



THE SPOONBILL

VOLUME VII No. 8

DECEMBER 1958

 *Spoonbills, often called pink curlews, are cou-
 *sins of the egrets. They live in tropical and *
 *subtropical countries and only one species, our
 own roseate spoonbill, comes north to the U. S.
 *Its very odd bill is not used as a scoop, but *
 *is swung back and forth in muddy water to pick *
 *up killifishes, small prawn and water insects. *
 *In spite of the fact that its plumage was not *
 *valued by milliners as it fades too quickly, *
 *the plume hunters nearly exterminated the bird *
 *as its plumes were popular for making fans. *
 The shyness of the spoonbill during nesting sea
 son and tendency to be frightened from the rook
 *eries by the plume hunters, was another factor *
 *in its near extermination. *

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

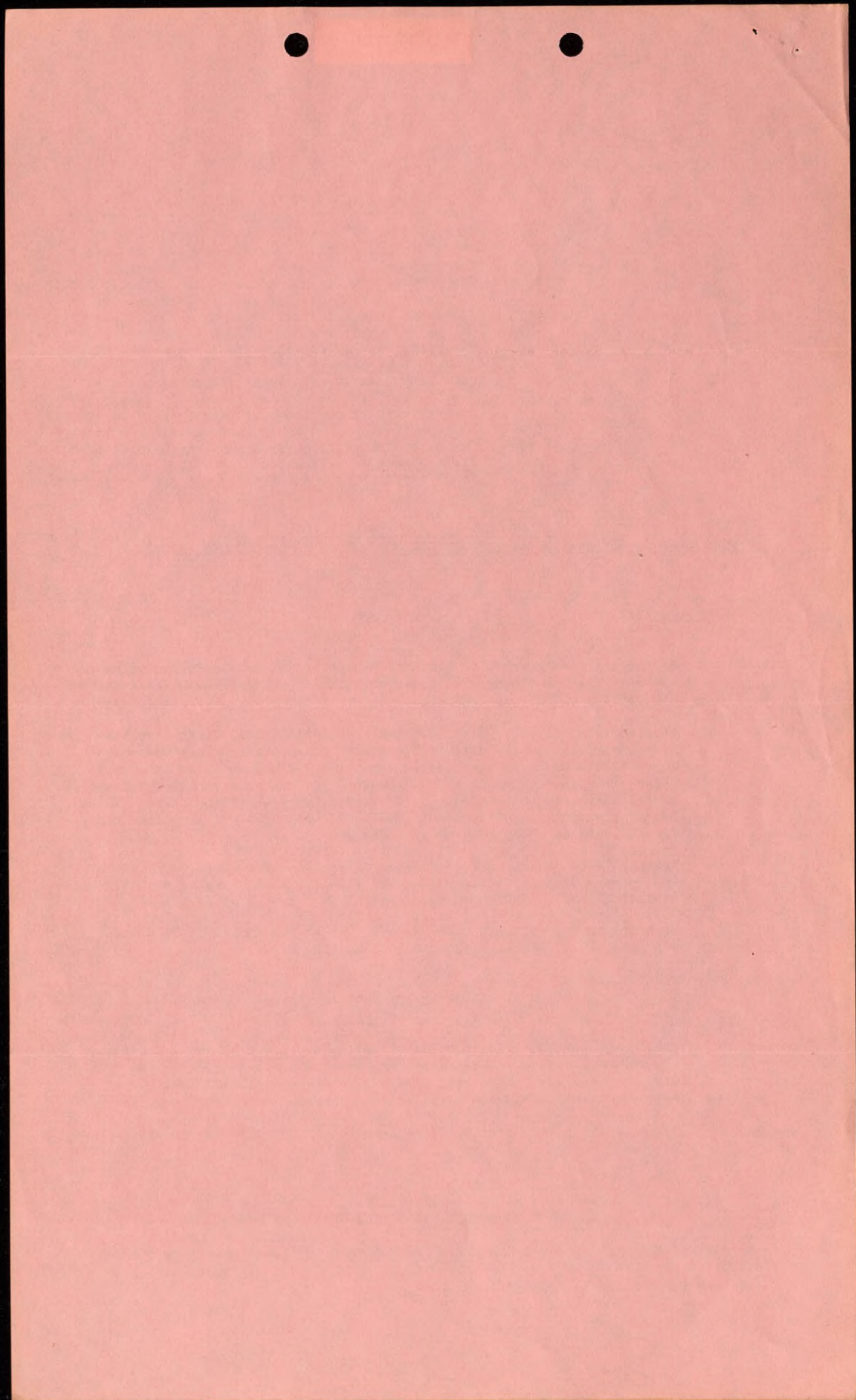
FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

- December 15 Another of the interesting lectures brought to us by the Museum of Natural History. Karl Robinson will speak on "Brazil" at the Prudential Auditorium at 8:15 p.m.
- December 21 The really, really big day: our annual CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. Further information follows, but this is the place to say that you are wanted. The more birders we have, the more we see. You don't have to be an expert; there will others in your party who are. You can make yourself valuable by recording, sighting birds, or driving. The main thing you need is to be nutty enough to get up in the middle of the night and bird like crazy for at least 12 cold, cold hours. Can you qualify?
- Sometime between the 25th & 1st Freeport area Christmas Bird Count. If you are interested in participating, please contact Vic Emanuel at Mo 7-0612. This is an interesting and rewarding area. You may also contact Ronald Fowler at Ho 5-4223
- January 13 1959 Regular meeting of the Outdoor Nature Club at the Garden Center, 8:00 p.m. Mr. Ed Kilman will speak on Texas State Parks.
- January 14 Audubon Screen Tour with ROGER TORY PETERSON. The subject: Wild America. Mr. Peterson is a thoroughly charming speaker and we are most fortunate to have him here.
- January 18 ORNITHOLOGY GROUP field trip led by Norma Oates, who plans to show us the sandhill cranes, duck, geese, and other wintering birds. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Forest Park West Cemetery, north side, Dairy Ashford at Westheimer (north side of Westheimer, that is).
- January 24 ONC field trip led by Mr. Charles Aves to the Texas State Forest at Conroe.

