

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY



No. 27

New Orleans, La.

October 25, 1961

NEW GAME BIRD FOR LA.

Ornithologists and sportsmen may look forward to a new Louisiana species if a recent importation by the Wild Life and Fisheries Commission proves successful. Black Francolins from Pakistan were released this spring in Cameron and Morehouse parishes and initial reports showed them making satisfactory progress. There were unconfirmed reports of two broods of chicks in Cameron and four nests with clutches of eggs were confirmed in Morehouse. It is surely hoped the Cameron birds came through hurricane Carla in good shape.

The francolin is a showy species, larger than the Bobwhite and, like it, is prized as a delicacy on the table. It occurs from southern Turkey, Cyprus and Palestine to the eastern border of India, north to the Caspian Sea and the southern foothills of the Himalayas. Sugar cane, rice and cotton fields with adjacent weed patches are expected to provide excellent cover in terrain similar to its native habitat.

In hunting, the francolin tends to flush well but, like the pheasant, is inclined to run when hunting pressure is great. They usually sit tight on their nests and are not easily frightened away.

This first release of 400 birds is part of a three-year program of the commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Any news on the progress of the species should be reported to the commission or to the LSU Museum of Zoology.

L.O.S FALL MEETING

DECEMBER 2nd IN NEW ORLEANS. Mark your calendar and make your plans now to attend the LOS Fall Meeting in the Crescent City.

A special bulletin will be sent to you about November 1 giving specific details and asking for your advance registration. New Orleans members are already working to make this an occasion that will surpass the 1957 meeting which Johnnie Gee promoted so successfully. Sidney Gauthreaux will be in charge of field trips and has promised to come up with something even fancier than the Say's Phoebe which was the star performer at the last New Orleans gathering.

Arrangements are being made for accommodations at various prices and of various degrees of luxury. The forthcoming bulletin will give full information on this subject.

The dinner meeting, as before, will be held at Tom Pittari's Restaurant and we're sure that the food will be his usual superb best. Burt Monroe is signed up for the program with an account of his recent African trip which is, even now, pouring a steady stream of exotic specimens into the L.S.U. Museum of Zoology. After the meeting, Horace Jeter will conduct a special nocturnal trip to an area noted for its unusual concentration of Scant-feathered Wagtails.

SEE YOU THERE?

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**BIRDS AT THE
ZOO**

BY

MRS. H. A. J. EVANS**-SUSTAINING MEMBERS-**

Bogan, Mrs. Harney S.
515 Drexel Drive,
Shreveport, La.

Ward, Mr. Dallas M.
7423 Cameo St.,
N.O., 24, La.

-REGULAR MEMBERS-

Courtney, Mr. Kent
7314 Zimple St.,
N.O. 18, La.

Dinkel, Mr. and Mrs. John S.
1620 Charlton Drive,
N.O. 22, La.

Doskey, Mrs. Miriam H.
1326 St. Andrew St., Apt. C,
N.O. 13, La.

Gordon, Mr. James Edward
Box 12375, University Stn.,
B.R. 3, La.

Nichols, Mrs. Kenneth C.
1061 E. Alabama Ave.,
Many, La.

Richmond, Mrs. Charles
608 Hector Ave.,
Metairie, La.

Roseman, Mr. and Mrs. Lowell M.
Box 4796 Audubon Stn.,
B.R. 6, La.

Ross, Mr. Gary N.
2677 Myrtle St.,
N.O. 22, La.

-CHANGE OF ADDRESS-

Carter, Mr. Dennis Lee
Dept. of Zoology,
University of Arizona,
Tuscon, Ariz.

-CORRECTION-

Stewart, Mr. James R., Jr.
2225 Meriwether Road,
Shreveport, La.

Members who attend the Fall meeting of the L.O.S. in New Orleans will enjoy a visit to the Audubon Park Zoo. While not to be compared in numbers or variety with some of the fine bird collections to be found elsewhere in the country, Audubon can still provide an entertaining hour or so.

The open air cages left of the Refectory are the homes of many interesting birds from far away places. A Great Bustard received from Spain in exchange for two Louisiana pelicans may be seen walking from one end of its cage to the other. A Cassowary from Australia, a Sarus Crane from India, two Emus from Australia, all seem at home. Peacocks, both white and blue, have the run of the zoo and their colorful displays are enjoyed by everyone.

