The JOURNAL OF LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGY is published twice yearly by the LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 88 Egret St., New Orleans, La. 70124. The Editors are David P. Muth and Robert D. Purrington. Manuscripts are solicited on any aspect of Louisiana ornithology or on any issue which is pertinent to an understanding of the birdlife of Louisiana. Articles, news and notes from the field, and literature reviews may address questions of identification, seasonal or geographic distribution, behavior, ecology, conservation or related matters. Articles submitted will be expected to be the original work of the authors and shall not have been published elsewhere. Manuscripts containing research results will be reviewed by one or more referees. Manuscripts must be type-written on good quality 8.5 x 11 paper, with ample margins and double-spaced throughout, including literature citations, tables, and captions to figures. All graphics, line drawings, or half-tones must be provided in camera-ready form. Authors should adhere to the style of THE AUK. Scientific and common names must follow the A.O.U. Checklist and its supplements. Manuscripts should be sent to the EDITORS, JOURNAL OF LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGY, Department of Biology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118.

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

David P. Muth and Robert D. Purrington

With this, the inaugural issue of THE JOURNAL OF LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGY, the Louisiana Ornithological Society has, we hope, taken a step which will have far-reaching consequences for ornithology in Louisiana. If this journal accomplishes what we and the officers and membership of the LOS intend for it, it will provide a vehicle for the publication of studies of Louisiana birdlife that have heretofore gone unpublished as too regional for consideration by THE AUK, CONDOR, or WILSON BULLETIN. The many felicitous effects of this are obvious: we ourselves will learn more about Louisiana birds and information about the birds of the state and of those involved in research on them will be widely disseminated. Above all, it can be expected that the possibility of publication in this journal will stimulate serious bird study, capable of meeting the rigorous standards of the refereeing process. This journal will be a success if it induces serious amateur students of birds to prepare the results of their studies, modest or ambitious as the case may be, for publication. But the JLO can also serve the professional ornithological community by providing a place where results mainly of interest to Louisiana can be published, or where graduate students can "get their feet wet" by publishing some of their early efforts.

We expect to publish articles on any aspect of Louisiana ornithology. This may include historical studies (see for example Daniel McKinley's paper in this issue), serious and detailed articles on difficult identification questions, long-term population or nesting studies, analyses of Christmas Count data and USFWS Cooperative Breeding Bird Census data, studies of avian behavior, including migration and orientation, and even studies on taxonomy or speciation, if they involve data taken in Louisiana or bear directly upon field ornithology in the state. We will be liberal in our interpretation of what is "Louisiana ornithology;" if a paper will significantly enhance our understanding of Louisiana birdlife, it will be considered for publication.

Photographs, drawings, and other illustrations will add interest and appeal to the journal, and to that end we solicit reproduction quality photographs of birds taken in Louisiana. We will tend to publish photographs for two main purposes: 1) to illustrate an article, and 2) to document the occurrence of vagrant birds in the state. In the latter case, we may occasionally choose to publish a photograph that is otherwise not of publication quality. On the other hand, we would also consider salon-quality photographs of (almost) any Louisiana bird. Similarly, given the number of bird artists who now reside in Louisiana, or who have lived and worked here, we hope to be able to embellish the journal with frequent
examples of their work--especially in easily-reproduced pen and ink, but, ultimately, in any medium. Almost certainly there are talents among the readership of the JLO of which we are not aware. Please consider submitting some of your drawings and photographs. We are especially happy to have this inaugural issue enhanced by the talents of Donna Dittmann, several of whose drawings grace these pages. She has set high artistic standards for others to try to match.

In this and future issues we hope to be able to inaugurate several recurring features or departments, which will, if all goes well, appear regularly. The official reports on the deliberations of the LOS Bird Records Committee will henceforth be published here. Retiring committee secretary Tom Schultenberg's 1987 report contains a valuable summary of the three previous reports, and of the changes in the state list that the committee has made since its inception in 1981. Periodically, we plan to publish a review of the ornithological literature which has some bearing on Louisiana--or about which Louisiana birders should know, and we will endeavor to have a summary of important Louisiana bird records that have occurred since the previous issue. There may be, in future, some short notes on identification, but for the most part such articles, especially if at all lengthy, will be refereed by experts on the birds in question, to insure high standards of accuracy. Book reviews by the editors of publications which are pertinent to the state's ornithology and of direct interest to its ornithological community will be a regular feature.

Most important, this journal is the offspring of the Louisiana Ornithological Society and it will serve the membership best if there is interaction between that membership and the Editors. This journal will be fully refereed and will demand of its contributors the highest standards, but its focus will be somewhat different from that of the professional journals. The most difficult part of our job as editors may be to strike the right balance among the interests of the serious amateur field ornithologist, the professional, and the young researcher, soon-to-be professional, looking for a place to publish their first research results. Between the Editors and the Editorial Board there is already such a balance, though, in fact, many members of the Board are serious birders themselves.

We are pleased to open this issue with a paper on the Carolina Parakeet in Louisiana by Daniel McKinley. This paper draws to a close a monumental study of this bird, sadly extinct, that McKinley has carried out during the last half-century. This article alone should make Volume 1 Number 1 a collector's item.

Finally, we dedicate this initial issue of the JOURNAL OF LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGY to the memory of Dr. Robert J. Newman (1907-1988) a friend, colleague, mentor, and field companion to so many of us. Bob was first of all a scientist, a tireless field man who at
age 70 could still run many of us into the ground. But Bob's talents were much broader than that: he was a great storyteller and wit, a deadly shot, and a man who knew his way around a bottle of scotch, to mention but a few. We will all miss him.
THE CAROLINA PARAKEET IN LOUISIANA: A HISTORY

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The Carolina Parakeet (Conuropsis carolinensis) was first reported to the scientific world by Linnaeus (1758), who credited Catesby (1731-1748) with recording it from "Carolina," hence its name. The first Louisiana records for the species are brief allusions to parrots in travel accounts by such explorers as Louis Hennepin (1679-1681) and Paul du Ru (1700). Somewhat more substantial narratives stem from the 1700s, those of Dumont de Montigny and Le Page du Pratz (both from the 1750s) being examples. The last, a trifle garbled, became the basis for Gmelin's (1788) "Parroquet of Louisiana," (Psittacus ludovicianus). Although no one now thinks Le Page du Pratz's bird a separate species, Gmelin's name has been used, following Ridgway (1916), for the western subspecies. Very little is known of early abundance of the species in the present state of Louisiana. Both Wilson and Audubon reported it to be common (1810 to about 1825), although their reports, as with all others, are fragmentary. By the 1870s, it was noteworthy to see parakeets at all, and McIlhenny's report of them at Avery Island, Iberia Parish, "during the years prior to 1881" must be among the very last valid reports. Some doubt surrounds the exact provenance of all extant specimens (including eggs) that have been attributed to Louisiana. Both Wilson and Audubon painted specimens probably procured in Louisiana, and Ridgway claimed the picture drawn by Levaillant (1801-1805) to have been made from a Louisiana specimen.

This account of the Carolina Parakeet summarizes the Louisiana part of what I have learned in a survey of early travel and natural history literature and in a comprehensive census of parakeet specimens. It is the final contribution in a series of state and local accounts that began in 1959.

The Parrot of Louisiana and how it Became Known

For the Carolina Parakeet as a whole, its first name, (Psittacus carolinensis), was fortunately preceded by a picture. The telegraphic description of Linnaeus (1758: 97), had been based upon the colored picture drawn by Mark Catesby (1731, plate 11). Although the name was not particularly appropriate for a species never very common in the Carolinas (McKinley 1979), the status of the name itself has never been in doubt.