INFORMATION ON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

As most of you know, the date of the 1958 Christmas bird count has been changed to December 21st.

Section leaders are as follows:



- SECTION 1 - L. A. M. Barnette, 4801 Linden, Bellaire - Ma3-4200
- SECTION 2 - Mrs. Eva Gilman, 10110 Telephone Road - Mi 9-7716
- SECTION 3 - Mrs. Norma Oates, 5908 Charlotte, - Ma 3-6140
- SECTION 4 - A. K. McKay, Rte 2, Box 184, Baytown
or Vic Emanuel, 2228 Dorrington - Mo 7-0612
- SECTION 5 - Steve Williams - 2732 University - Ma 3-1573
- SECTION 6 - Mrs. J. A. Snyder, Box 3095, Baytown - LaPorte 7643
Dr. Ernest P. Edwards, 5230 Grape Road - Mo 4-2115

The area and sections are the same as last year, and all who desire to participate are requested to contact the leader of the section in which they prefer to operate, which leader will issue the necessary instructions.

Instructions, lists and maps are being furnished each of the section leaders, and additional copies are available if needed.

Please remember that the National Audubon Society requires a fifty cent (50¢) fee from each participant, to assist in defraying the cost of publication of the results.

Let's make every effort to lead the nation this year.

Clayton B. Gilman, chairman

ORNITHOLOGY GROUP REPORTS:

O. G. FIELD TRIP TO SHELDON RESERVOIR - - - - - REPORTED BY BEN FELTNER

On November the 9th at 7:30 a.m. a group of ornithology addicts assembled at Sears parking lot on Wayside and Harrisburg, under a heavy shroud of fog. Enthusiasm ran high, however, and we were soon on our way to Sheldon Reservoir under the proficient leadership of Jimmie Murray.

The initial stop was made on a cut-off road between Park Drive and Sheldon. Here the habitat was comprised of open pine woods cluttered with slash piles and second growth brush. Chickadees, titmice and gnatcatchers were found in profusion along with lesser numbers of whitethroats, pine and myrtle warblers. A pleasant surprize was afforded several members of the group when a short-billed marsh wren was flushed from a palmetto clump. The tiny mite was completely fearless, and after scrutinizing the observers for several seconds continued unperturbed to forage in the undergrowth in a manner more becoming a mouse than a bird. Before adjourning for first coffee break we observed and added to the growing list: red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-shafted flicker and eastern towhee.

The ride to Sheldon was briefly interrupted twice, once for a downy woodpecker, and again for a mysterious bird, which proved to be a bunch of dead oak leaves animated by the wind. At the reservoir, birds were found in amplitude and variety wherever one looked. A resplendent male vermilion flycatcher posed long enough for most alert binoculars to find him, and then disappeared. Elsewhere coots, American egrets, Louisiana herons, pied-billed grebes, belted kingfishers and anhingas were turned up. The latter monopolized the dead cypress trees to the extent, that birds and trees together presented an effect not at all unlike giant candleabras. The high mark of the day, I think, must be accredited to the ducks at Sheldon. Of the ten species observed, the majority were lesser scaup and fulvous tree ducks, a sprinkling of redheads and canvasbacks were distributed throughout the lake, and occasional ruddy's could be seen. Clinton Snyder turned up a pot hole, which, with the aid of the balscope yielded a harvest of pintails, mallards, baldpate and gadwall presenting a kaleidoscopic potpourri of color against the dark green of aquatic vegetation, and everyone was afforded ample opportunity to study them. It may be added that before leaving Sheldon one undesirable specimen of Red-faced Duck Poacher was flushed and successfully put to flight. This miserable creature became shy and elusive while under observation; and showed marked wisdom in repairing to cover on discovering the presence of his natural enemies; the conservationists!

We held luncheon in an informal manner as the guests of Jimmie Murray at his San Jacinto River place. Here some members sauntered off on impromptu tours turning up the local hermit thrush and a pileated woodpecker, while others admired the glorious fruiting dogwoods arrayed along the drive. The waggish Mr. Gilman (a veritable storehouse of information) promptly heightened my gross ignorance by sallying off on a botanical classi-



cation spree, pointing out in particular a dainty white orchid I've probably overlooked for years.

The afternoon birding which was equally rewarding as the morning consisted of a trip to the Baytown tunnel via Lynchberg and San Jacinto Battlegrounds. A solitary late scissor-tail was predicted and found for us by Jimmie Murray along the Lynchberg Road. At the battlegrounds, a large flotilla of white pelicans lay offshore seemingly in deep thought, while avocets, Forster's terns and herons kept us busy checking off species.

The backdrop of sunset set the stage for the finale of the day as we had a last bout with HORNED GREBES, clapper rails, and western sandpipers at the tunnel.

Seventy odd species were observed by a satisfied group: included were the wood duck, red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk, marsh hawk, kestrel, red-headed woodpecker, ring-necked duck, blue goose, snow goose, black-crowned night heron, eastern phoebe, song sparrow, white-throated sparrow, royal tern, and double-crested cormorant.

Present on this field trip were the following: Jerry Baker, Josephine Wilkin, Mr. and Mrs. J. Robert Deshayes, Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Lynch, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Goodwin, Bess, Walter and Lee Barbare, Mary Clark, Helen and Ella Wolfer, Carolyn Simmons, Edna Miner, Darris Massingill, D. A. Deaver, Ben Feltner, Eva and Clayton Gilman, Jimmy Murray.