The flamingo colony by the levee road attracts many visitors and these colorful birds are the delight of visiting photographers. Recently, one visitor took time out from snapping pictures to ask his companion what the strange things were. A successful nesting season added two young birds to the colony. Two species are represented in the collection.

Two of the zoo's famous Whooping Cranes, George and Georgette, may be seen in an enclosure near the lion cages. These birds were hatched in the zoo in the Spring of 1957. One bird hatched this past nesting season to bring the total in the Audubon group up to six at this time.

In the large aviary or flight cage may be seen an albinistic Black-crowned Night Heron, a Roseate Spoonbill, an Egyptian Goose and an assorted collection of ducks, geese, herons and other species. A tropical bird house contains many exotic macaws, parrots, mynahs and other varieties. New facilities for these species are badly needed and Mr. George Douglass, the Park Superintendent, has plans for a new house to be erected soon.

LIFERS IN THE WEST

BY HORACE H. JETER

Vacation time being lifer time, this year I went in June to central California, which was full of promise since my only previous experience in that state had been a brief visit prior to going overseas when in the Army.

My first major locality for birding was Point Lobos State Park near Carmel. On the way, however, I made a point when approaching Los Banos to keep my eyes open for what I hoped would be Lifer #1. Sure enough, in a wet field about $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Los Banos I saw a flock of Tri-colored Blackbirds feeding. The white on the wing was very conspicuous both in flight and on the ground. I was able to study them at my leisure. Also in the area were two male Red-Winged Blackbirds of the "Bicolored" race, apparently on their territories, making direct comparison possible. A short time later I took time out at Bell's Station to renew acquaintance with the Yellow-billed Magpie.

At Point Lobos I found myself in extraordinarily beautiful surroundings and had the additional pleasure of adding 5 lifers in a short period of time. Western Gulls (#2) were always in view and were nesting. On Bird Rock was a large colony of Brandt's Cormorants (#3), while nearby were scattered Pelagic Cormorants (#4) nesting. Perhaps my favorite was the Black Oystercatcher (#5), of striking color and proportions. Near Seal Rock I saw the Pigeon Guillemot (#6) and was able to see the black bar on the white wingpatch as it flew below me. White-crowned Sparrows were common and confiding here; they represented the race nuttalli, much browner and dingier than the ones we have in Louisiana (almost suggesting White-throats instead) and with black-tipped yellow bills.

The next day I headed toward San Francisco, adding 3 more lifers en route. In Natural Bridges State Park in Santa Cruz I found Chestnut-backed Chickadees (#7). Near Watsonville and on the Stanford campus in Palo Alto I saw California Quail (#8). At the latter, also added California Thrasher (#9).

Top of the Mark; Cable cars; Telegraph Hill; Chinatown; Golden Gate; the hungry i; Irish coffee; fisherman's wharf; fog; Japanese tea garden; smoked octopus.

Betty and Harry Adamson-- I'd met Harry by chance two years ago while birding Sonoita Creek in southeastern Arizona. Harry had been very helpful in making suggestions in advance on where to go to see birds on this California trip. They live in Lafayette, east of Berkeley, and it was a treat to see them. The William Pursells, whom I met through Buford Myers-- they live in San Rafael just north of the Golden Gate a few miles. At their homes and on field trips with them-- first the Adamses and then the Pursells -- I added Allen's Hummingbird (#10), Wren-tit (#11) (best look in Tomales Bay State Park), Nuttall's Woodpecker (#12), Lawrence's Goldfinch (#13) (a little beauty-- some on the Mines Road south of Livermore and a pair at Point Reyes near the lighthouse residence), Common Murre (#14)-- a colony of perhaps 100 on the rocks at Point Reyes lighthouse, and Glaucous-winged Gull (#15) (two on the east side of Tomales Bay). I renewed acquaintance with Lewis's Woodpecker, Anna's Hummingbird, Western Bluebird, and Oregon Junco. California Quail fed in the Pursell's back yard; more Chestnut-backed Chickadees were seen in Tomales Bay State Park.

My visit to Yosemite was much too short. Spent most of a day trying for Gray-crowned Rosy Finches without ever getting a good look at one, although a few flew past giving the characteristic rosy finch call. It was a particular pleasure here at Yosemite to meet Walter Fitzpatrick, a charming person who took me straight away to get a couple of excellent lifers. One was a male Calliope Hummingbird (#16), about as cute as a bird can be, and also the Pygmy Owl (#17), which answered and flew up as soon as Fitz began to call -- my only complaint was that it behaved suspiciously like a pet. Later Fitz helped me to get the unusual-looking White-headed Woodpecker (#18).

