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LOUISIANA
ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY



No. 43

Lafayette, Louisiana

February 6, 1967

GREETINGS from your new officers elected at the Annual Fall Meeting of the LOS held at Cameron, Louisiana, November 19-20, 1966

President: Marshall B. Eyster
226 Montaigne Drive
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501

Vice-President: Gayle T. Strickland
1744 Brecade Drive
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Sec.-Treas.: Mrs. Helga Cernicek
St. Martin's School
5309 Airline Highway
Metairie, Louisiana 70003

Directors: Sidney A. Gauthreaux
Museum of Natural Science, LSU
Baton Rouge, La. 70803

Robert M. LaVal
110 Willow Street
Homer, Louisiana

James Stewart
2225 Meriwether Road
Shreveport, La. 71108

RESUME OF FALL MEETING

The 1966 Fall Meeting was a marked success. We had one of the best turnouts with over 65 people in attendance. Some arrived Friday evening and consequently were able to get in a full day of birding on Saturday. Others arriving on Saturday also observed their share of birds in that great bird-paradise known as Cameron Parish.

The Saturday evening dinner meeting was held at the Cameron Recreation Hall where Representative Conway LeBleu from Cameron Parish, his wife and Mr. E.J. Dronet from the Calcasieu Marine National Bank prepared a savory boiled shrimp dinner for the LOS members. Everyone had their appetites satiated by the delicious shrimp which was donated by the business men of Cameron. We are all grateful to these people for their fine hospitality.

After the dinner, the meeting was opened by Dr. Hugh Land, who on behalf of the LOS, thanked the hosts for the dinner.

In the absence of Mrs. Ralph Bodman, Dr. George Lowery gave the following Secretary-Treasurer's financial report:

On Hand - April 29, 1966	\$ 891.74
Receipts	96.26
Total	<u>988.00</u>
Disbursements	498.05
Balance	<u>489.95</u>

Special Fund in New Orleans Bank	1,206.92
Total Assets	\$ <u>1,696.87</u>
Nov. 19, 1966	

(Signed) Mrs. Ralph Bodman

It was indicated that Mrs. Bodman would not be able to continue as Secretary-Treasurer because she will be unable to attend the meetings.

Dr. Lowery, as Chairman, then presented the slate of officers proposed by the Nominating Committee and the slate was accepted by acclamation.

Sidney Gauthreaux then capably compiled the list of birds seen for the day. The final results totaled 167 species. However the most unusual bird was not seen until the next morning when Gayle Strickland and his party spotted a longspur on the side of the road about a mile west of the ferry. At that point, Dr. Lowery arrived on the scene and identified it as a male Chestnut-collared Longspur, a new bird for Cameron Parish.

The evening program on Guatemala was presented by Hugh Land who showed slides that he had taken on his three trips to that country. His talk was further enhanced with bird specimens he had collected there. He discussed the ecology of the country and indicated some of the representative birds of several different ecological communities. It was a particularly enjoyable program and after the meeting the members were able to examine the specimens more closely.

We were honored at the meeting by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Strickling of Houston. Jerry is the capable President of the TOS.

Following the meeting, the Executive Committee appointed your new President as Editor of the LOS NEWS for the ensuing year.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

There was no formal discussion at the Fall Meeting concerning any Christmas Censuses to be taken, but we do know that several were made. Please send the Editor information about your count so that it may be included in the next LOS NEWS.

DUES

Annual dues of \$1.00 for 1967 are now payable. Please do not procrastinate. Send your check to Mrs. Helga Cernicek today. If your address and zip code is not listed correctly on the Sept., 1966 Membership List, please indicate changes when you send your check.

Some members are paying ahead for the next five years (\$5.00 for a regular membership, etc.) which simplifies the bookkeeping and insures the individual against any change in the yearly dues.

1967 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Late March---Boat trip to Delta Refuge and offshore islands.
 April 14-16---Chicot State Park
 April 29-30---Spring Meeting at Cameron
 June-----Summer Breeding Bird Counts
 June or July-Vermilion Bay boat trip
 October-----Zemurrays Garden and Fairview
 Nov. 18-19 or---Fall Meeting at Cameron
 Dec. 2-3
 Late December-Christmas Bird Counts state wide.