* * * * *

To the editor of the SPOONBILL from Dudley A. Deaver:

"I am a relatively new birdwatcher. I have only been active since early April of this year. I am very fortunate, however, in that my home is located at the edge of a large, heavily grassed and bushy prairie just south of Pasadena city limits off Red Bluff Road. Today I spent the early morning hours and the hours just before twilight tramping across this prairie for the first time. Sighted: 3 Sprague's pipits, a short-billed marsh wren (there are a few marshy areas in this meadow) and numerous Savannah sparrows. In the late afternoon, my companion, Trevor Feltner and I sighted a sparrow hawk on the far side of the meadow. To me this seems an excellent area. I have had killdeers in my back yard every since I began noticing them. Last Spring a lesser yellowlegs spent a couple of weeks in my back yard. Trevor and I also flushed a green heron last Spring. I plan to make steady periodic check of this area, probably every weekend, and I will keep you posted. This is probably nothing exciting to experienced birders but I find something new almost every time I go out.

Yours truly,
Dudley A. Deaver

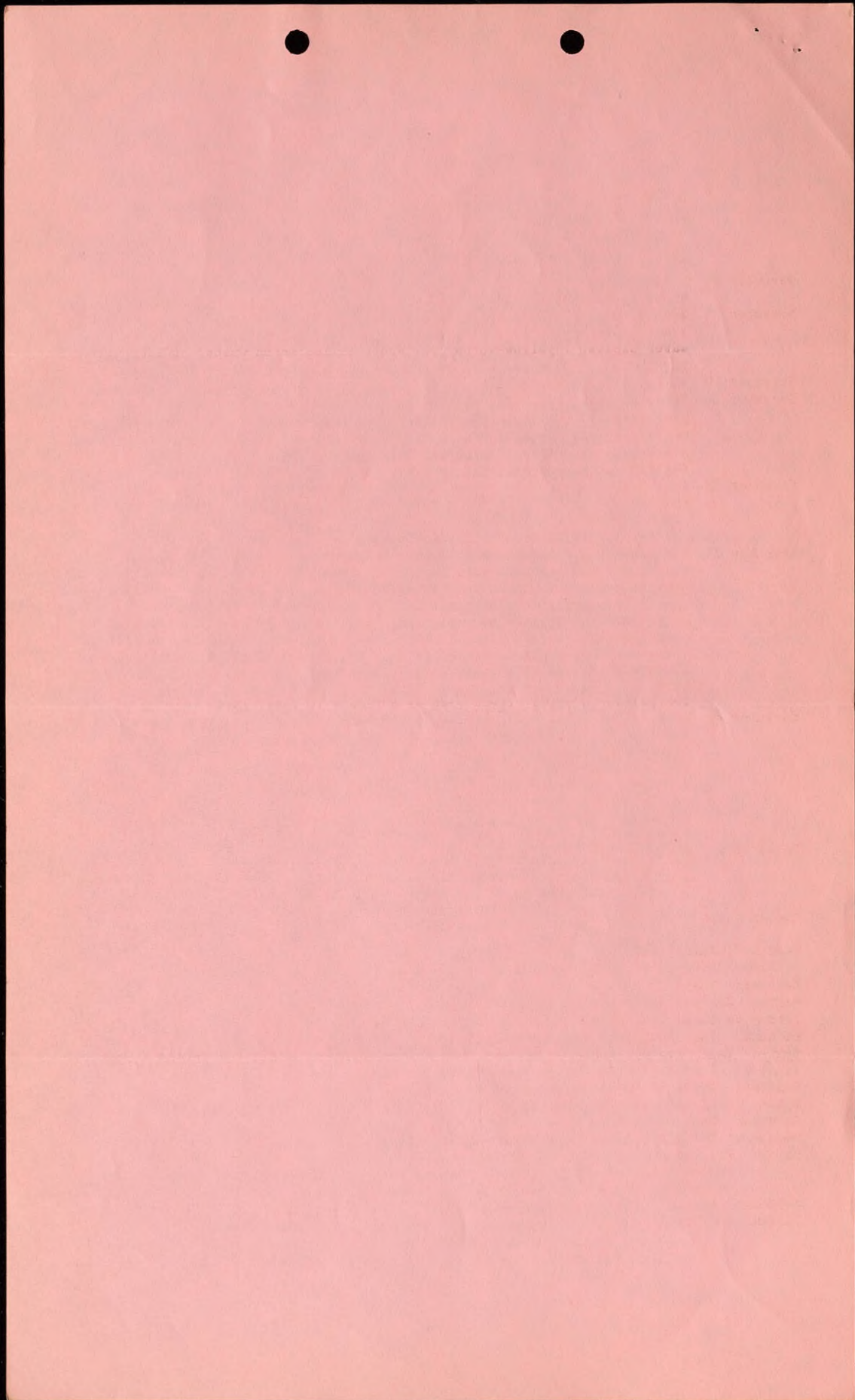
* * * * *

We find new and pleasant surprises in our back yard too. This year for the first time the yellow-bellied sapsucker visits the suet and cocconut feeders regularly. The biggest thrill is to see that nervous little mite, the ruby-crowned kinglet, picking up and discarding bits of hen scratch on the feeder until he comes to a piece that strikes his fancy! He is less choosy about the suet, however, and eats heartily from a sort of straddle legged stance. Seen in the open like that, he is quite brilliantly colored and often shows the ruby crown.