For the western and midwestern population of the parakeet, which had become known as the Louisiana parakeet, the beginning was in word only, and garbled at that. Thus, the taxonomic record of the western parakeet began both accidentally and ambiguously with a French engineer, Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, who had pioneered in that indefinite region called "Louisiana" from about 1718 to 1734. His book,
published in 1758, was a rambling work of history, tall tales, and miscellaneous recollections that proved him to be blessed with a poor memory. In it, he wrote: "The Parroquet of Louisiana is not quite so large as those that are usually brought to France. Its plumage is usually of a fine sea-green, with a pale rose-colored spot upon the crown, which brightens into red toward the beak, and fades off into green towards the body. It is with difficulty that it learns to speak, and even then it rarely practices it, resembling in this the natives themselves, who speak little. As a silent Parrot would never make its fortune among our French ladies, it is doubtless on this account that we see so few of these in France" (Le Page du Pratz 1758, 2: 128-129; 1763, 2: 88).

By "silent" (the English translator's word), Le Page meant non-talking, I am sure, because in the French original, he credited them with going about in noisy companies, noting (in my translation) that if caged, "in revenge they fill the air with anguished cries," corroborating general early reports that the parakeet was anything but silent. Le Page also reported: "These birds usually make their nests in holes that they improve after they have been commenced by woodpeckers. They live on the kernels of a species of 'pacane' that is tender and bitter, pines, tulip-laurels, and other seeds" (1758, 2: 129). (Paul Hamel, in litt..., suggests that "pacane" is the thin-shelled bitter pecan or water hickory, *Carya aquatica*, and that "tulip-laurel" is yellow-poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*.)

Except for the prying eyes of those who read traveler's tales, there the matter might have stood, had not the lordly Counte de Buffon injudiciously snapped up the bird as a new species and advertised it to the learned world as "Le Papagai a Tete Aurore (Buffon 1770-1786, vol. 6)." P.L.S. Muller (1776: 74) promptly relegated this to synonymy with the Linnaean parrot of Carolina; but Johann Friedrich Gmelin (1788, 1: 320, 347), translating the thirteenth edition of Linnaeus' *System Naturae* thought otherwise, and for the first time the western form of the bird had a proper Linnaean binomial, *Psittacus ludovicianus*, the 'Parrot of Louisiana.'

A major source of confusion in Le Page's description is that it was obviously based upon an immature bird, a fact long unrecognized by ornithologists. Such a bird had red feathers near the bill, the rest of the head being, at least at first, green; probably in this case some adult yellow feathers were beginning to appear amongst the green. Furthermore, misled by Buffon's pronouncement that parrots were found only in the tropics, and could be but wandering visitors elsewhere, and perhaps having seen South American specimens of parrots that really had entirely green heads, even so keen a zoologist as Thomas Pennant (1784-1785, 2: 243-244) had his "Illinois Parrot," which he thought probably the same as the Carolina parrot of Catesby and the Louisiana parrot of Le Page, inhabiting "the interior part of North America...; it is also met with in the Brazils."

The whole mess of the more or less green-headed parrot never have occurred, if an equally obscure contemporary of Le Page had been followed, for the description of the parakeet in

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Louisiana given by Lt. Dumont de Montigny (1753, 1: 87) is not only a better account, but it also has priority: "Parakeets are very common in Louisiana, and are of the size of a pigeon and a definite green color. Their head is evident and the beak as with other birds of their kind, but with two sides [i.e., front and back] of the head, a sort of arc of yellow color mixed with a little very fine red feathering." Although he incorrectly regarded the head of the male as redder than that of the female, he agreed with many other early observers in describing their manner of life: "These birds fly ordinarily in bands of 18 or 20; and when they pass in rapid flight, their cries are so loud that the ears are stunned." From there, Dumont balanced possibly personal experiences with solid and widespread folklore: "One shoots them and one eats them; the flesh is black. When they eat the seeds of the appel mace that I have spoken of [clearly he referred to the cocklebur, Xanthum sp., for on page 12 he describes the appel mace as a plant "that disports buttons that are garnished with very fine points and curved spines, that attach themselves...to all they touch."], and of which they are very fond, if after one guts them and gives the intestines to cats, they thereupon die." (Many early naturalists, including Catesby, op. cit., refer to the widespread belief that parakeets were somehow poisonous to cats; I shall review this matter and its possible relationship to cockleburs in a later report.)

Down through the nineteenth century, few ornithologists recognized a separate name for the western populations of Carolina Parakeet. G.R. Gray (1859: 36) was nearly alone in considering that specimens from Louisiana were properly called Conurus ludovicianus, Conurus (Kuhl 1820) being a sort of catch-all genus for long-tailed small parrots that Linnaeus and his contemporaries had lumped into the even more comprehensive and artificial genus Psittacus. (Salvadori [1891] later removed the Carolina Parakeet from the genus Conurus, making it the only species of his new genus Conurospis.)

The term ludovicianus could not, however, be easily ignored. Hair-splitting ornithologists (Bangs 1913) claimed that they could distinguish specimens of the parakeet that originated in the western and interior parts of the range. In addition, three famous illustrations of the parakeet seemed to depict specimens that originated within what is now part of the state of Louisiana (Levaillant, Wilson, Audubon; see below). Up to the twentieth century, however, no ornithologist had looked critically at specimens from Louisiana to make sure that they were western in their affinities.

In 1913, Outram Bangs examined two specimens, probably collected near New Orleans. Upon comparison with Florida skins, Bangs proclaimed them "exactly similar in every way to Florida specimens"; they showed "no approach whatever to the pale glaucous birds of the prairie region" (Bangs 1913). (These specimens will be discussed below.)

Taxonomically, this meant two things: 1) Louisiana birds must bear, by invocation of the law of priority, the earlier name of carolinensis, bestowed upon the birds of Florida affinities by Linnaeus; 2) Gmelin's ludovicianus, given to birds presumed to exist in Louisiana
(even though Le Page du Pratz' 'Louisiana' had a comfortable elasticity to it), became a synonym of the name provided by Linnaeus. Bangs thereupon gave parakeets of the more midwestern region the subspecific name of Conuropsis carolinensis interior.

Robert Ridgway (1916: 147, 150), who believed that Louisiana birds belonged to the western form, claimed that Bangs had been misled by having "an insufficient series of Mississippi Valley birds, several examples of which were abnormal in the development of the blue cast to the plumage; also by a specimen said to be from Cape Florida (but unquestionably not from there) which agrees with the single Louisiana adult with which it was compared."

H.C. Oberholser (A.O.U. 1917) sustained Ridgway's decision to retain the name C. c. ludovicianus for Louisiana (and other western) parakeets, even though he pointed out that Ridgway had erred in deriving the name ludovicianus from Linnaeus, a decision with which Bangs (1930; 202) ultimately agreed.

A Review of the Parakeet in Louisiana

No specimens were made available by either Le Page du Pratz or Dumont de Montigny. In fact, I know of no extant specimens originating in Louisiana in any part of the eighteenth century, although some probably did. The latter probability is brought out by Levalliant's vague reference to larger numbers of parakeet skins in his account of the species that accompanied his picture of the parakeet (1801-1805, plate 33). Ridgway (1916: 148) thought that the painting depicted a specimen from Louisiana, although it is not clear what his grounds for this statement were.

The Parrot of Louisiana had, however, been seen by travelers before Dumont and Le Page's times and described with even less precision than by either. David Ingram is said to have walked from the Gulf of Mexico to Cape Breton in the Canadian Maritime Provinces about the year 1568. For readers capable of accepting it, he states that "There are in those countryes abundance of Russets parrotts but very few green" (Ingram 1883: 206). Elsa G. Allen (1951: 444) rather strains credulity by supposing that this referred to the Louisiana subspecies of parakeet, on the basis of the yellow head and reddish face of the species. Because most of Ingram's material is quite raving, I doubt that it is a parakeet record at all, for Louisiana or anywhere else.