This is largely a tentative schedule and your opinions regarding it would be sincerely welcomed. Several people have asked me to please announce program dates

well in advance since their schedules are crowded.

Because of the great demand for the Group Camp at Chicot State Park, I reserved it and paid the necessary deposit in early December so that the LOS will have the Camp for the weekend of April 14-16. In recent years, the LOS has twice enjoyed Chicot Park and been rewarded with goodly numbers of birds. The Park is centrally located, being about half way between New Orleans and Shreveport, or approximately 150 miles from these two extremes. You will be further informed about Chicot in the next newsletter but for the benefit of those that have not been there, the Group Camp contains 20 rustic cabins that can accommodate 125 persons, a large mess hall with stoves and a walk-in refrigerator, and a large separate meeting building. There are also some furnished vacation cabins at Chicot (outside the Group Camp area) and two motels in Ville Platte.

Traditionally the big Spring Meeting is held at Cameron, during the last week-end in April. This will mean two big gatherings for the LOS in April, but this is the best month for birding in Louisiana.

BOAT TRIP, ANYONE?

The Crescent Bird Club is currently making plans for an all-day boat trip this spring (late March or thereabouts) to the Delta Migratory Waterfowl Refuge area and the Tern Islands Reservation Bird Sanctuary and possibly (depending on weather and boat conditions) out to the Breton Bird Refuge Island group. They are trying to obtain a boat through the La. Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, which would mean more reasonable charges per person than a commercially chartered boat. The boat would leave from Venice (72 miles from New Orleans once one crosses the Greater N.O. Bridge) early in the morning, most likely on a Saturday. The CBC extends this invitation to all LOS members to join them. Though it might necessitate a drive to New Orleans and an overnight stay, LOS members may find this field trip different and well

worth their while.

Since it is imperative at this time to have an idea of how many members outside the Greater New Orleans area might be interested, please drop a line at once to our Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Helga Cernicek, who is in charge of making the arrangements.

CHRISTMAS COUNTS IN JUNE?

Your President would like to make an inquiry to determine if the LOS Members would be interested in making a statewide, parish by parish, census of the birds in Louisiana during the breeding season, perhaps about the middle of June. As a group, the LOS has collected considerable data concerning our wintering populations of birds but we have done very little about our summer birds. With our large membership, we probably have members living in over half the parishes of the state and if just one person in each of these parishes would help, we would obtain a more precise picture of our avifauna situation statewide. Even the distribution of some of our common breeding birds is not well known. For example, the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is generally considered to be a common summer resident throughout Louisiana, but during the 16 years that I have spent studying the birds of Lafayette Parish, I have never seen this species during the month of May and only twice each month during June and July. It would be interesting to determine if this species is rare during the summer in the whole southwestern prairie area of the state.

If summer counts were to become an annual event, we might discover some interesting yearly fluctuations in our nesting birds. We could keep a closer watch on such species as the Eastern Bluebird and might find some progressive decline in a species due to pesticides or other factors, a situation that might not be otherwise discernible. The Brown Pelican disappeared right before our eyes. Let's not let other birds suffer the same unheralded demise.

Drop your President a note if you feel that this might be a worthwhile project for the LOS. When do you feel would be the best time to obtain a valid picture of our breeding birds? What ground rules would you suggest? A 15-mile diameter circle as for the Christmas Counts? Or confined to but including all areas in any given parish? Should it be restricted to one weekend statewide? Or should it be over a longer period, even perhaps anytime during the month of June? Should it be restricted to a single 24-hour period? Or would it be permissible to make several shorter counts on several different weekends in various parts of a parish? To be of greater value the more uniform the various parish counts are, the better. Any project of this sort involving a large group of people living all over the State will have to be planned well in advance. June will be here before we know it, so please write in the next couple of days if possible and fill the mail with your ideas.

CONSERVATION CORNER

51 California Condors—On October 18 and 19 1966, over 100 observers sighted what was believed to have been 51 different individual California Condors. A similar count in 1965 found 38 birds. The larger count in 1966 was probably due to improved census techniques and not to an actual increase in the condor population. By wing markings, the spotters estimated that about 13 of the birds were immature, that is less than five years old.