* * * * *

CLEARING HOUSE:

- October 29 Seen by Ben Feltner east of Galena Park: 4 Nashville warblers, great horned owl, and solitary vireo.
- November 9 Two house wrens seen by Hoffmans in their yard. Are still around and very much at home.
Austin Evans reports seeing an osprey at Freeport. Some avocets are seen every day.
- November 11 The Barbare report the following seen at McGregor Park: downy and red-bellied woodpeckers, 12 yellow-shafted flickers, chickadee, blue-gray gnat-catcher, tufted titmouse, hermit thrush, pine warbler. In the wooded area just east of the University of Houston: ruby-crowned kinglets, Nashville warbler, kestrel, brown thrasher.
Seen by the Stricklings on a circuit out Memorial and around Sugarland:



- Ducks: 20 gadwall on a pond, 500 mallard in a rice field, 200 pintail in the same field and a number of baldpate. Geese seen were: 500 plus blue, 2000 plus snowy, and 20 white-fronted. Sparrows: 15 Savannah, 5 vesper, a number of white-throats. Warblers: 5 pine warblers and one yellow-throated. 1 pileated woodpecker.
- November 13 Brown creeper, ruby-crowned kinglet, yellow-bellied sapsucker, many chickadees, pine warbler, house wren, chipping sparrows seen by Hoffmans in yard.
- November 15 Seen by Dudley Deaver and Ben Feltner at east reservoir off Barber's Hill Road: 1 swamp sparrow, 53 Savannah sparrows, 115 plus meadow larks, 150 water pipits, 1 yellow-throat, 17 short-billed marsh wrens, 31 long-billed marsh wrens. 20 spoonbills at Tunnel. 2 Sprague's pipits at Pasadena.
- November 19 White-throated sparrows at Hoffman feeders.
- November 20 Birds seen by Charlotte Reindl from her window - Woodland Park: 2 blue-gray gnatcatchers, 1 brown creeper, 2 ruby-crowned kinglets, Carolina wren, shrike, 4 flickers, 1 downy woodpecker, 4 sapsuckers, 2 red-bellied woodpeckers, brown thrasher, pair of cardinals, mocking birds, doves, blue jay, English sparrows. All were seen within one hour.
- November 22 Seen by Dudley and Ben east of Galena Park and the Tunnel: white-throated sparrow, Nashville warbler, ruby-crowned kinglet, house wren, pileated woodpecker, eared grebe, avocets, black-bellied plover, marsh hawk, semipalmated plover, lesser scaup, royal and Forster's terns.
- November 23 The Stricklings and the Barbares took the Balscope on a bird trip to the tunnel and Anahuac and saw some "good" birds. The usual plus some unusuals. 6 eared grebes, 3 HORNED GREBES (had two eared grebes and one horned grebe in the Balscope at the same time) 12 to 15 Bonaparte's gulls, 8 marsh hawks, 4 red-shouldered hawks, 6 red-tailed hawks, 30 white-faced glossy ibis, 200 American pipits, robin, 2 yellow-bellied sapsuckers, 20 white-throated sparrows, 2 white-crowned sparrows, 3 solitary vireos, 1 WHITE*EYED VIREO, one ROUGH*WINGED swallow, 3 common tern, 1 orange-crowned warbler, 6 pine warblers
- Two yellow-throated vireos seen by Hoffmans in their yard.
- November 29 Seen in Horseshoe Bend east of Galena Park by Dudley Deaver and Ben Feltner: American bittern, bluebird, 4 wood ducks, 23 purple finches, yellow-shafted flicker, American goldfinch, red-shouldered hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, sparrow hawk, blue jay, 3 PINK-SIDED JUNCO, barred owl, robins, white-throated sparrows, solitary vireo, myrtle, pine and Nashville warblers, downy and red-bellied woodpeckers, Carolina and house wrens, BLACK-THROATED GREY WARBLER. The latter was an adult male and was seen twice. Feltner was familiar with it as he had seen the species many times in New Mexico.
- December 6 Sharp-shinned hawk in yard by Henry Hoffman

Quoted (sort of) from Clifton Fadiman's new book:

RANDOM CONVERSATIONS:

H. Allen Smith: "At my house the latest time-waster is two bird feeders -

Fadiman: What?

Smith: You put birdseed in it and leave it outside your window.

Jerone Weidman: You mean you feed strange birds?

Fadiman: That you don't know formally?

Smith: Well, you put these things out, and you're supposed to get all manner of magnificent birds as guests during the winter social season.

Weidman: Doesn't it depend on the kind of table you set?

Smith: Well, you use two kinds of foods-

Weidman: Good and bad.