Supposedly referring to the voyage of LaSalle down the Mississippi in 1679-81, Louis Hennepin (1938: 672) credited parakeets to "the vast plains of Louisiana," but there is no reason to take that statement seriously. A much more convincing reference was left by the Jesuit Father Paul du Ru, who traveled with d'Iberville from Biloxi Bay for some distance up the Mississippi in 1700. Referring to northeastern Louisiana (Tensas Parish or Claiborne County, Mississippi), he wrote in his diary on 23 February: "Almost always I see the same thing along the Mississippi. There is always a fine hedge of green cane and occasionally willows standing out on the points. I often see ducks at the edge of the river. The bustards [probably Canada Geese] are not very common but there are parroquets by the thousand. Some

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of them have very beautiful plumage" (du Ru 1934: 17-18).

The reference (about 1707-1721) to parrots "differing from ours" by Daniel Coxe (1850, 2: 261), an easterner, is less than helpful. Jean Bernard Bossu, author of much quaint material on natural history, found "parrots and parakeets" in the region of the lower Mississippi River (1771, 1: 370).

During the time that the English ruled "West Florida," their territory extended to the Mississippi in the vicinity of Baton Rouge. Edward Mease wrote the Earl of Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Colonies, an account of travels in that province. He spoke of the countryside along the Iberville River, now called Manchac Bayou, between Burville, just below Baton Rouge, and Lake Maurepas; that is, more or less on the line between Livingston and Ascension Parishes. On "Manchac Bayouc" (the old spelling) on 12 January 1777, he found land "cover'd with Oaks, Gums, Canes, Brambles and that kind of Bulrush used by Cabinet Makers for polishing. In the lowest Places, they are cover'd with Cypress not very large ... the Iberville was dry unless in some few Places, which were only small Ponds of stagnant water and it appear'd frequently choak'd up with Logs ... Perroquets are in great Abundance, they feed upon Shumach Berries and are esteem'd good eating" (Rowland 1925: 69).

As for the nineteenth century, Baudry de Lozieres (1802: 174), apparently referring to the country around New Orleans, listed "perroquets" among the 40-odd bird species that would occupy the attention of the ornithologist. It is not, however, yet proved that he was ever in Louisiana (Clark 1956: 82). Christian Shultz (1810, 2: 182, 184) wrote to a correspondent that he had dined upon "a most deelicious sea-pie" made of parakeets killed on the lower Mississippi. With unrivaled opportunities for observation, he did not get beyond "Parroquets" baldly listed among birds of the region of New Orleans.

That parakeets occurred commonly can be safely inferred from the short notice left in the report of Peter Custis, who kept natural history records during Thomas Freeman's exploration of the lower Red River in 1806 (Freeman and Custis 1984: 221-222). Unfortunately, his only reference to them is in the first part of the journey (to about the first of June), from the mouth of the Red on the Mississippi to the vicinity of the present city of Natchitoches, was: "Paroquets (Psittacus carolinensis) very numerous. They are always seen in large flocks." One can infer, perhaps, that there was no spottiness in their distribution during that part of the trip; there is no further mention of them in the continued ascent of the Red to Bowie County, extreme northeastern Texas.

Alexander Wilson did not add much to knowledge of the parakeet in Louisiana. He apparently bought one or more of them there, presumably in the market. One of these seems to have become the model of his illustration and, as a specimen, went to Charles Willson Peale's ill-fated museum (Wilson 1811: 91, 97, plate 26, figure 1; Faxon 1915: 136). (See discussion of specimens, below.)

George Ord, using information collected by Wilson (although not first hand, because Wilson was in Louisiana only during June 1810), recorded that parakeets swarmed
into the fields of cockleburs along the Mississippi above New Orleans in the fall of the year (Ord 1894: 323).

Samuel R. Brown (1817: 146), a writer of guidebooks whose ornithological short-comings are obvious, credited Louisiana with having parakeets among its birds, the latter including white pelican, white eagle, great white owl, tufted woodcock, ivory woodpecker, and "great bat," the latter being the "bullbat" or nighthawk.

John James Audubon (1929) made several references to parakeets on the Mississippi River in the latitude of Arkansas-Mississippi, in the very late autumn of 1820 (McKinley 1981; McKinley and James 1985). However, he recorded nothing specific about the species along the Louisiana leg of the journey, neither in a long list of Louisiana birds nor in his journal of the period 16 June to 20 October 1821 at Bayou Sara.

On 29 March 1823, Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Wurttemberg, then a young man of 25, rode in a two-wheeled cart in the southern part of Pointe Coupee Parish, "though a splendid dense forest of the most beautiful native timber with an undergrowth of impenetrable reeds and lanes ... The forest in the neighborhood teemed with rare birds, among them parrots, hummingbirds, a few beautiful varieties of ducks, woodpeckers, and kingfishers." The next day, on the Mississippi, apparently just across the river from Bayou Sara: "After the rain the fresh green gave the forests the most beautiful luster ... the birds too, had been lured forth by the rays of the sun ... Their song formed a strange contrast with the cries of the parrots and the croaking of the great frogs." He added parenthetically: "On the same evening I shot two varieties of beautiful yellow-headed parrots." He immediately called one Psittacus carolinensis and, with more enthusiasm than good judgement, proposed naming the other one, which he admitted was "perhaps only a sub-variety"—and was probably just a parakeet in an immature plumage—"Psittacus mississippianus." He concluded: "Although they are very shy one can approach them by hiding behind large trees and can kill several with one shot, since they sit so close together" (Paul Wilhelm 1938: 135, 139-140). See my Mississippi state account (McKinley 1981) for an additional reference by Duke Paul that is somewhat pertinent to Louisiana.

Distilling from his extensive experience, Audubon wrote in the first volume of his Ornithological Biography (1831: 138), a text for his parakeet plate in The Birds of America: "I should think that along the Mississippi there is not now half the number that existed fifteen years ago." There are few reliable records from Audubon or anyone else, by which to evaluate such a statement. Certainly, well within the period of 15 years preceding 1831, parakeets were numerous in the vicinity of Louisiana (McKinley 1980).

Audubon himself had been a reliable source of specimens. On 18 November 1829, he noted the things he hoped to collect for European correspondents: "Turkeys, Alligators, Oppossums, Parokeets, and plants, as Bignonias & & & ..." Swainson had asked for "two Parrots of America" (Herrick 1968, 1: 429, 431). On his way up the Mississippi with Lucy in January 1830, it is recorded that Audubon "skinned
twenty Carolina parrots, two ivory-bills and four pilleated woodpeckers, as well as many other accessions for England" (Ford 1964: 261-262; Herrick 1968, 1: 435).

Audubon's plate (his number 26, 1827-1838), presumably done in December 1825 at St. Francisville, certainly indicated no shortage of parakeets. The exact origin of specimens used for models for that plate is not known, except in the case of the upper figure. That female with 14 tail feathers instead of the usual 12 was a specimen taken at nearby Bayou Sara. It must be noted that some of the figures in the plate may have been done from memory, for the young bird, although said by Audubon not to be quite so unusual as the odd female, has an all-green head and is unlike any immature Carolina Parakeet ever described by an informed observer. For authoritative corrections to the plumage of the young bird, see Finsch (1867: 479), Russ (1879: 838-840), Bartsch (1898), and Ridgway (1916).

After Audubon, we have mostly undocumented reports. There is a note by Charles Daubeney, a closer observer of plants than animals, that the parakeet "abounded" in the Teche River (or Bayou) country of Iberia Parish in March 1836 (1843: 145). Baird, Brewster, and Ridgway (1874: 587) claimed that there were still "considerable numbers" of parakeets in western Louisiana, but they offered no substantiating evidence.