Before returning home I revisited Monterey in the hope of seeing Heerman's Gull. I was rewarded by getting one immature (#19) among the myriads of Westerns; and here was the biggest surprise of the entire trip-- an Arctic Loon (#20) in summer plumage at the wharf area.

CARLA

BY

SIDNEY A. GAUTHREUX

Louisiana has had her share of hurricanes but she did not really have Carla. The eye of this over-sized storm hit the central Texas coast but its huge proportions caused severe flooding and high winds along the entire coast of Louisiana and even into Mississippi.

It is reasonable to say that every hurricane that has entered the Gulf of Mexico has had sea-birds associated with it. This state has never had an invasion of pelagic species from such a storm or, if so, they have not been recorded. There are at least two reasons that could have contributed to such a lack: (1) the birds actually remained within the storm's eye until it dissipated far inland in another state, or (2) there were no observers on hand at the time to check for the birds thrown free as the hurricane moved inland. This second reason is probably much the more important. Unlike the rather high Atlantic coast, the Gulf Coast immediately floods when a hurricane nears and the high waters recede only after a large portion of the living birds have gone back to sea. The roads are closed to everyone until danger is past. As for the dead birds, they are dispersed throughout the 4,000,000 acres that comprise our coastal marshes. So few roads cover this area that it is strictly by chance that an observer comes by one of the dead birds.

Storms of hurricane size naturally move over flocks of sea-birds feeding far offshore. It is said that these trapped birds move towards and into the storm's eye for refuge. Carla's eye was sixty miles in diameter and, from the time of its birth, reconnaissance flights reported birds so thick that low-level flight was impossible.

Carla was not only possibly the largest storm ever in the Gulf but it also precipitated pelagic birds that were recorded in fair numbers for the first time in Louisiana's history. In the eastern part of the area, on the extreme fringe of the storm, the

following were reported. The usual numbers of Magnificent Frigate-birds invaded the coast and moved inland, one being reported as far in as the Fish Hatchery at Natchitoches. I saw Frigate-birds heading north across Lake Pontchartrain helped along by a fifty mile wind. An immature Brown Booby landed on a vessel in the Gulf south of Pilottown and died after all efforts to feed it failed. A sub-adult Blue-faced Booby was picked up alive near New Iberia and later given to the Wildlife Museum in New Orleans while another landed much further inland at Jackson, north of Baton Rouge.

Dr. Henry Haberyan of Gulfport found a dead Noddy on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and a Sooty Tern was found dead one mile south of Leeville on the Grand Isle road. I saw one Parasitic Jaeger sitting with hundreds of gulls and terns on a sand bar in New Orleans.

Cameron was, of course, totally closed to travel until the storm had passed and the water had gone down. As soon as the roads were open, a group of LSU graduate students went in and they hit the jackpot. Laurie Binford, Delwyn Derrett, Edward Armstrong and Keith Arnold combed a four-mile stretch of coast west of Holly Beach. They found a total of 14 Audubon's Shearwaters, never before recorded in the state. They found one Bridled Tern for another Louisiana first. They found one Noddy and one Sooty Tern, both second state records and they collected the second Red Talarope in Louisiana history.

How many other exotic species have gone unfound will never be known but this was certainly an exciting group of records, even for a gal with the size and force of Carla.

Lovett E. Williams added another species to the ever-growing Louisiana list on April 11 when he identified the first Parasitic Jaegers to be found within the state's offshore boundaries. His ship, the U.S.C.G. Gen-tian, was anchored 5 miles south of the Calcasieu River mouth when he got one adult and 3 immature birds. Later that day, he also sighted 2 immature Pomarine Jaegers but they were too far out to be considered in state waters. Both species have been seen before but have always been too far offshore to be counted.

CANADIAN BIRDING

Ex-President Ava Tabor has taken time off from her Red Cross duties to send us a fine report on the long trip she and Mrs. Electa Levi made this summer. Their main objective was the Wilson Society meeting in Ontario, Canada but they got in a lot of intensive birding before and after. Some high points are given here.