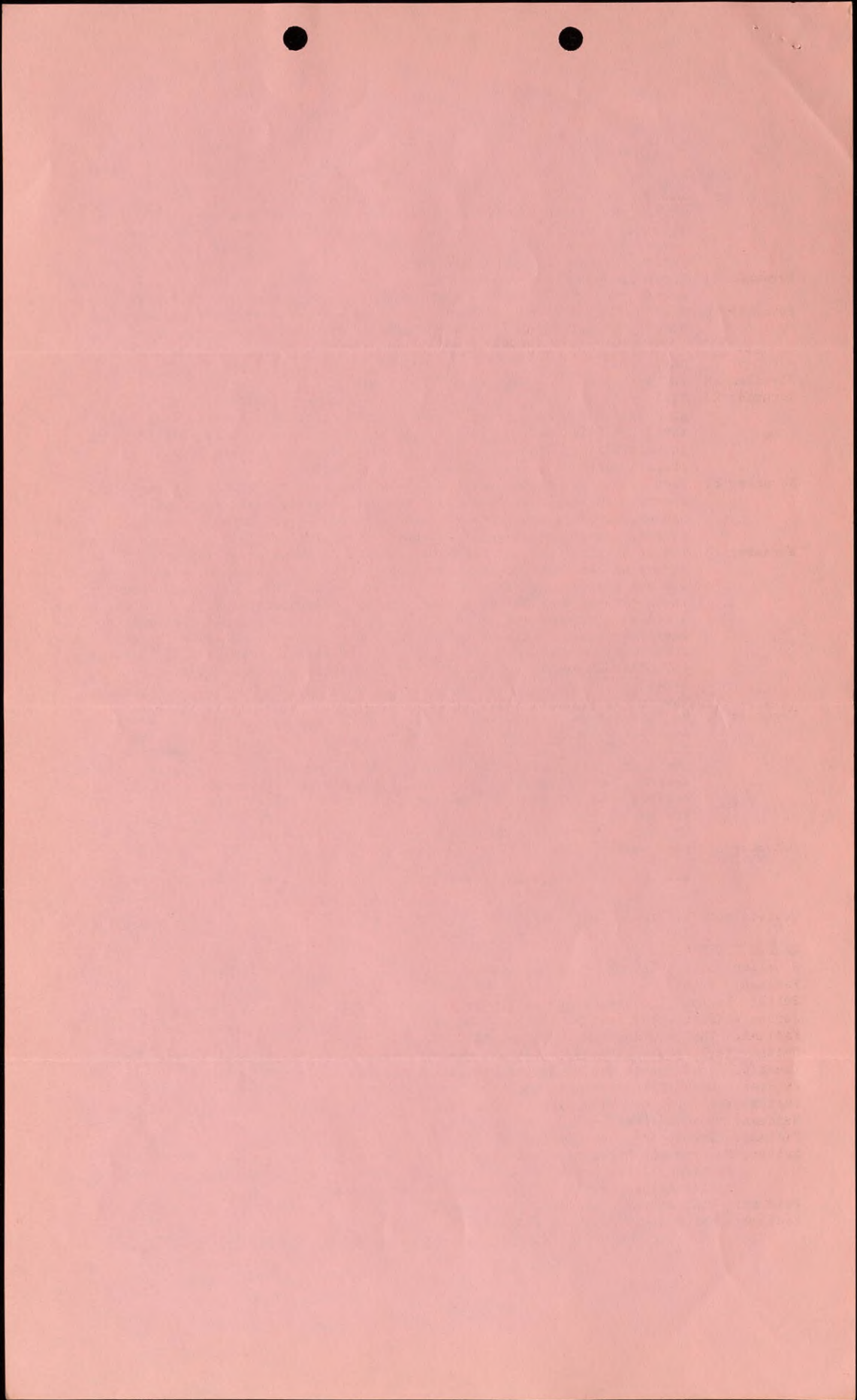
Fadiman: For upper-class and lower-class birds.

Smith: No, you put birdseed in one feeder and suet in another. This attracts two kinds of birds. This winter I've wasted in it's entirety. I've looked at ten thousand chickadees all exactly alike, and two woodpeckers.

Weidman: What do the woodpeckers eat, suet?

Fadiman: Naturally, the other food is unsuited to them!"

Alright, alright, I'm sorry. So sue me!



Your editor has at hand a fascinating little deal put out by the Department of the Interior in 1878 entitled: NOTES ON THE ORNITHOLOGY OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE OF TEXAS, FROM OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING THE SEASON OF 1877, by George B. Sennett. Edited with annotations by Dr. Elliott Coues.

Unless you holler mighty loud (and why should you holler, I'm the guy who has to figure out who the birds with the Latin names are) I'd like to run parts of it from time to time.

I take it that many of our birds take their names from these two ornithologists, don't you? Sennett's white-tailed hawk, for instance. As I go along I'll try to compare their lists with our present findings for this area. This is gonna be fun!

Here are some notes from Sennett's letter of transmittal:

"I set out for Texas on February 23d of the present year (1877) On the evening of the 20th of March, we arrived at Brownsville, our objective point. My plan was to work down the lower coast of Texas and arrive at Brownsville, as a base of future operations, before the breeding season had fairly commenced. We were exactly two months on the southern border. The country worked over lay between Point Isabel, a point a few miles above Hidalgo, embracing a distance of a hundred miles by road or 300 miles by river." (Then, as now, the Yankees were complaining bitterly about Texas, for he says: "On some days the weather was intensely hot ... We were constantly on the alert for huge rattlesnakes, tarantulas and centipedes, yet more troublesome enemies were with us continually in the shape of wood-ticks and red-bugs" (Just in case you are interested, their method of prevention was an ammonia bath each night and a daily bath of kerosene before going into the brush) Sennett claims that under such circumstances it requires courage and enthusiasm to persevere in any pursuit, and I think he's got something there!

The result of the trip was the securing of some 500 birds, three of which were new to our fauna and one new to science.

Here are some of the birds he saw in 1877 and in each case I will try to compare his findings with present conditions for the area:

MOCKINGBIRD - First seen in great numbers at Corpus Christi. Abundant everywhere on the Rio Grande. He complains about being fooled by their imitation of the chachalaca.

LONG-BILLED THRUSH: (Wolfe calls him the long-billed thrasher, *Toxostoma longirostre sennetti*) He found this bird next to the mockingbird in point of numbers but a check list of birds of Laguna Atascosa lists it as uncommon now. Wolfe lists it as being restricted to area 7. Santa Ana lists it as common in all seasons.

CURVE-BILLED THRUSH (thrasher to us) Not so common as the long-billed thrasher at that time. Now listed as common in Brownsville. Sennett says also that he did not encounter the bird until he came to Brownsville.

BLUEBIRD: Sennett saw only one pair of bluebirds on the Rio Grande - near Hidalgo. He is still listed as occasional to rare for Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana.

BLUE-GRAY GNAT-CATCHER: Sennett had only seen this bird once or twice. Found a nest in April near Brownsville. Now listed as abundant in Santa Ana and Laguna Atascosa except in the summer.

BLACK CRESTED TITMOUSE: These lively and sweet singers were everywhere abundant, says Sennett. He had difficulty finding the eggs. Now the bird is uncommon in Laguna Atascosa but common in Santa Ana.

