold.

Louise Rogers called members' attention to an article on dredging on the Texas Coast which appeared in the November/December Audubon Magazine.

Marian Washburn introduced Mr. Bill Brummel, Area Manager for the Sheldon Wildlife Management Area, who gave an interesting program regarding the aims and problems of the area. He issued an invitation for us to bird the area.

The meeting then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Katrina Ladwig, Secretary

FIELD TRIP TO THE MATAGORDA AREA NOVEMBER 21, 1968 by David Marrack

Thirty-three members of the Ornithology Group met Levy and Sharon Davis at Cain's Cafe, Route 35, Bay City, in spite of the misdirections of the Field Trip Chairman, for which he apologized. We were pleased to see a number of new faces but missed some well known ones.

This trip was deliberately organized to examine the potential of the area. No field trips had been made to this area in recent years and it is at the known Eastern limits of a number of wintering species. Levy and Sharon had, over previous weeks, made several extensive reconnoitering trips to the area on our behalf. They reported finding White-tailed Kite, White-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, and earlier the presence of numerous shore birds.

We left going South by a back road to pick up Route 60 to Matagorda. As anticipated, it was an intermittent journey with stops for every large bird seen to insure all Hawks were given an opportunity to identify themselves. The first "goodies" from this was a pair of Caracaras following a plow. Near the coast 10 Spoonbills in flight made a fine sight.

Turning East along the beach for some 5 miles before parking we got acquainted with most of the winter coastal birds. A cow track to the North led to the edge of Matagorda Bay and most of the party strolled through this recently flooded area and saw Bittern, Curlew, Long-billed Dowitchers and numerous Horned Larks. Two Dunlin conveniently made themselves available at close range. Dirk Hagemeyer strolling amongst the hummocky grass raised a Short-eared Owl and some 20 Groove-billed ani were seen in bushes close to the cars.

It was a very warm day with a gentle gulf breeze awaiting a cold front pushing into the state. We had a leisurely lunch before returning back along the beach and on to Route 521 towards Brazoria and then South on a shell road to Quintos for a big effort to locate the White-tailed Hawk and White-tailed Kite. Numerous hawks were inspected including a fine but deceptive Krite's Red-tail and near the big lake at the South end we found a hawk which

caused much discussion. It was dark and had a rather broad but sharply demarcated black subterminal band on the tail visible above and below, dusky underwings with dark patches at the "wrists." Its identity lay between a Rough-legged and White-tailed "immature," and the underwing pattern being much more like the illustration for the Rough-leg. However, the bird did not hover and did not appear to have the "leggings" of the Rough-leg when adjusting for takeoff or again in flight but appeared to show bright yellow shanks.

Regretably we could not reach the lake but could see white pelicans but very few duck on it. Duck were noticeably absent all day. Having had a very successful day, thanks to the Davis' efforts we returned home to learn that the Hoffmans who missed us at the start had found a King Rail and a Harlan's Hawk in the same area. Late report of those who stayed with the "hawk of dubious identity" by the lake state that it gave long periods of hovering after we left to support convincingly the Rough-leg identity. Dirk Hagemeyer reports that he saw a Wood Duck at Lake Jackson on the way home.

The area clearly needs to be covered more frequently and should be good for duck later in the winter.

The following participated in the field trip: Mr. and Mrs. Levy Davis (Leaders), Ann and Harry Brister, Nell Ray, J. C. and Ruth Faris, Sarah Gordon, Mary and Jack Gillette, Melba Drake, Don and Marian Washburn, Norma Oates, Frank and Mary Belle Kokesh, Ed and Marion Taylor, Hyrum and Nora Strong, Grace Hayes, Carol and Dan Hayes, Lillian Taylor, Bud Anderson, Wallace C. Mebane, Jr., Dirk Hagemeyer, David Marrack, Paul Marrack, Marilyn Crane, Dick and Orbie Miller, Mabel M. Smith, Ruth Trichel.

WE HAVE ALWAYS HEARD OF A RINGTAIL TOOTER, BUT NOW WE HAVE A RINGTAIL TUTOR!!