Judge Lawrason, "who lives in the country near Bayou Sara, informed me that as late as 1875 he found the Carolina Parakeet every year at his place, but since that date he has neither seen nor heard of any in this locality." reported Charles Wickliffe Beckham (1887). Beckham's uncle, Governor Wickliffe, who lived at Bayou Sara, "says that twenty years ago it was quite common here at times in large flocks, and Mr. Wederstraudt has several times observed it within the last few years, but never more than two or three together at a time. About eighteen months ago he saw one in an orchard near 'Wyoming'" (Beckham 1882). "About eighteen months ago" would make the last date there about October 1880--and note that Beckham himself did not see it, as Oberholser (1938) reported him to have done.

The Hon. Frank R. King wrote in 1881, in a report on Vermilion Parish in a promotional book on Louisiana, that "paroquets" were among "migratory birds from the tropical regions" that take the place of the migrants departed to the north. His account has some interesting commentaries on wildlife of the time and it is a pity that he said so little to substantiate his reference to the parakeet (Harris 1881: 236). Edward Avery McIlhenny, a reliable observer but only a youth at the time, stated that "Flocks ... occurred quite regularly in the spring and fall at Avery Island [Iberia Parish, just east of Vermilion Parish] during the years prior to 1881" (McIlhenny 1943; Bendire 1895: 3).

By the year 1880, the parakeet's light was flickering out in Louisiana. The birds were observed by Thomas B. Burns, of Cincclare Plantation, West Baton Rouge Parish, "in September, 1880, in flocks of two or three dozen flying along the Mississippi, and alighting in trees and on the ground ... on one occasion at least they came in such numbers that the
negroes turned out with shot-guns and procured many of them for the table" (Langdon 1881). The same observer had no record of them in spring and it seems probable that his report was an unusual record for that era, even in autumn.

Without citing authority, Captain Bendire (1895: 1, 3) held that an occasional pair was "still seen in southern Louisiana" but his prime authority, McIlhenny, clearly had not seen them since 1881. The American Ornithologists' Union's second Check-List (1895: 152) considered them no longer extant in Louisiana. However, I.H. Alford, of Prairie Mer Rouge, Morehouse Parish, reported to Oberholser (1938: 323) many years later that, although he had never seen one, he had heard of them during the years about 1900, in Union, Claiborne, and Webster parishes.

Ridgway (1916: 147) held out faint hope that, if still in existence, the species might be found "in very restricted areas in bottom lands of southwestern Arkansas or northwestern Louisiana," but he did not document that hope in any way. It must be recalled that in 1900, George Eugene Beyer (1900: 101) wrote that "During sixteen years of collection and observations, in almost every section of the state, I have never obtained either specimens or data, and in localities which I have thought likely to be still its habitat, the people did not know that a paroquet had ever existed in Louisiana." In view of this, it appears that Oberholser's hope, that some parakeets were still alive when he wrote his book (published 1936) was unrealistic. Lowery (1955: 309) considered Oberholser's Union-Claiborne-Webster report of about 1900 "highly indefinite."

Comprehensive reviews of the history of the Carolina Parakeet for states adjoining Louisiana may be found in McKinley (1964, 1978b, 1981, 1985) and McKinley and James (1985).

Parakeet Specimens from Louisiana

For many years it has been customary to dismiss the claim that the Tulane University Museum specimen, an adult male, was actually from Louisiana. Beyer (1900) thought it "undoubtedly collected in Louisiana," but he could find no substantiating evidence. Oberholser (1938) could do no better. There is an even more questionably local specimen in the Louisiana State Museum of Zoology (an adult without other data; LSUMZ 19428).

Stanley Clisby Arthur (1931: 51) calculated that Audubon had collected the "one record" of the parakeet in Louisiana (the female at the top of his plate with 14 tail-feathers) "on Bayou Sara, Dec. (1821?)." But Audubon was in New Orleans in December 1821, and the only December and Bayou Sara residence that coincide seems to fall in 1825 (Ford 1964). Although it is possible, but unlikely, that the specimen was shot at Bayou Sara while Audubon was at the Pirrie plantation and retained for later use, it is more likely that it dates from the time of the painting, when he was in the vicinity and working actively: a date that Davidson (1966, plate 223, p. xxxiv) seems correctly to place "about 1825." At any rate, the specimen itself seems not to have survived.

There are, however, a few somewhat more definite records
for Louisiana than the Audubon illustration. Bangs (1913: 93) considered that the two specimens without data from the de LaFresnay collection (one adult, one immature; Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard, MCZ 72186, 72187) were collected by Salle', probably near New Orleans.

Already referred to is the specimen that Alexander Wilson used as his model for his plate 26, figure 1 (MCZ 67853; part of Wilson's drawing from this specimen also survives at MCZ [Egerton 1963]; the drawing is uncolored and, because Wilson frugally snipped up drawings and re-used the reverse sides of them, the surviving scrap lacks head and tail); this is probably a Louisiana specimen. Two other specimens (MCZ 73223, 166766), both adults without further data, possibly belong with the Wilson accumulation.

The British Museum (Natural History) has two adult specimens presented by Audubon (BM(NH) 33; BM(NH) Vellum Cat. 336). They are unfortunately without date or indication of sex and are simply labeled "Louisiana, North America." They were once identified by G.R. Gray (1859: 36) as Conurus ludovicianus.

There is also an adult mounted male in Museum Koenig, Bonn, Germany (their no. 50,475). It is from Colfax (modern transcribers have misread this as "Colfox") on the Red River. It was acquired from Umlauf (a dealer, presumably) at the end of the nineteenth century, a "date" that probably refers to accession or purchase rather than collection.

There is an egg in the John E. Thayer collection at the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ 4499), said to be from Louisiana, 1859. It lacks other data, but the U.S. National Museum has an egg collected by James Fairie in Louisiana, probably in 1859 (McKinley 1977), and the two originally perhaps made up a set. The USNM has another pair of eggs, another so-called set (no. 17709), that were taken on "Grand Coteau Island, St. Mary's Parish," March 1878. Bendire (1895: 4) reported them as in rather poor condition," and was unable to secure further information on them. A card in the files of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says of them: "Found in hollow of cypress tree March, 1878. David Weeks." Whether Weeks was collector or annotator is not known. A Grand Cote Island is in Iberia Parish, previously part of St. Mary Parish. It is noteworthy that Bendire (1895: 6) entirely ignored the James Fairie egg and seriously doubted the authenticity (as does the author) of the two now assigned to Weeks. I suspect that the March date, if meant to imply date of laying, is enough to discredit them (McKinley 1978a).

Acknowledgments

I have not forgotten the kindness of a multitude of people who have helped me secure information on specimens and aided in locating obscure references. I hope they will suffer their anonymity, here with understanding and view charitably the use I have made of their labors. At various times the Frank M. Chapman Fund of the American Museum of Natural History and the summer stipends of the Research Foundation of the State University of New York have helped financially, and I am grateful for
that support. Finally, I thank recent reviewers for their comments.

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Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). Pen and ink by Donna L. Dittmann.
FIFTH REPORT OF
THE LOUISIANA
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS
COMMITTEE

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This report contains the decisions of the LOS Bird Records Committee reached since the last report (Schulenberg 1986). During this period the Committee has reviewed 62 records. Among these are reports of two species that the Committee accepted as first state records: California Gull and Antillean Nighthawk. Also accepted by the Committee was the second state record of Lesser Goldfinch. The rate of acceptance for the records reported on here was 85%, significantly higher than the overall acceptance rate of 76% for all records reviewed by the Committee to date.

