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LOUISIANA
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



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Natchitoches, La.

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SOCIETY NEWS

Fall Meeting -- Cameron, November 19. As announced in the LOS News of last spring the fall meeting of the Society will be held at Cameron, La. on the weekend before Thanksgiving. Accommodations will be scarce as usual so it would be wise to make reservations well ahead at the Gulf or Broussard's Motel or in Lake Charles.

As in the past we will meet at Fred's Restaurant for the evening meal at 6:30 p.m. to count the birds seen during the day, elect officers, and enjoy a program.

Hodges Gardens Meeting. A break in the weather furnished unusual birding for a good turnout of watchers Saturday, October 1. A cold front passed through on Friday night bringing heavy rain. The last of the cloud mass passed over the Gardens at 6 a. m. At 8 a. m., aided by a brisk wind from the warming sunlight, Broadwinged Hawks began to circle. In the course of an hour several groups passed over, some close enough to see the markings in detail. At least 200 passed over the gardens and other circling specks could be seen in the distance. When we were about to leave Fountain Island, our observation point, a gray wisp in the distance

materialized as a circling flock of birds white on one side and dark on the other. As the flock came directly overhead we counted 77 immature White Ibis led by a lone White Pelican. After this grand beginning the rest of the weekend was enjoyable but anticlimatic.

Crescent Bird Club Grows Wings.

After "hatching" at an initial meeting in May, interested birders in the New Orleans area met again early in October and decided to form a definite group, to be known as the Crescent Bird Club. Events will be planned on a monthly basis, more or less. Program meetings will alternate with field trips, with emphasis, hopefully, on the latter.

Any and all interested LOS members of the greater New Orleans area, who missed this first regular meeting, are encouraged and urged to contact Mr. Joseph C. Kennedy, CBC Secretary-Treasurer (13501 Chef Menteur Highway, Apt. 252, New Orleans, La., 70129). If you want to be sure of being notified of all future CBC events, don't delay and send in \$1.00 annual dues, together with your name, address, and zip code to Joe. Your interested friends, though they may not be LOS members, are also most welcome to join our fledgling group.

Cornell Nest Cards. For those of you who gathered data this summer for the Cornell North American Nest Record Card Program, this is the time to send in your cards. You may send them to me (Hugh C. Land, Dept. of Biology, N S C, Natchitoches) or directly to Cornell. Don't bother to return unused cards. The format is being changed for next year.

Gift to Texas Wildlife. At the spring meeting the Society voted to send a donation to Texas Wildlife for the Prairie Chicken fund. By mail the directors agreed upon a gift in the \$25 range so we are sending this amount to Houston. The Prairie Chicken Refuge near Eagle Lake is now open to visitors. If there is enough interest the Society might plan a trip down in the early spring, or whenever the Chickens are booming. This could be combined with a visit to the Aransas Refuge to see Whooping Cranes.

Zip Codes and Membership Dues. Please note that by January, 1967, the post office will charge first class postage for all LOS mailings that do not have zip code numbers in the address. Therefore, please send your zip code to the secretary if it was not included in the recent membership list. Send to: Mrs. Ralph Bodman, 9555 Jefferson Highway, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809. Dues for the coming year are also payable at the same address. Some members are paying ahead for the next five years (\$5.00) which simplifies the bookkeeping and insures you against any change in the yearly dues.

Offshore trips. The offshore trips scheduled for the summer were cancelled since only a few people indicated interest in going. The boat that was under consideration can accommodate 30 to 35 people for a day and would have been too expensive for a small group.

Correspondence Courses in Conservation.

Cornell is offering two series of essays on conservation, the first presents basic biological principles, the second the historical and legal bases for natural resource management. These are non credit courses.

New Books. Among recent ornithological publications is a new guide to field identification entitled, "Birds of North America," which portrays and describes all species, both eastern and western. Illustrated by Arthur Singer and with text by several authors, the book is small but worth investigating at the field edition price of \$2.95, (Golden Press, 850 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022).

LOUISIANA CONSERVATION

Fire Ant Control.

"I feel sure that you observed that the legislature appropriated thousands of dollars to fight fire ants. This will mean that deadly poison will be sprayed FROM THE AIR, killing thrushes and other birds that eat worms on the ground. It also kills small animals. This method of spreading this terrible poison kills more wildlife than all the fire ants destroy."

"In the Saturday Evening Post for Sept. 2, 1961, there appeared an editorial quoting Dr. George J. Wallace, of Michigan State University, as saying that the uncontrolled use of pesticides posed the greatest threat to wild life North America has ever faced! He especially scores the program of fire ant control, and names Louisiana as one of the states most guilty! He recommended that all spraying be placed under the control of a special board. This was FIVE YEARS AGO--and the indiscriminate spraying goes on!"