YELLOW HEADED TITMOUSE: This one threw me! Turns out it is the verdin. Sennett comments on the beauty of the nest, far excelling all other bird architecture. The nests were found in open chaparral country. Birds were by no means abundant. Now it is reported as common in Laguna and uncommon in Santa Ana.

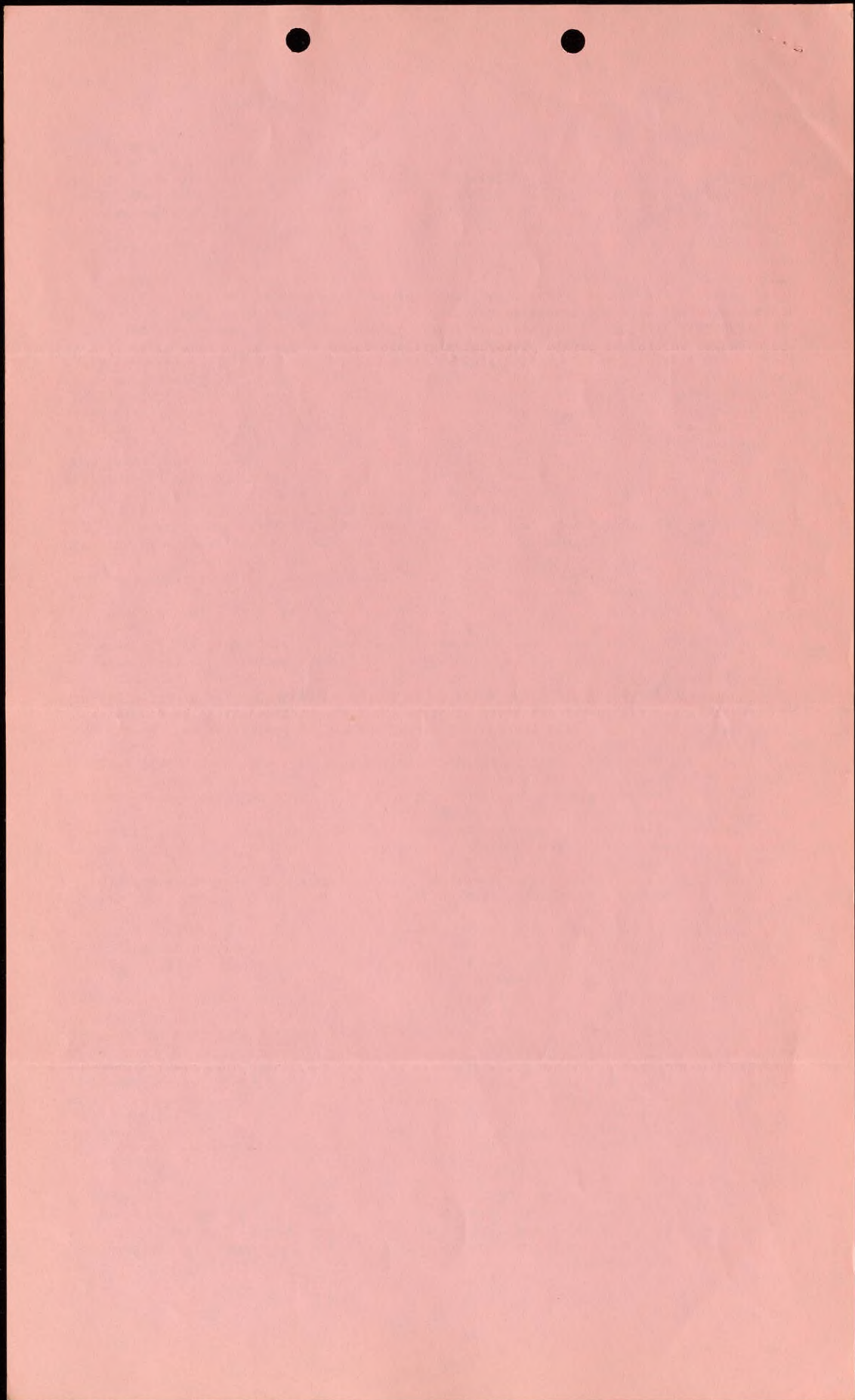
BERLANDIER'S WREN: I just couldn't find this under the name he gives it: *thyrothorus ludovicianus* (that much is Carolina wren) *Berlandieri*, but wonder if it might be the Carolina wren (*Lomita*) which is now uncommon in Santa Ana and Laguna. Sennett found it to be common on the Lower Rio Grande.

BEWICK'S WREN: As common on the southern border as the house wren in the north. He found them nesting in the woods and most abundantly in the brush fences. They are abundant to common in both refuges now.

Sennett found no house wrens though they are now common to abundant in Fall and winter in both valley refuges now.

HORNED LARK: First found by Sennett on the dry sandy ridges adjoining the salt marshes. Seen often with the horned larks were McCown's longspur (Sennett called it bunting just to throw me off) Still seen in Brownsville area but not Galveston.

MISSOURI SKYLARK: This one after a bit of detective work turned out to be our Sprague's pipit! We call it a JWR but he says "I think this bird has not before been noticed so far south" This is where he saw it in Galveston "South of Galveston, just without the city limits, are lagoons and salt marshes. The low ridges dividing them are covered sparsely with grass, and, as in other sandy tracts, all of the tall grass grows



in clumps or hummocks" Sennett had difficulty in distinguishing it as he and Coues claim that our southern Sprague's pipit has a soiled appearance as compared to the northern one.