Since its inception in 1981, the Committee has reviewed over 200 bird records. As a result of these actions, the Committee has admitted 23 species to the Louisiana state list: Eurasian Wigeon, Zone-tailed Hawk, Mongolian Plover, Ruff, California Gull, Thayer's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Sabine's Gull, Antillean Nighthawk, Anna's Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Williamson's Sapsucker, Tropical Kingbird, Rock Wren, Varied Thrush, Tropical Parula, Townsend's Warbler, Hepatic Tanager, Blue Bunting, McCown's Longspur, and House Finch (Anonymous 1982, 1984; Schulenberg 1984, 1986). The Committee has also voted to remove from the state list 9 species previously accepted by Lowery (1974): Greater Shearwater, White-tailed Tropicbird, Greater Flamingo, Harlequin Duck, Harris' Hawk, Black Francolin, Smooth-billed Ani, Connecticut Warbler, and Snow Bunting (Schulenberg 1985). Two taxonomic revisions have also affected the state list: the prior Louisiana record of Tropical Kingbird was found to refer to a relatively recently recognized species, Couch's Kingbird, while the Gray-headed Junco is now regarded as a subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco (AOU 1983). Taking all of these additions and deletions into account, the Louisiana state list currently stands at 423.

The Committee solicits reports of a species on the Review List, which is published at the end of this report, as well as of any species not previously recorded in Louisiana. Photographs may be especially valuable in documenting records, and contributors are encouraged to submit photographic documentation when possible.

All documentation (including photographs) for records submitted to the Committee, as well as the Committee's comments and votes, are housed at the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. These records are available for inspection to any interested party.

Committee members who voted on some or all of the following records are D. Bruce Crider, Horace H. Jeter (Chairman), Robert J. Newman, Robert D. Purrington, J.V. Remsen, Buford M. Myers, III, David P. Muth, and Thomas S. Schulenberg (Secretary).
The records in this report are arranged taxonomically following the *Check-list of North American Birds* (AOU 1983). Within each species account, records are usually arranged chronologically. The Committee's official file number for each record is given in parentheses. For records of birds at sea, the name of the parish of the nearest point on the mainland is placed in parentheses. The information in each account is usually based only on the information given in the original documentation submitted but I have made some effort to supplement this, whenever possible, with the full range of dates during which a bird(s) was present. The original discoverer of a bird, when this information was available, is marked by an asterisk(*). I have not made an effort to list all observers who might have seen a given bird. Observers who submitted documentation (contributors) are listed first (by initials); other observers, if any, mentioned by the observer who submitted details, are listed second, separated from the contributors by a semicolon.

Photographs are not mentioned as documentation in a species account unless copies are on file with the committee. Photographs that are not submitted to the Committee, which could then store them for "posterity" and make them available to other researchers, are worthless from the point of view of documenting rare occurrences. All specimens are deposited at the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology (LSUMZ).

**Accepted Records**

**WESTERN GREBE** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). One (85-37) on the Mississippi River at New Orleans, Orleans/Jefferson Parish, from 3-6 November 1971 (DP, MM*). This bird was photographed, and a photo published in *American Birds* (Purinton 1972:74). This was the first record of any kind of "Western Grebe" for Louisiana and was accepted by Lowery (1974). The American Ornithologists' Union "Check-list Committee" recently (AOU 1985: 680-681) recognized as a species the very similar Clark's Grebe (*A. clarkii*), formerly regarded as merely a color phase of the Western Grebe. This change in nomenclature requires that the Committee will review all previous Louisiana records of "Western" Grebe to ascertain to which species they in fact refer. The Committee has accepted the original 1971 record as a true Western Grebe. Other Louisiana records of "Western" Grebes have yet to be reviewed with the aim of differentiating between Western and Clark's Grebe's, and such review may in fact prove difficult in cases in which the relatively subtle distinctions between the two species were not noted at the time. (This is one more reason why a rare bird description should be as detailed and complete as possible, and not merely a recitation of currently accepted field-marks!)

**WILSON'S STORM-PETREL** (*Oceanites oceanicus*). One (85-27) about 20 miles SSE of Southwest Pass at the mouth of the Mississippi River (Plaquemines Parish) on 11 June 1985 (MM); two (85-28) at the same location on 10 June 1985 (MM); one (86-11) about 8 miles south of East Timbalier Island (Lafourche Parish) on 15 July 1985 (DD, SC); two (86-12) 28-35 miles south of

J. La. Ornith.
Northern Gannet (*Sula bassanus*), adult. Pen and ink by Donna L. Dittmann.

Belle Pass (Lafourche Parish) on 16 July 1985 (DD, SC); one (86-13) 25-28 miles south of Belle Pass (Lafourche Parish) on 16 July 1985 (DD, SC); 12 (86-14) from 53 miles south of Barataria Pass to 55 miles south of Cheniere Caminada (Jefferson/Lafourche Parish) on 16 July 1985 (DD, SC); one (86-15) 18.5-25 miles south of Point au Fer Island (St. Mary/Terrebonne Parish) on 17 July 1985 (DD, SC). This rash of records substantiates the view that small numbers of Wilson's Storm-Petrels are regular visitors to Louisiana off-shore waters, and the Committee has removed this species from the Review List.

**MASKED BOOBY** (*Sula dactylatra*). One adult (85-24) about 62 nautical miles south of Raccoon Point (Terrebonne Parish) on 19 July 1985 (MM); one adult (85-25) at the same location on 6 August 1985 (MM); and one adult (85-30), also at the same location, on 31 August 1985 (MM).

**BROWN BOOBY** (*Sula leucogaster*). One (85-26) photographed about 20 miles South-southeast of Southwest Pass at the mouth of the Mississippi River (Plaquemines Parish) from 29 May to 8 June 1985 (MM). This bird was an immature, not an adult as previously reported (Imhof 1985).

**NORTHERN GANNET** (*Sula bassanus*). Two (86-17), one mile southeast of Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Parish, on 2 February 1986 (DD, SC); one immature (86-18) found dead (LSUMZ #126836) about one mile east of Belle Pass, Lafourche Parish, on 11 September 1985 (DD; GR, DM); 3 or 4
immatures (86-19) at "Rutherford Beach," 2-10 miles west of the old mouth of the Mermentau River, Cameron Parish, on 20 December 1985 (DD,SC). This species is now regarded as a regular winter visitor to Louisiana, and is no longer on the Review List.

TUNDRA SWAN (Cygnus columbianus). Six birds (85-3), 3 ad., 3 immatures, seven miles south of Start, Richland Parish, from 26 January to 24 February 1985 (TK; HJ, PD, et al). These birds were part of a small invasion into Louisiana during the winter of 1984-85; see Muth (1985) and Schulenberg (1986).

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE (Elanus caeruleus). One (86-21) at Hackberry Ridge, west of Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Parish, on 16 September 1984 (DD; GR, VR, DM).

SWAINSON'S HAWK (Buteo swainsoni). One (85-8) at Cameron, Cameron Parish, on 4 May 1985 (JA; CA, TD); one immature (85-12) photographed about 1 mile west of the Calcasieu Pass ferry at Cameron on 19 December 1982 (MM; JS, JW).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (Phalaropus lobatus). One immature (86-20) collected (LSUMZ 126654) at Hackberry Ridge, Cameron Parish, on 22 December 1985 (DD, SC).

POMARINE JAEGER (Skua pomarinaus). One immature and one adult or sub-adult (85-15) about 20 miles South-southeast of Southwest Pass at the mouth of the Mississippi River (Plaquemines Parish) on 4 April 1985 (MM); one sub-adult (85-21) at the same location 12 May 1985 (MM) (Imhof erroneously reported an adult Parasitic Jaeger at this location on this date); one adult (85-20) about 62 nmi south of Raccoon Point (Terrebonne Parish) on 29 June 1985 (MM).

PARASITIC JAEGER (Skua parasiticus). One adult and one immature (85-18) about 62 nautical miles south of Raccoon Point (Terrebonne Parish) on 7 July 1985 (MM); one adult (85-19) about 20 miles South-southeast of Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River (Plaquemines Parish) on 6 May 1985 (MM); one adult (85-31) about 62 nautical miles south of Raccoon Point on 31 August 1985 (MM).