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's ringtail has now been named after some 43,364 fifth grade school children had a go at submitting the name. The five-man judging committee selected the name "Tutor" because of the role the small furry animal will play in the conservation education program for the children of the State. Seven youngsters from widely separated areas throughout the State submitted the winning name. To break this tie, Department officials held a game of "Ringtail Roulette" where Tutor Ringtail actually chose the winner. From the center of a six-foot circle on the floor of the photographic studio at Austin headquarters, Tutor Ringtail scampered across the entry submitted by Emma Hypolite, a fifth grader at Pease Elementary School in Midland. She lives at 1206 Chestnut Lane, Midland, and is the daughter of Sergeant and Mrs. Clifton Hypolite. Her father is serving in Vietnam with the U. S. Army engineers. As the official winner in the Name-the-Ringtail Contest, Miss Hypolite will receive approximately \$400 in outdoor recreation equipment donated by Texas merchants, be named game management officer in her hometown for one day, be presented a citation by the Governor in Austin, all-expense-paid visit to Six Flags Over Texas and a five-year subscription of the TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE magazine.

CLEARING HOUSE NOVEMBER, 1968

Grebe, Pied-billed: (1-8) 7 days, Cove, AKM.
Pelican, White: 9 days (600+) 10, Cove, AKM.
Cormorant, Double-crested: (1) 6, (7+) 5, (5) 17, Cove, AKM.
Olivaceous: (3) 18, Cove, AKM.
Nightheron, Black-crowned: (1) 6, 10, 12, (8-10) 3, 16, 17, Cove, AKM.
Bittern, American: (1) 10, 29, Cove, AKM.
Ibis, White-faced: (3) 10, (50-100+) 3, 18, 27, 29, Cove, AKM.
White: (20-30) 3, 27, (100-150) 18, 29, Cove, AKM.
Spoonbill, Roseate: (165+) 6, (10-45) 6 days, Cove, AKM.
Goose, White-fronted: (8) 27, Cove, AKM.
Duck, Mallard: (1-10) 4 days, Cove, AKM.
Mottled: 7 days, (30+) 18, Cove, AKM.
Gadwall: 8 days, (2,000+) 18, Cove, AKM.
Pintail: 16 days, (200+) 3, 24, Cove, AKM.
Teal, Green-winged: 13 days, (100+) 18, 24, Cove, AKM.
Blue-winged: (1) 14, 18, (4 or less) 24, Cove, AKM.
Cinnamon: (1 drake) 3, 16, 18, 24, Cove, AKM. (See Clearing House Notes)
Widgeon, American: 9 days (150+) 10, Cove, AKM.
Shoveler: 11 days (30-50+) 3, 10, 12, 18, 24, 29, Cove, AKM.
Wood: (3) 18, (4) 29, Cove, AKM.