BLUE YELLOW-BACKED WARBLER: You guessed it the first time - parula warbler! I'm going to quote his very charming story with your and, I hope, Uncle Sam's permission: "Just before we sighted land, imagine our surprise and joy to see a little blue yellow-backed warbler on our mast. It soon flew down to the sail, and thence to the deck, where it felt quite at home. Our sailor caught him, and he was passed around for all to admire and pet. It would nestle in our hands and enjoy the warmth without the least fear ... Often he would fly to one or the other of us, as we were lying on the deck, and into our hands and faces, with the utmost familiarity."

SENNETT'S WARBLER: I believe this would correspond to the warbler Wolfe calls an olive-backed warbler or parula pitiaiyumi nigrilora Coues. The Latin name given by Sennett is parula nigrilora, Coues. Wolfe feels that it is probably now a summer resident in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Santa Ana lists it as olive-backed warbler (Sennett's) and gives it as a nesting bird in the area. Sennett found it more abundant than any other warbler in a "mezquite timber of the old resaca, within a mile of town" (Hidalgo)

"It was a constant surprize to me while on the Rio Grande that so few warblers were to be seen" so says Sennett. What say you?

NASHVILLE WARBLER: The only specimen seen was in the dense woods in the vicinity of Hidalgo. Now in Laguna it is still occasional to uncommon, but in Santa Ana it is common.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: Only one specimen taken at a lagoon near Brownsville. It was impossible to save the specimen on account of the heat. Now common at Santa Ana but seen only occasionally in the Fall at Laguna.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER: Specimen taken near Hidalgo. Now listed as uncommon in both refuges except common in the Spring in Santa Ana.

YELLOW RUMPED WARBLER: Right you are! The myrtle warbler it is! Conspicuous among the birds seen at Padre Island and also Brownsville. Some were said to remain all summer on the southern border. Laguna gives them as abundant, but not summer residents, as does Santa Ana. Wolfe doesn't give them as a summer resident anywhere in Texas.

YELLOW THROATED WARBLER: The specimen described is subspecies albilora or Sycamore a yellow-throated warbler in which the eye stripe is entirely white. Now occasional to uncommon in both refuges.

LARGE BILLED WATER THRUSH: This is our Louisiana water thrush. Seen flitting through the branches near the ground and never at rest. Thought not abundant as he didn't see others and was often in places favorable for them. Now they are listed as rare and seen only in Spring in both refuges.

YELLOW BREASTED CHAT: Commonly seen but more frequently heard. Sennett thinks them by far the finest singers of all our birds. Now are listed as common in summer but not other seasons in Laguna. Santa Ana lists them as abundant in Spring and summer but uncommon in Fall and winter.

REDSTART: Several species seen at Hidalgo in April. Now seen uncommonly in fall and winter, but commonly in the spring at both refuges.

SUMMER REBIRD: Latin name given is *Pyrranga Aestiva* and I can't locate any tanager called *aestiva*, though I suppose this is just our summer tanager. Seen frequently by Sennett as they are now in Santa Ana in the spring and summer. Occasional in Laguna.

BARN SWALLOW: Not noticed on the Rio Grande but when the party's steamer was opposite Galveston, several flew about them, almost in their faces, and alighting on deck.

WHITE-BELLIED SWALLOW: This is our tree swallow. Commonly seen by Sennett from Indianola to Point Isabel and about lagoons in Brownsville. After April 1 they were no longer seen.

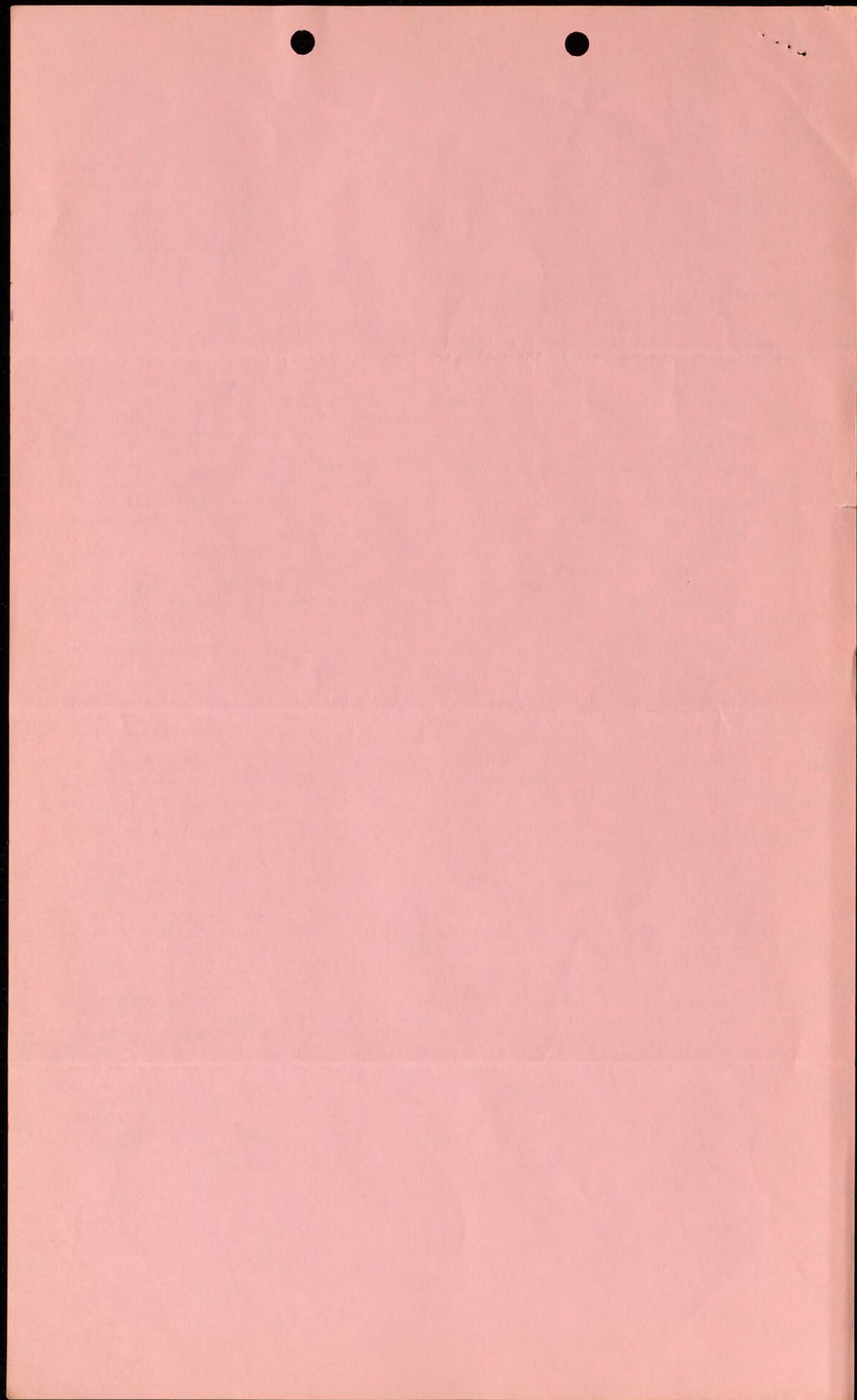
CLIFF SWALLOW: None were seen lower down the river than Hidalgo much to Sennett's wonder for the conditions seemed quite as favorable for them at Brownsville or Matamoros as at points above. In the absence of cliffs in Hidalgo, the birds adapted themselves to the eaves of the buildings in town. They were especially numerous on the court-house Sennett comments on the intense gregariousness of these swallows. They are now uncommon in both refuges, but does anyone know if they still inhabit the Hidalgo court house?