LITTLE GULL (Larus minutus). One immature photographed between Holly Beach and Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Parish, from 27 April to 12 May 1985 (KR*, PM, DP, BC, et al). This is believed to be only the fourth or fifth record for Louisiana.

CALIFORNIA GULL (Larus californicus). The following records are all from "Rutherford Beach," 2-10 miles west of the old mouth of the Mermentau River, Cameron Parish: one first winter immature (86-27) found on 29 September 1985 and collected the following day (LSUMZ 126708) (DD, SC*); one second-winter immature (86-29) collected (LSUMZ 126709) on 12 October 1985 (DD, SC*); one second-winter immature (86-30) from 13 to 25 October 1985 (DD, SC*; VR, MM, DP, NoN, DM); one winter adult (85-34) on 25 November 1985 (JK; DH); one winter adult (86-31) from 27 November to 8 December 1985 (DD*, SC); one
Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*), winter adult. Pen and ink by Donna L. Dittmann.

winter adult (86-32) on 8 December 1985 (DD,SC*). This is an amazing set of records for aspecies not previously recorded in Louisiana. Details of the plumage, size, and soft-part colors of these seven records suggest that at least six individual California Gulls were represented by these sightings. Only two winter adults were believed to have been present during November and December, so there is evidently some overlap in the three reports from this period; the descriptions suggest that records 85-34 and 86-32 refer to the same individual.

THAYER’S GULL (*Larus thayeri*). Three records of first-winter immatures, all from the New Orleans city dump on Almonaster Road, Orleans Parish; one (83-12) collected (LSUMZ 103493) on 28 February 1982 (DP,SC;DM*); one (85-7) on 23 December 1984 (DM*,JH); one (86-10) on 29 December 1985 (JH*,DM).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*). One sub-

adult (84-15), at least three years old, photographed on "Rutherford Beach," west of the old mouth of the Mermentau River, Cameron Parish, on 26 April 1985 (KR).

GLAUCOUS GULL (*Larus hyperboreus*). One immature (85-9) photographed on Fourchon Beach, Lafourche Parish, on 21 April 1985 (PW*,AS,GS,CS,JS); one in first winter immature (85-35) two miles west of Holly Beach, Cameron Parish, on 25 November 1985 (KR;DH).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*). One adult (85-6) along "Rutherford Beach," west of the old mouth of the Mermentau River, Cameron Parish, on 2 March 1985 (TK).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTI-WAKE (*Rissa tridactyla*). One immature (85-16) five miles south of Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River, Plaquemines Parish, on 1 April 1985 (MM); one immature (86-8) at the West Jetty at the mouth of Calcasieu...

BRIDLED TERN (*Sterna anaethetus*) One adult and three immatures (85-22) about 20 miles South-southeast of Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River on 10 June 1985 (MM).

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*). Three adults (84-18), including a pair that successfully bred in Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish from 26 February to 31 March 1984 (DB); a bird on the nest was photographed. This represents the first confirmed nesting record for Louisiana. Inca Doves are clearly increasing in the Lake Charles area, from breeding, immigration, or both. The main colony has grown slowly but steadily (see Muth 1985). The Committee currently regards the Inca Dove as a regular, although local, breeding bird, similar in status to other highly local breeding species such as Crested Caracara or Bronzed Cowbird. Inca Dove has been removed from the Review List.

ANTILLEAN NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles gundlachii*). One (83-3) in New Orleans, Orleans Parish, from 27 May to 17 August 1977 and (presumably the same bird) 24 to 26 May 1978 (JR*;DP,BN, et al). Vocalizations of this bird were tape-recorded by Purrington and the tape was invaluable in documenting this record. The Antillean Nighthawk is very similar to the Common Nighthawk and was only recently recognized by the A.O.U. "Check-List Committee" as a separate species (AOU 1983). The typical "songs" of the Antillean and Common

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Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*), immature, at Fourchon Beach, Lafourche Parish, April 21, 1985. Photo by Phillip Wallace.

J. La. Ornith.
Nighthawks are quite distinct, allowing for field identification of calling birds. This is the only U.S. record to date outside of Florida.

SAY'S PHOEBE (Sayornis saya). One (86-4) in northwestern Red River Parish on Yearwood Road, near La Chute, from 21 January to 9 February 1986 (MH, TK, AE, PL, JA, PD, PM; HJ) This is the seventh or eighth state record and the first for northern Louisiana.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (Myiarchus cinerascens). One collected (LSUMZ 122216) eight miles southwest of Ringgold, Bienville Parish, on 13 January 1985 (PD; DD). There is only one other record for northern Louisiana from Concordia Parish (Lowery 1974).

GRAY KINGBIRD (Tyrannus dominicensis). One (85-23) about 20 miles SSE of Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River (Plaquemines Parish) on 30 May 1985 (MM).

"PLUMBEOUS" SOLITARY VIREO (Vireo solitarius plumbeus). One immature (85-36) collected (LSUMZ 118774) at Hackberry Ridge, west of Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Parish, on 16 September 1984 (VR). This western subspecies breeds in the Great Basin and Rocky Mountains. While the Committee does not normally review records of subspecies, recent unpublished information (fide V. Remsen) suggests that the "Plumbeous" form may represent a full species. This form has now been added to the Review List. I know of no other records of this subspecies in the eastern U.S.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (Icterus parisorum). One immature male (84-38) photographed in New Orleans, Orleans Parish, on 24-25 October 1984 (NoN, MM); one adult male (85-4) at Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Parish, on 19 February 1985 (AS, GS); one adult male (86-3), photographed, at a feeder in Heflin, Webster Parish, from 18 December to 29 March 1986 (VD, PM, BC, PD, et al). There are only six previous records for Louisiana, and no Scott's Oriole had been reported in the state since 1974; the record from Webster Parish is the first from northern Louisiana.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (Carduelis psaltria). One sub-adult male (85-5) photographed at a feeder in Gretna, Jefferson Parish, from 19 January to 20 February 1985 (FB, BC, DP, BN, et al). The only other state record is of a bird in Cameron Parish in 1954.

Unaccepted Records

The following records were not accepted by the Committee. It is rather uncommon for a record to be rejected because the bird was obviously mis-identified. More often, a record may be denied acceptance because the information provided was not sufficient to document the reported occurrence. It is very difficult to supply the Committee with too much detail on a record; it is all too easy, however, to not take enough time to describe a bird well.

WHITE-TAILED HAWK (Buteo albicaudatus). On immature (85-13) four miles south of DeQuincy, Calcasieu Parish, on 19 March 1985.
CALIFORNIA GULL (Larus californicus). One adult (85-32) on "Rutherford Beach," west of the old mouth of the Mermentau River, Cameron Parish, on 19 October 1985.

GLAUCOUS GULL (Larus hyperboreus). One immature (86-9) two miles west of Holly Beach, Cameron Parish, from 25 to 28 April 1985. This bird was "mostly" Glaucous in its features, but the wing-tips were noticeably darker that the rest of the wing, suggesting some degree of hybridization with some other species of gull.

TROPICAL/COUCH'S KING-BIRD (Tyrannus melan-cholicus/ couchii). One (83-19) near Bains, West Feliciana Parish, on 3 June 1983.


AMERICAN TREE SPARROW (Spizella arborea). One (84-29) near Nachitoches, Natchitoches Parish, on 3 February 1977; one (86-1) near Ball, Rapides Parish, on 18 December 1985.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (Icterus parisorum). One female (86-6) at Hefflin, Webster Parish, 21-22 January 1986. The photograph of this bird reveals it to be a female "Baltimore Oriole."