43 Whooping Cranes—In case you have not heard, forty-three Whooping Cranes returned to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas this past fall. This is one less than the number that headed north last spring. Five of those that came south were young birds which means that six that went north did not come back.

Bald Eagles—At the National Audubon Society Convention at Sacramento, California in November, Roland C. Clement,

staff biologist, called for stronger protective laws for the birds of prey in some states and for better enforcement in states that now have good laws. Also at the convention, Alexander Sprunt IV reported on a five-year study of the Bald Eagle and indicated an accelerated decline of the species in many places but particularly along the whole eastern seaboard and around the Great Lakes.

One in 11 Million, reports Census Bureau—Bird watchers have finally been given official recognition by the U.S. Government. A 1965 U.S. Census Bureau survey disclosed that there are 11,300,000 people watching birds in the U.S. The figure is broken down into 8,196,000 bird watchers and 3,113,000 bird and wildlife photographers. It is reported that details about the age, sex, and education of the bird watchers will be made public in a few months by the Department of Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. So you can see we are not alone in this grand advocacy.

The above were abstracted from the Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide.

Did you hear that Louisiana just lost two Whooping Cranes to Texas? Crip and Rosie have been transferred from New Orleans Audubon Park Zoo to the San Antonio Zoo.

25th Season for Audubon Wildlife Films—The National Audubon Society is now preparing for its 25th season of Audubon Wildlife Films. These excellent color movies are presented in 250 communities throughout the North American continent, but only Lafayette and Shreveport in Louisiana at the present time sponsor these programs. These movies are photographed and narrated by some of this country's outstanding wildlife photographers and many are well known ornithologists such as Roger Tory Peterson, Olin S. Pettingill, Allan D. Cruickshank, and G. Stuart Keith. Here is an opportunity to meet some of these famous

photographers in person. Why not investigate the possibility of presenting these programs in your community? If interested write:

Lecture Department
National Audubon Society
1130 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10028

BIRDS IN AUSTRALIA

by John P. Gee

(Editor's note: A year ago John P. Gee and his family were transferred to Australia by the oil company for which he works. For the benefit of any LOS member who has not heard of John's outstanding achievements as an ornithologist in Louisiana let me state that he was President of the LOS for the year 1957 and added many new species of birds to the state list.

John has written several letters to his friends here in Louisiana telling of his birding experiences in Australia. The following excerpts which have been somewhat edited are from a letter to Sidney Gauthreaux; it is dated August 8th, from Brisbane.)

"There is a good variety of birds and the numbers are as great as in the rich Gulf Coast area of Louisiana. However, I'm going to restrict this letter to the more representative and more noticeable birds around Brisbane. Most of the lower orders of birds are represented but very few of the species are identical to those in Louisiana. A few that are, include the Osprey, Glossy Ibis, Gull-billed and Caspian Terns and Golden Plover. One of the plovers called the Red-capped Dotterel is conspecific with the Snowy Plover but its upperparts are as dark as a Semi-palmated Plover and its crown is reddish. Among the higher groups, many, if not most, of the birds are very strange and belong to families not found in Louisiana. A lot of the bird groups like jays and woodpeckers are missing. One of the most evident characteristics is the dominance of black and white birds. And, many of the common

dooryard and roadside birds are large in comparison to those in Louisiana.

The winter in Brisbane is amazing. The daytime high is almost always between 65° and 75° and the nighttime low is 50°-60°. Almost everyday is like the loveliest days of the year in New Orleans. The area around Brisbane is rich and varied—ocean, bays, islands, mangrove swamps, tidal flats rocky headlands, hills, lakes and farms. There are many lovely spots along rivers, on mountain tops or near quiet brooks and rocky gorges. Much of the Australian "bush," as they call their forest, is surprisingly homogenous. It is dry, and usually there is little undergrowth, just grass and scattered shrubs. Eucalyptus (gums) and wattles (acacias) predominate. The amazing thing is that this dominant bushland is the home of much, if not most, of Australia's rich fauna.

Near Brisbane there are several patches of rain forest, and to the north and south there are extensive rain forests. The trees are very tall and the forest is cool and dark, much of it is impenetrable. One of the most interesting trees is the strangler fig but there are palms and tree ferns.