"Organizations such as yours can have a lot of influence in combatting this outrageous menace to our wildlife."

Caroline Dorman

Predator Control and Pesticides.

"In the May 20 issue of LOS News, I was delighted to see the condemnation of "Predator Control." This business is a hang-over from pioneer days, completely out-moded."

"Intelligent and observant people everywhere have become convinced that most of the so-called "predators" are more beneficial than harmful. Even the poor harried coyotes

and wolves do more good than harm. As for owls, they are almost gone. Farmers will shoot anything called "owl", then if they would use any reasoning, they would know that owls hunt at night, and destroy the wretched rodents. I used to have the gorgeous great-horned, but he is gone. How I miss his solemn call! Let's put on a campaign to end this senseless practice."

"Now another tragic situation: we are rapidly approaching 'Silent Spring.' For several years I have observed the diminishing numbers of my birds. This spring, to my great sorrow, I found that my beloved wood thrushes were practically gone! Just two years ago, James Stewart said, 'You have the heaviest population of wood thrushes that I know of.' I told him that, even then, there were not nearly as many as formerly. I wrote Dr. Lowery about the situation, and I think he put his finger on the chief cause. He said there was a reckless use of insecticides in some South American countries. Well, I looked up the birds that were vanishing, and almost all winter in some South American country! In addition to wood thrushes, wood pewee and Louisiana water-thrush are gone. I used to have swarms of robins in winter; this past season there were almost none. Rachel Carson reported that many robins were destroyed in the U. S. by reckless spraying for Dutch Elm Disease."

"Local 'fogging' for mosquitoes could destroy our birds that take insects on the wing. This would affect all swallows, And our delightful 'big-mouths', Chuck Wills Widow, night hawk. They are almost gone."

"A strong proof that our birds are being destroyed in their winter homes is that my resident birds -- cardinal, Carolina wren, etc., are as plentiful as ever."

"If we don't put up a strong fight we will indeed have 'Silent Spring'! Of course, the companies that manufacture insecticides, deride any criticism, and it will require a stiff fight to place controls on their use."

Caroline Dormon

That Pelican Again. This summer a motion was made in the State legislature to name the Brown Pelican as the official state bird, as it has been unofficially for years. I wonder if anyone there knew that the pelican is gone as a resident bird. This would have been a good time to try for an appropriation to study the problem.

The Level of Conservation in Louisiana. In "Rural Louisiana" for June, 1966, an article entitled, "Bayou Beauty is a Bonus from Watershed," was accompanied by two photographs. The first showed an unsullied bit of Louisiana swampland, brush and willows along a bayou, nearly motionless water reflecting the trees, the sort of spot an alligator or heron would appreciate. The second illustration showed a small stream flowing through a meadow in which a bulldozer was completing the work of leveling the banks and removing the last bit of brush and streamside vegetation. I expected, for a reason that escapes me now, that the article concerned the preserving of some patches of our native swampland from the prevalent activities of the bulldozer. I was shocked to read this caption under the first illustration, "Bayou Rapides was a mean, marshy jungle before clearing," and under the second, "Work almost completed will make Bayou Rapides a 27-mile stream of beauty all the way from Alexandria to Hot Wells."

The article, written by a "conservationist," from the Soil Conservation Service in Alexandria goes something like this (in part): "Bayou Rapides...was a marshy jungle wrapped up in worthless brush. As a part of the watershed project four low-level weirs are being constructed to hold water at about four feet deep so landowners along the way can pump from it. The Red River, Atchafalaya and bayou Boeuf Levee District saw another possibility in addition to increasing the flow of water. They are clearing the banks of all but the big trees that enhance the beauty. They are smoothing the banks so folks can get down to the edge of the water."

"Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Com-

mission will stock the bayou with game fish this fall after the weirs are completed."

"The result will be a 27-mile stream of beauty, with good fishing, from what was once an eyesore."

"Take the scenic drive along Bayou Rapides where you can stop and fish, and the end will be boating, swimming, picnicking, camping, or just seeing the sights. Help from a lot of city, parish, state, and Federal agencies made it a thing of beauty."

Actually the project may have merit for irrigation and fishing, but to bill it as beautification makes one wonder if the men in our state services have any desire to preserve any of our natural settings from the bulldozer. In my opinion we don't make beautiful places in nature, we preserve them.
Hugh Land

NATIONAL CONSERVATION

Inventory of Texas Natural Areas. Sixty-five conservationists, including twenty-biologists and two geologists, have contributed to the first draft of an inventory of significant natural areas of Texas. This inventory will be the basis for assessing damage under the Texas Water Plan and for recommending changes to avoid damage. By referring to the inventory, conservationists can determine where roads, dams, and developments should not be permitted in the public interest.