CEDAR BIRD: At Lemita Ranch some seven miles above Hidalgo, Sennett was surprised to see a flock of birds. On securing a specimen, it turned out to be the familiar cherry bird of the north, our own cedar waxwing. He comments on the fact that in the north they can tolerate 12 degrees below zero and were in Hidalgo as late as May 8.

RED-EYED VIREO: One species secured in Hidalgo on April 30. Uncommon now for Laguna Atascosa and not listed for Santa Ana.

WHITE-EYED VIREO: Migrating pair seen in Brownsville. Listed as common for both refuges.

BELL'S VIREO: Single specimen taken at Hidalgo in small bush under ebony tree. He saw nothing of its habits. It is rare and seen only in the Spring at Santa Ana now.



LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: Common. Preferring the openings near towns to wooded districts
 MCCOWN'S BUNTING: or longspur. Found only in Galveston. When flushed they darted from side to side, taking a swift, irregular course, never very high, and suddenly drop down among the grass tussocks with their head toward you. He doubted if they extended farther south than Galveston. Wolfe claims it is seen further south, but not now in the Galveston area or east of there.

SAVANNA SPARROW: Sure I know how to spell. I'm just copying. Species found near Brownsville but not at Hidalgo. Found in tall grass in old resaca beds.

WESTERN GRASS FINCH: Here we go again. This one turns out to be Baird's sparrow. Can't be too hasty about this translating from Latin to English, I find. For a moment I thought it was a vesper! Two specimens secured near Hidalgo and Brownsville. Listed now at Laguna Atascosa only in the spring and then, rarely.

"From the nature of the country, all of the ground birds are extremely difficult to study. The great abundance of impenetrable thickets give them convenient and safe cover at all times. I will say here that during the whole trip not a single nest of the number of small birds was found on the ground or in a low bush."

SEASIDE FINCH: This is our seaside sparrow, subspecies Sennetti. Found at Galveston. He thought that it resided in the area the year round, and we list it now as a 4R.

LINCOLN'S FINCH: You know who! Seen in small flocks near Brownsville. They were quite shy!

CASSIN'S FINCH: Sparrow to us. He did not meet with it above Brownsville. Very shy. At the first sight of man it darted into the thickest of bushes and was with difficulty flushed out. Very distinctive song. Common at Santa Ana.

BLACK-THROATED FINCH: These beautiful little sparrows, almost as restless as titmice, were found in all suitable localities on the Rio Grande. "There is a bush on the Rio Grande, whose name I could not learn, common in exposed and dry places, usually on barren knolls bordering the resacas, whose scanty leaves are so small that it at all times presents a dull and lifeless appearance. It is this bush that the black-throated finches like to frequent."

CHIPPING SPARROW: No comment other than species identified at Hidalgo, May 1 and 4

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: Only one specimen taken and nothing noted on its habits. It is however, listed as common in both refuges.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: Abundant about hedges, fences and thickets near Brownsville. Seen together with lark sparrow.

LARK FINCH: This sparrow common about Brownsville but scarce farther up the river. Seen sometimes in broken flocks and again apparently in pairs. Now listed as common.

BLACK-THROATED BUNTING: This time I thought I had met my Waterloo! The Latin name given is *Euspiza Americana* and I searched wildly in Peterson, Pough and Wolfe under that name. No luck. Then I tried each sparrow with its Latin name in all three. The I tried all the buntings. Finally I looked in the general species area in Wolfe and found *Spiza Americana*, and that is it, and it is a dickcissel. Maybe I should have known after Sennett said that he found them in open woodland in the company of blue grosbeaks and orioles

"On the northern end of Padre Island, in the middle of March, I saw more of the migration of our northern birds than during the remainder of my stay in Texas, although I was on the island but three or four days."

Don't forget to get in on the Christmas count. Don't be bashful about it, just call one of the leaders and get information. Help us have big things to report in the next SPOONBILL.

Outdoor Nature Club
(Ornithology Group)
402 Sue St.
Houston 22, Texas
Return Postage Guaranteed