Contributors and Observers


LITERATURE CITED


Appendix: The Review List

The following is a list of all species for which the LOS Bird Records Committee solicits reports (in addition to any species not previously recorded in Louisiana). Included on the Review List are three recognizable geographic varieties that the Committee will review: "Great White Heron" (Great Blue Heron), "Plumbeous Vireo" (Solitary Vireo), and "Gray-headed Junco" (Dark-eyed Junco). Three species (Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Northern Gannet, and Inca Dove) have been deleted from the Review List since it was last published (LOS News No. 113, April 1986), and one species (Golden Eagle) has been added. Contributors are encouraged, although by no means required, to use the Committee's official report form, available from the Secretary (Museum of Zoology, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, 70803-3216).


(e) extirpated from Louisiana
(E) Extinct

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BREEDING RANGE EXPANSION OF CLIFF SWALLOW IN LOUISIANA

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The Cliff Swallow (Hirundo pyrrhonota) nests over much of North America from Alaska and northern Canada south to central Mexico, but it is largely absent as a breeding bird from the southeastern U.S. (AOU 1983). In fact, its breeding range in the eastern U.S. had become rather local and sparse, and it had withdrawn from areas in which it formerly nested (AOU 1983). Recently, however, the Cliff Swallow has reoccupied much of its former range (Robbins et al 1986). Whatever may be happening in the eastern U.S. as a whole, there is good evidence of erratic and discontinuous expansion in the southeastern U.S. (Jackson 1980). The first known nesting in Mississippi occurred in 1954 (Newman 1954), and the initial records for South Carolina and Florida came in 1965 and 1975 respectively (Parnell 1965, Tedards 1965, Ogden 1975, Sykes 1976). By 1975, Louisiana was the only one of the contiguous 48 states in which Cliff Swallow was not known to have bred. The only breeding season records for Louisiana were of one collected near Madisonville, Tangipahoa Parish, on June 12, 1886 (Oberholser, 1938) and two seen near Mira, Caddo Parish on June 28, 1959 (Lowery, 1974).

In summer 1978 an adult Cliff Swallow with fledged young (no nest) was reported from Cameron Parish, southwestern Louisiana (Jackson and Cooley 1978), and in 1980 two nests were found under the Kayo Bayou Bridge, Cameron Parish (Jackson 1980). These records represent the first evidence of nesting in Louisiana. In spring 1981, a colony was discovered in lower St. Tammany Parish east of New Orleans (Toby Bradshaw, pers. comm.), and a subsequent search of the area by the author and others found 81 adults and 41 nests, mostly under two U.S. Hwy. 90 bridges over the Middle Pearl River, just west of the Louisiana-Mississippi border, about two hundred miles east of Cameron Parish. Since then the sites have been censused regularly during the breeding season, with the following results for the number of active nests: 1982, 23 nests; 1983, 66 nests; and 1984, 50+ nests. Although the data were obtained opportunistically, the visits were usually during late May and June. By 1986 the colony, mainly occupying two bridges over the Middle Pearl River, had grown to 170 active nests. The earliest arrival dates noted have been March 21, 1987 and March 22, 1988. Additionally, in summer 1983 a colony was discovered at Lake D'Arbonne, Union Parish, in northeastern Louisiana, two hundred miles north of the previously discovered sites (D.T. Kee, pers. comm.), which in 1986 contained 12-15 nests. These observations suggest that the Cliff Swallow is more widely distributed as a breeding bird in Louisiana than has been suspected.

All nests found in Louisiana have been under the concrete portion of highway bridges over
Cliff Swallow (*Hirundo pyrrhonota*), adult. Pen and ink by Donna L. Dittmann.

water. Few of the nests have actually been over permanent water, and none has been attached to the steel portion of the bridges. In every case Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) colonies have been nearby, typically occupying the over-water sites and nesting on steel girders if present. This use of man-made structures and the likelihood that it has contributed to the range expansion of the Cliff Swallow is rendered more interesting by the expansion of the breeding range of the Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) in southwestern Texas using highway culverts (Martin 1974, Martin and Martin 1978).

*Note added in proof:* In late April 1988, two Cave Swallows were found in the swallow colonies at the US 90 bridge over the West Middle Pearl River. This is, of course, the first Louisiana occurrence. Details of this record and of the possibility of breeding will be published separately.

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Bridled Tern (Sterna anaethetus), immature 70 miles south-southeast

J. of La. Ornith.
UNUSUAL SNOW GOOSE MORTALITY IN SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA

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The lack of data on weather-related mortality in waterfowl is apparent from Stout and Cornwell's (1976) study. Their reported nonhunting waterfowl mortality associated with weather represented 7.4 percent of 2,108,880 waterfowl deaths. Information on in-flight weather-related deaths is sparse for all birds. Most accounts involve lightning (Glasrud 1976; Harrison 1963; Lincoln 1941; Sprunt 1941) and hail (Fyfe 1957; Hochbaum 1955; Smith and Webster 1955). Rate (1957) noted waterfowl mortality caused by a strong downdraft.

On the evening of 25 January 1983, several people called the Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge to report seeing dead Snow Geese (Chen caerulescens) that morning near Jennings, Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana. On 27 January, I traveled to the site, a rural farming area approximately 5 km northwest of Jennings.

Mortality was restricted to an area 3 km wide and 8 km long. I observed about 50 dead geese, many of which had been scavenged by predators. The highest density noted was two to three birds per 20 hectares. Total mortality was estimated at 200-300. All geese were dead; no moribund birds were seen. Birds were found in yards, roads, ditches, as well as in open fields, and the geese appeared to be scattered at random throughout the area. Most birds were lying ventral surface up. In moist fields, geese made indentations in the earth where they had struck the ground, indicating that they had become incapacitated while flying.

Several necropsied carcasses revealed no gross lesions which might be due to infectious disease nor any indication of trauma usually associated with lightning or hail strike. Most had a hematoma in the rump region along the lower vertebrae, which could have resulted from the fall. All exhibited free blood in the pericardial and pleural cavities. No samples were submitted for laboratory analysis because of advanced bacterial decomposition of the carcasses.

Although a definite cause of death could not be established, the pattern of mortality seemed to rule out infectious disease, parasites, or toxicoses. No known waterfowl disease or parasite could cause such a rapid death simultaneously among numerous individuals. Birds affected by toxicoses such as pesticide poisoning might be expected to be recovered emanating from a central point where contact with the agent occurred. Such was not the case. Debilitated birds from any cause are usually too weak to fly, and die on the ground rather than in mid-flight. Furthermore, sick birds would not likely be flying en masse.

The nearest National Weather Service Station (U.S. Department of Commerce 1983) and local residents reported heavy thunderstorms in the area the night before the first dead geese were seen. Although the carcasses showed no signs of lightning or hail.
strike, it is likely that the mortality was caused by these storms. Severe thunderstorms are known to spawn powerful updrafts capable of lifting aircraft many thousands of meters at vertical speeds of 30 m/sec (Ludlam 1980). Coastal thunderheads often tower to over 12,000 m (Schaefer and Day 1981). Barometric pressure and oxygen content of air at 6000 m is one-half that of air at sea level, and by 9000 m it has dropped to 30 percent. It is plausible that a flock of geese caught in an updraft and carried rapidly to such heights would experience respiratory and circulatory stress similar to that found in the necropsied birds. This hypothesis could also explain the distribution of carcasses as the geese succumbed and fell out of the storm at slightly different times and places.

Geese have been observed flying at altitudes near 9000 m in the Himalayas (Swan 1979). These heights were probably achieved over a period of hours, thus allowing time for physiological adjustment. The Louisiana geese were likely carried aloft in a matter of only a few minutes, which would have precluded acclimation and resulted in mortality.