The inventory will also serve as a potential source of nature preserves, both public and private. It may also be used as a guide to field trip areas for conservationists, archaeologists and students.

The inventory already contains more than a thousand natural areas. It is already the most highly developed state inventory in the nation, except for Ohio and possibly California. (T.O.S. Newsletter) but an informal testing program is included. The cost for either course is \$10.00 and the final enrollment date is December-

31, 1966. Address inquiries to: Prof. Richard J. McNeil, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850.

CONSERVATION BATTLE

1. Arkansas Opens Predator Hunt. Little Rock (AP)-- The hunting season will be open on predators the year-round, beginning Wednesday, the state Game and Fish Commission said Saturday.

Under existing rules, only crows may be hunted during the period between game seasons.

"On the new no-closed season list are crows, hawks, owls, English sparrows, starlings, wolves, bobcats, coyotes, gophers, groundhogs, nutria, muskrat and beaver." (Shreveport Times, June 1966.)

2. The National Audubon Society came out with this comment on the Arkansas decision:

"Backward Step in Arkansas. In an era when most states are providing, or moving toward, full legal protection for the birds of prey because of their diminishing numbers and in recognition of their beneficial role in nature, the State of Arkansas has taken a dismaying backward step. The state's Game and Fish Commission has established a year-around open season on all hawks and owls, along with crows, English sparrows, starlings, wolves, bobcats, coyotes, groundhogs, gophers, nutria, muskrats and beaver.

"When questioned on reasons for the change, Director Hugh Hackler of the Arkansas Game and Fish Department said, "The Commission realized they had taken the rights of the predator hunter away from him and they wish to restore them."

"The Arkansas, Pulaski County, and South Arkansas Audubon Societies, and other conservation groups, are trying

to persuade the Commission to reverse its ruling." (Audubon Conservation Guide)

3. "Arkansas Changes Its Mind. In a reversal of its June 15 decision, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has declared in that state, 'except when destroying wildlife, domestic fowl or livestock.' Eagles, vultures, buzzards and kites are included in the new protective ruling. The phrase 'except when destroying wildlife' looks like a serious loophole, perhaps inadvertent, because these birds all feed naturally on mice, rabbits, snakes and other wild animals. Although far from a total solution to the diminishing numbers of these birds of prey, this is a step forward in Arkansas."

"The change is due in large part to the work of the Audubon Societies of Arkansas, Pulaski County, and South Arkansas, along with all conservation-minded people in that State, now the 46th to offer protection to hawks and owls." (From the National Audubon Conservation Guide.)

Help for our Estuarine Habitats:

"The Estuarine Areas bill sponsored by Rep. John D. Dingell (Mich.), H. R. 13447, was approved with amendments Aug. 25 by the House Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation. Chief purposes of this trail-blazing conservation measure are to authorize a nationwide study of estuaries and related coastal wetlands and to set up procedures for protecting such areas in a 'national system of estuarine areas.' As amended the bill incorporates some provisions of H. R. 11236, the bill by Rep. Herbert Tenzer (N.Y.) to establish a 'Long Island National Wetlands Conservation Area.' One of the key provisions would require the approval of the Secretary of the Interior before the Army Engineers could issue a permit for dredging or filling in an estuarine area." (Audubon Conservation Guide.)

This is important to Louisiana since our extensive estuarine areas include the wintering grounds of thousands of ducks and geese

and the spawning ground of the economically important shrimp.

Conservationists Can Be Encouraged in the knowledge that their continued protests have just about stymied any further action in this session of Congress on the bill that would authorize dams in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. It appears that not many congressmen, except those from a half-dozen or so southwestern states, wish to go before their constituents this fall trying to explain why they voted to mar the unspoiled grandeur of the world's greatest scenic and geologic wonder.

"The scheme is far from dead, however. The Bureau of Reclamation and its western-state lobbies never give up easily on one of their dam-building dreams. The battle will be continued in the next Congress. The preservation of the Grand Canyon depends upon the continued, outspoken alertness of the American people." (Audubon Conservation Guide.)

LATE NEWS

"A Lifetime With The Birds." "An Ornithological Logbook" by Earl R. Greene, the first president of the Louisiana Ornithological Society, is now available from Edwards Brothers, Inc., 2500 South State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104, at \$6.00.

Mr. Greene, long with the Fish and Wildlife Service and experienced in birding and conservation, is also a gifted writer and his account, which spans many years in the field during a critical period in the development of an American conservation conscience, is well worth reading.

Pelican Information Wanted in Florida. The Brown Pelican has been declining in numbers along the shores of Florida and adjoining states. It is almost unknown now along the coast of Louisiana where the Brown Pelican is the state bird. The Florida Audubon Soc. is now gathering basic information on nesting: Pelican Nesting Area, Density (in no. of individuals), and Seasonal Distribution.