- Duck, Ring-necked: (3-9) 5 days, Cove, AKM.
 Canvasback: 8 days (165) 18, (240+) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Scaup, Lesser: (200+) 17, (1) 19, Cove, AKM.
 Bufflehead: (1) 18, Cove, AKM.
Merganser, Hooded: (6) 23, Sugarland, L&HH.
 Vulture, Black: (1) 3, (18+) 12, Cove, AKM.
 Hawk, Red-tailed: 18 days (17) 12, (20) 17, (21) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Red-shouldered: (1) 16, 18, 25, Cove, AKM.
 White-tailed: (6) Galveston Island 28, Party "A".
 FERRUGINOUS: (1) dark, 3 - my second record, Cove, AKM.
 EAGLE, GOLDEN: (4 immature) 28, Brazos River 1 mile east of Brazoria, Party "A".
PHEASANT, RING-NECKED: (2) 23, Sugarland, L&HH. - Stephen G. Williams in his Checklist of the Birds of the Upper Texas Coast, states: "Introduced into the area around San Jacinto Ordnance Depot and San Jacinto State Park in 1942. Descendants of these birds are seen occasionally but are not ordinarily expected." - Subsequently they have been introduced into other areas in Texas.
 Crane, Sandhill: (19) 18, Cove, AKM.
 Coot, American: 7 days (2,000+) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Plover, Black-bellied: (1) 10, (5) 17, Cove, AKM.
 Woodcock, American: (1) 12, 10215 Chatterton, Dan Hardy: "My mother studied this bird for 20 minutes in yard."
 Snipe, Common: (1-8) 6 days, Cove, AKM.
 Curlew, Long-billed: (50+) 3, (15+) 18, Cove, AKM.
 Sandpiper, Spotted: (1) 6 days, Cove, AKM.
 Willett: (2) 10, (11) 17, Cove, AKM.
 Yellowlegs, Greater: (1-3) 4 days, Cove, AKM.
 Lesser: (2) 18, (6) 24, (1) 29, Cove, AKM.
 Dunlin: (15+) 3, no count 3 days, Cove, AKM.
 Dowitcher: (sp.) 6 days, (100+) 10, Cove, AKM.
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: no count 2 days, Cove, AKM.
 Least: 5 days, Cove, AKM.
 Western: no count 10 days, Cove, AKM.
 Sanderling: (3) 17, Cove, AKM.
 Avocet, American: (22) 10.
 Gull, Herring: (3) 10, Cove, AKM.
 Franklin's: (8-34) 6 days to the 23rd, Cove, AKM.
 Tern, Royal: no count 17 days, Cove, AKM.
 Sandwich: (3) 17, Cove, AKM.
 Caspian: no count 6 days, Cove, AKM.
Dove, Ground: (1) 18, Cove, AKM.
 Owl, Barn: (1) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Kingfisher, Belted: 11 days, (5) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Flicker, Yellow-shafted: 14 days, (5) 26, Cove, AKM.
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: (3) 29, Cove, AKM.
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: (1) 6, 16, 29, Cove, AKM.
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: 1 south of Dayton, 1, Cove, AKM. (reported as a matter of interest even though not in one of our five counties).
 GREAT CRESTED: (1) 23, Sugarland, L&HH.
 Phoebe, Eastern: 7 days, (5) 3, Cove, AKM.
Empidonax species: (1) 11, 10215 Chatterton, Carlene Hardy, Dan Hardy's mother, described the bird as small, prominent wing bars and eye ring, flitting around like a warbler)
 Flycatcher, Vermilion: (2) 16, 18, (3) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Swallow, Tree: (many) 10, (30+) 16, (3) 18, (1) 29, Cove, AKM.
 Bank: (1) 3, Cove, AKM.
 Rough-winged: no count 3, Cove, AKM.
 Barn: (50+) 3, (1) 5, (3) 10, (25+) 16, (4) 18, Cove, AKM.
 Wren, House: (3) 3, (1) 4, Cove, AKM.
 Short-billed Marsh: (2) 10, (1) 16, Cove, AKM.
 Thrush, Hermit: (1) 18, 29, Cove, AKM.
 SWAINSON'S: (1) 24, Eureka Junction, BM.
 Bluebird, Eastern: (2) 17, Cove, AKM; (20+) 23, Bear Creek Park, DHH.
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: (3) 23, Bear Creek Park, DHH.
 Pipit, Water: (1) 16, (200+) 18, (7) 24, (125+) 29, Cove, AKM.
 Vireo, Solitary: (1) 23, 10215 Chatterton, DHH.
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: (2) 18, 29, (1+) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Magnolia: (1) 1, 10215 Chatterton, DHH.
 Myrtle: (100+) 16, (50+) 23, Bear Creek Park, DHH; (1) 24, Cove, AKM.
 Pine: (1) 20, 10215 Chatterton, (1) 23, Bear Creek Park, DHH.

Warbler, Palm: (1) 3, (4) 16, (3) 18, (2) 24, Cove, AKM.
Yellowthroat: (2) 16, (1) 18, 24, Cove, AKM.
BLACKBIRD, RUSTY: (1) 18, Cove, AKM.
Brewer's: (2) 24, Cove, AKM.
Goldfinch, American: (30+) 29, Cove, AKM; (4) 23, Bear Creek Park, no count (24),
10215 Chatterton, DHH.
Sparrow, Seaside: (1) 10, Cove, AKM.
Vesper: (1) 2, Cove, AKM.
JUNCO, SLATE-COLORED: (1) 16, Bear Creek Park, DHH.
Sparrow, Chipping: (10) 16, Bear Creek Park, DHH.
Field: (3) 16, Bear Creek Park, DHH; (1) 18, Cove, AKM.
White-crowned: (2) 18, (20+) 24, Cove, AKM.
Lincoln's: (2+) 16, (1) 24, Cove, AKM.
Swamp: (1) 10, 12, 29, (2+) 16, Cove AKM; (2) 16, Bear Creek Park, DHH.
Song: (1) 24, 29, Cove, AKM.