"We left Thibodaux May 31 to attend the W.O.S. meeting at Lake of Bays, Ontario. Decided to go early and try to get the Kirtland's Warbler in Michigan. At Mio, Mr. Vern Dockham took us out and we heard the song but were unable to find the bird. Next A.M. we were out again early and by 7:30 had 3 males and a female. Also heard the insect-like song of the Clay-colored Sparrow and saw nesting Upland Plover. Crossing the Mackinac Bridge into Canada, we spent two days on beautiful Lake Nipissing where we found a pair of Mourning Warblers nesting near the motel and a Veery nest that had been parasitized by a Cowbird.

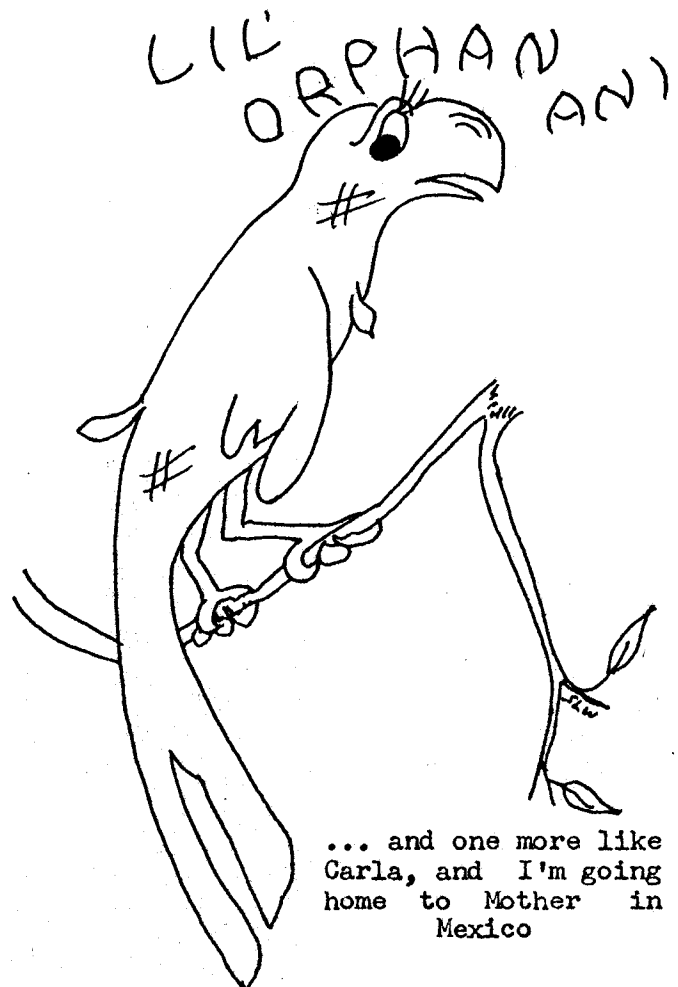
We arrived at the Britannia Hotel for the meeting on June 7. The birding there was fabulous and so were the Black Flies. On one morning field trip, all warblers and Empidonax flycatchers were identified by their songs. On one trip, I went through a thicket and flushed a beautiful male Spruce Grouse, the only one seen on the trip. Over 70 species were seen, some of the more unusual for us including Ruffed Grouse, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Common Raven, Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin and Red Crossbill. Also 7 species of flycatchers and 15 of warblers.

We visited Ottawa and Quebec and then headed for the Gaspé. Before we reached Matane, we saw hundreds of breeding Common Eiders including one raft of over 100 babies attended by 3 females. The young could not have been over 3 or 4 days old. Our next big thrill came on the road to Percé where we had 2 male and a female Yellow-billed Loons swimming and diving in the Gulf of St. Lawrence not more than 30 feet from the car. Also saw a pair of Common Scoter with 4

young and, further along, Black Guillemots, Great Black-backed Gulls and all three species of scoters together.

On June 18 we went by boat to Bonaventure Island Bird Sanctuary where we saw thousands of nesting Gannets, Black Guillemots, Murres and Leach's Petrels. As the boat neared one huge rock, several hundred Murres slid down the side like children down a chute the chute. The Gannets were beautiful, nesting on overhanging rocks and ledges and coming in with some kind of moss in their beaks for nesting material. It was a wonderful trip, long to be remembered.

Our road home took us by Skyline Drive and the Smokies where we had more nesting warblers and other characteristic birds of the region. And so back to Thibodaux, arriving July 1."



... and one more like Carla, and I'm going home to Mother in Mexico