LITERATURE CITED

UTILIZATION OF DEAD BALDCYPRESS BY NESTING BOAT-TAILED GRACKLES

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Most marsh-nesting icterids place their nests in cattail (*Typha* spp.) stands in and around bodies of water (Orians 1961). In addition to *Typha latifolia*, nests of Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*) have been reported in *Cladium jamaicense*, *Scirpus californicus*, *Zizaniopsis miliacea*, and trees, placed near or over water (McIlhenny 1937; Harrison 1975; Bancroft 1986).

The Manchac Wildlife Management Area in northern St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana, is primarily fresh to intermediate marsh (Chabreck and Linscombe 1978), with dominant vegetation consisting of bulltongue (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), alligator-weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), and Walter's millet (*Echinochloa walteri*). Formerly a freshwater swamp, many baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) stumps and snags remain in the area.

During the breeding seasons of 1986 and 1987, 10 active and 5 inactive Boat-tailed Grackle nests were observed in bald-cypress stumps and snags within the management area. Thirteen nests were constructed within stumps completely surrounded by permanent water (Figure 1). Height of these nests above the level of nearby marsh substrate averaged 62.7 cm (range 43.0-97.8 cm). The remaining 2 nests were built atop broken snags; one was 548.6 cm in height and 53.0 cm from the nearest source of permanent water, the other, 609.6 cm in height and 39.0 cm from the nearest permanent water source. All nests were lined with *Sagittaria lancifolia*, and 4 nests had the grasses *Echinochloa walteri* and *Panicum dichotomiflorum* additionally woven into the nest structure. Clutch size of all the active nests averaged 2.6 eggs (range 1-3 eggs). Presumably, the lack of perennial vegetation in the marsh has forced these birds to nest within dead woody material.

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LITERATURE CITED


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Boat-tailed Grackle nest within baldcypress stump. Manchac Wildlife Management Area, St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. Photo by the author.
A FIELD GUIDE TO HAWKS: A REVIEW

by David P. Muth


With the successful appearance in the market-place of one-volume identification books devoted to discrete groups of birds such as gulls, seabirds, shorebirds, and, most recently, tanagers, it is hardly surprising that the Peterson Field Guide Series has joined the competition. A Field Guide to Hawks of North America (there really is no "the" in the title) is the first of what promises to be a series of Peterson-format field guides devoted to difficult groups of North American birds—a guide to the wood warblers is already in the works. There may come a day when there is nothing more of substance that could usefully be communicated concerning the field marks of a given group of birds, or still yet a day when serious birders would not avidly purchase the latest attempt at elucidation, but we are far from that day. Certainly North America's raptors are a group that cry out for more in-depth treatment, not only because they are one of the most difficult groups to master for the evolving birder, but because the master birder is continuously challenged by the array of plumages that are encountered in the field. Hawks successfully provides the more extensive treatment missing from other field guides, and will be a welcome addition to the shelves of any birder. (Note that I say "shelves"; this book is not really for the "field" in the classic sense, though it is small enough to be. Unless one is specifically going on a hawk watch, this book will join the growing reference library stored at home, and occasionally carried in a prohibitively heavy "back-pack"—another misnomer—in the car.)

The text of Hawks is by William S. Clark who has for years been closely associated in the minds of birders with advances in our knowledge of raptor field identification. Clark has criss-crossed the continent, studying raptors in the field and in museums, and his expertise is readily apparent in this volume. The text is remarkably complete and informative, treating in detail the thirty-three regularly occurring and six accidental species—Crane Hawk didn't make it—recorded north of Mexico. Every conceivable plumage is described in detail, broken down by sex, age, molt, region, and color morph, with a section on unusual plumages thrown in. Each species account also covers distinguishing field marks, similar species, modes of flight, behavior, voice, measurements, status and distribution. A section called "Fine Points" contains more obscure, but fascinating and often astonishingly unexpected and useful information.

The plates are by Brian K. Wheeler. They are separated from the main text, but an encapsulated text appears on the facing page, so that page-flipping is not quite as severe a problem here as in some other Peterson guides. On the good side, the individual paintings

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are faithful depictions of plumage patterns and the colors are generally quite accurate. On the other hand the paintings are flat, artless, and primitive. In some instances, e.g. some kites and eagles, the birds seem mis-shapen, and in many they appear disproportionate. This is a serious flaw, since so much of hawk identification depends upon shape and *gestalt*. However, though these paintings lack the verve and feel of a Peterson, a Pratt, or an O'Neill, they are nevertheless the work of someone who has studied his subjects closely. The combined work of Clark and Wheeler shares something with the work of Peter Harrison, whose paintings in *Seabirds* have a similar flat but utilitarian quality.

There are 240 black and white photographs tucked away at the end of the text. This is a useful appendix, a good place to turn while you are still scratching your head over that weird hawk that went by earlier and that doesn't appear in the plates. A photo might be just the medium to capture that strange flight posture that you noted earlier but can't describe. Unfortunately, these photos run the gamut from very useful to useless, and it is hoped that in future editions the worst will be replaced.

Thirty-two of the thirty-three regularly occurring species' accounts are accompanied by a range map. These are very disappointing. There are three shadings: summer, winter, and permanent. No attempt is made to show migration routes or to shade in areas where migrants might reasonably be expected. This is an unfortunate omission since most hawk observations take place during migration. There is no attempt to use the maps to convey any really useful information. For instance, the map for Red-tailed Hawk shows permanent shading for most of the U.S. In the species account, considerable text is devoted to outlining the ranges of various plumage types, but the map gives no help. *A picture is worth*.... Too much material for one map? Then why not more maps—at a painful $13.95 this is a very slim volume of 198 pages. Maps could be used to clear up some of the confusion about color morphs and subspecies—a very real confusion in the text since with some species, such as Red-tailed, its not clear whether the plumage types described under "Description" correspond to the races described later under "Subspecies". Furthermore, maps could be used to help show relative abundance. For instance, no one using these maps for Louisiana would see any difference in the status of Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel, all of which are shown as permant residents statewide. Thus, that Cooper's is a rare breeder statewide in heavily forested areas, an uncommon migrant, and a relatively rare winterer; that Red-tailed is a rare breeder in open areas but absent from the coastal marsh in summer and abundant there and in other open areas in winter; that Red-shouldered is an abundant breeder in forested wetlands, and a common breeder in most upland forests; or that the Kestrel is a common to uncommon breeder in open areas, except the coastal marsh, a common migrant, and an abundant winterer throughout, are all facts lost in this format. It is no better for the more
widespread summer residents such as Mississippi Kite and Broad-winged Hawk, and for rarer birds the maps are actually misleading. Osprey, for instance, is shown as a summer resident along the coast. In fact, it is rarer there at that season than at any other, and its breeding seems to be restricted to a few nests in the southeast. The summer range of the Swallow-tailed Kite is shown as the eastern Florida Parishes with a curious shading reaching down to the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain. In fact, its breeding range seems to be restricted to the Honey Island Swamp and the Atchafalaya Basin, two rather widely disjunct areas, the latter not included within the mapped range. Black-shouldered Kite is shown as a permanent resident along the coast, which is surely a premature conclusion and in any case ignores the state's first breeding record, in the northwest corner of Louisiana. The state is not included in the winter range of Rough-legged Hawk, which is fine, but we are shown within the winter range of the rarer Golden Eagle. And so on. Most of the maps are at best muddled, and many are inaccurate. There are also problems, though not as egregious, in the written range descriptions. These objections may seem like quibbles, but in fact range maps can and should be accurate and they could easily be useful and informative. Much of a beginner's troubles would be eased if they could look at a range map and find out whether they are in the right ballpark. I look forward to future editions of this work, and hope that other new guides in the Peterson Field Guide Series will avoid some of its mistakes. In any case, this book, and this new direction of the series, is welcome.
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Facing p. 1, Carolina Parakeet (Conuropsis carolinensis), in Southern Magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora), pen and ink by Donna L. Dittmann.

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