There seem to be no large marshes but there are swamps where a gum-like tree called the "paperbark" or "tea-tree" predominates and there are numerous marshy ponds and sloughs.

Now for the birds. The Australian equivalent of the Killdeer is the Spur-winged Plover. It prefers parade grounds, parking areas, airports and even lawns, but is nearly twice the size of a Killdeer. In flight it has a beautiful black and grey pattern and there is a large yellow wattle on the face. There is only one gull, the Silver Gull, but it is a pretty one. It has a very light grey mantle, bright red bill and feet and an awful croaking voice.

One of the best-known and most highly regarded Australian birds is the Willie

Wagtail. That is its accepted common name! It is an Old World flycatcher that is very tame and switches its tail back and forth sideways while it scolds and sings. Another dooryard bird is the Mudlark which walks on the lawn like a lark but also spends much time in the trees overhead. Some of its notes remind one of the bugling call of the Blue Jay and it is very active and noisy like the jays.

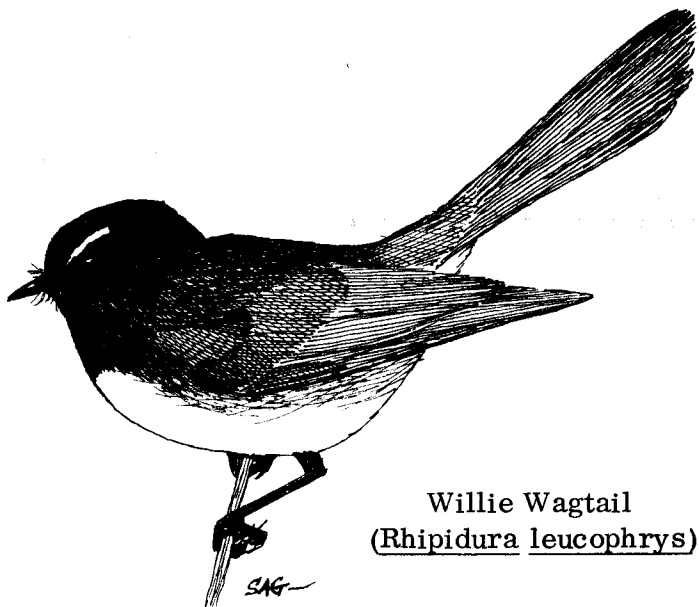
One of the most conspicuous birds is the "Micky" or Noisy Miner. It is mostly grey with a black and yellow face and bright yellow bill and conspicuous white tip to the tail. The first Mickys I saw were bathing in a swimming pool by plunging headfirst into the water, flying out and shaking themselves. They were obviously enjoying themselves immensely and looked like a bunch of small boys. Until I saw the Micky feeding on flowers it was hard to realize that it was a honeyeater.

Australia has more kinds of honeyeaters than any other type of bird. Most typical ones are rather slender and have thin curved bills like one would expect nectar-drinkers to have. Strange honeyeaters are the friar-birds which are big and scrawny with bare black faces and peculiar black knobs on their heads.

One peculiarity of the parts of Australia I have seen is the abundance of big birds. One does not have to go to the coast to see ibises, spoonbills, eagles and cormorants. From my porch I can see the White-breasted Sea Eagle which is closely related to the Bald Eagle. It has very broad wings and a beautiful flight pattern which reminds me somewhat of that of the White-tailed Hawk of Mexico. Its head and tail are white. Even more lovely is the Red-backed Sea Eagle which is rich chestnut with a white head and breast. Even the Wedge-tailed Eagle can be seen close to the city. It is a relative of the Golden Eagle. Another lovely common hawk is the Black-shouldered Kite which is very much like the White-tailed Kite of America.

Getting back to smaller birds, I must mention the Whipbird which lives in the ravine next to our house. The male's voice is like the cracking of a blacksnake whip-- a loud whistling swish ending with a sharp crack. The most interesting thing is that the female answers with two or three sharp pretty whistles but sings them so quickly it all sounds like one bird's song. It is a peculiar experience to stand between a pair while they are singing.