Contributors to Clearing House:

Party "A"	Bud Anderson, Marian and Dan Washburn
CH	Carlene Hardy
DHH	Dan H. Hardy
L&HH	Louise and Henry Hoffman
AKM	Arlie McKay
BM	Bill McClure

Clearing House Notes:

Cinnamon Teal: "The first 3 times 2 other teals with blue wings were with it, the last time only one. On the 24th I found a dead and crippled Canvasback. The ducks were much more shy. I flushed 2 teal with blue wings and supposed the drake had been shot. Then I flushed a drake and another teal both blue-winged; then I flushed the pair of Cinnamon Teal. I suspect they were a pair, and there had been only two."

SAVE BEAR CREEK FOR PARKS! an article appearing in the Houston Chronicle December 15, 1968

"The lure of cheap leased land has stimulated another commercial proposal for the Bear Creek Park area. The new promotion is a 154-acre amusement park. The promoters should not be permitted to use public land for private profit. Recently another private-use proposal for this land--a spread of about 26,000 acres in the Addicks area-- was finally rejected by the Corps of Engineers which holds the acreage for flood control purposes. The first promotion was an Indianapolis-style speedway. There is nothing bad about building a speedway but there was no reason to build it on public land. The same applies to the amusement park.

In both of these cases the Harris County Commissioners have endorsed the proposals. We do not understand why they are so willing to lease the land which should be developed as a county park. It would hardly be fair to blame the promoters for their efforts. It would be much cheaper for them to lease the land than to buy a site. But no promoter should get this benefit which would have the adverse result of tying up land that can be developed for park use. . . . In not too many years the city will surround Bear Creek Park. It would be indefensible to split off large chunks of that land for non-park use. It appears that attempts to do just that will continue to crop up unless the county, or the city and county together, devise a master plan for development of the land. It is not too early to draft such a plan, and if these guidelines were established, some of these commercial promotions would never get off the ground. This acreage is a major asset which can become an immensely important part of the Houston environment and image with sensible development. A Coney-Island approach may reap some immediate profits for private investors, but the public would lose a recreation and park area which could not be matched by any other major city in the nation." - -

The Editors thought that the Chronicle expressed the sentiments of the members of the Outdoor Nature Club much better than we could. When are the County Commissioners going to stop their GIVE AWAY plans in regard to this area and cooperate in attempting to maintain it as a park?? We can let them know our feelings by writing to them, the Corps of Engineers, the city of Houston officials, etc.

COMING EVENTS:

- * January 12, Sunday: Regular OG Field Trip. Leader Dave Marrack. Meet at Dewalt on Route 6. (S. E. of Sugarland) at 7:45 A. M., and proceed after examining the lake to the S. E., on to Arcola and thence to Sandy Point and turn west.
- January 14, Tuesday: Regular meeting of ONC at the Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive, 8:00 P. M. The program: "Gem and Mineral Collecting in South America" by Dr. Albert L. Kidwell.
- January 19, Sunday: Regular ONC Field Trip. Leader: Linda Snyder (Mrs. J. A. Snyder). Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Meeting place and time in next Nature Notes.
- * January 25, Saturday: Regular OG Field Trip to Sheldon Reservoir. Take U. S. 90 to Fauna, turn left on Fauna Road and travel to Garret Road, turn right and travel to first group of buildings on right (Reservoir Headquarters). Meet there at 6:45. Mr. Bill Brummel, the Manager, will lead a trip in the Reservoir area.
- January 27, Monday: Audubon Wildlife Film, The speaker: Dr. William J. Jahoda, his subject: "Nature's Ways." Greater Houston Builders Auditorium, 2710 West Alabama, 8:00 P. M., usual dinner Suzanne's Cafeteria. "Nature's Ways" opens in the winter, on a quiet, snow-covered world, when animal populations are at a low ebb. Gradually, this world begins to thaw, and the awakening of nature is revealed. Through the seasons we follow the pageant of animal activity, as creatures from microscopic protozoa to big game animals interact in their natural environments, struggling for survival, preying and falling prey, in the fantastic design of life.

Let's save a page by not listing the officers. HAPPY NEW YEAR TO OUR READERS - the Eds.



Return Postage Guaranteed
Houston, Texas 77005
1746 Wexton Court
(Ornithology Group)
Outdoor Nature Club

*end of Quintana
Jetties
go to east bank
on rock beyond tower*

*89
Doc*