Finally, you may already know that Australia has more kinds of parrots than any other country. They are conspicuous and beautiful. Typical of the brush-tongued nectar-eaters is the Rainbow Lorikeet which has a blue head and belly, red breast and also much green and yellow. The rosellas are larger with long graceful tails. The commonest here is the Pale-headed Rosella with yellow head, turquoise underparts, yellow, black and blue upper parts and red crissum. Very dull! The even prettier Eastern Rosella is rare in Brisbane but we have a pair frequenting our yard. The head and chest are scarlet, cheeks white, underparts yellow. Fantastic!"



Willie Wagtail
(Rhipidura leucophrys)

FLASH!!

PURPLE MARTINS ARE HERE!!

Those always anxiously awaited harbingers of spring — the first Purple Martins — arrived at False River on 21 January when several advance scouts made their appearance. This record early date for the interior of the state will be welcomed news to everyone who enjoys having these fine birds in their yard and who looks forward each year to the return of the first individuals from their winter quarters. In this regard we do not differ from the Early American Indians who hung gourds to attract martins, or from our rugged ancestors who soon learned of the pleasures and benefits to be derived from having a colony of martins nearby.

Most LOS members probably already have martin houses, but those who do not may be interested in building one themselves or in purchasing one already built from Henry P. Allendorph of Oscar, Louisiana. Mr. Allendorph is a retired sugar mill engineer of Pointe Coupe Parish who is a sincere and dedicated promoter of the Purple Martin. As a hobby and as an outlet for his enthusiasm for Purple Martins, he has converted his workshop and part of his home on the banks of False River into an assembly line for the mass production of his well-designed and efficient box, which is of a modular construction permitting the utilization of a single story or the addition of two or more floors as one may wish. George Lowery, who we all know is an ardent Purple Martin enthusiast (he devoted more space to this species in LOUISIANA BIRDS than to any other species), heartily endorses the Allendorph box and now has one in his yard along with two of his 18-compartment houses of older vintage. Allendorph did not have enough boxes last spring to meet his demand; so, during the fall and winter just past he managed to assemble 4,500 boxes and now has them ready for the coming season. His prices are very reasonable — if you don't believe it, try building a martin house yourself, keeping track of everything you buy in the way of wood, screws, paint, and roofing material. And don't forget to

charge against the cost at least \$1.25 (the current minimum hourly wage) for every hour you spend on the job.

What better project could LOS members undertake at this time than to encourage their friends and acquaintances to provide nesting boxes for this delightful bird. To those who do the reward will be great. And who knows, the interest thereby kindled might lead to the production of another first-rate field ornithologist.

EARLE GREENE'S

"A LIFETIME WITH THE BIRDS"

A Review

People are curious about people. Even bird people are curious about other bird people. We wonder about each other—about each other's lives. But our conversation so seldom gets away from birds that many of our friends remain only half-known to us. Were you aware, for instance, that John Gee speaks Japanese? Could you say why?

Several years ago, to help LOS members to become better acquainted, the LOS NEWS began a series on Who's Who in the LOS. The ideal subject for the first story would have been Earle Rosenbury Greene, the affable founder of our organization. But Earle had moved to California, temporarily beyond the reach of an interviewer. So the spotlight fittingly shifted to Ava Tabor, then our President. Soon afterward, the editing of the NEWS changed hands. The series was not continued.

Now Earle has provided his own biography in sumptuous style—404 pages of privately-printed letter press with 130 photographs, appropriately bound in green hard covers bearing gold-leaf lettering and a drawing of two night-hawks flying. This Ornithological Logbook, as it is subtitled, traces Earle's career from his boyhood in Georgia until the present time. How long a career it has been is attested by his having shaken hands with Grover Cleveland. From that point, his presidential contacts on a national scale declined. He glimpsed

Franklin Roosevelt at Key West; but, when he tried to photograph Eisenhower passing in a motorcade, he framed the wrong car in the view finder and missed seeing Ike altogether. Meanwhile, in naturalists' circles, his presidential fortunes were on the rise. He became President of the Atlanta Bird Club in 1929 and President of the Georgia Ornithological Society in 1938. He had been one of the founders of both these groups and of the Georgia Society of Naturalists as well. The strong organizational bent he thus acquired led upon his moving to New Orleans to the formation of the Louisiana Ornithological Society in 1949, with Earle as its first President.

Earle says that readers have remarked to him that his Logbook, which moves straight down the path of chronological order with hardly a deviation, is less a book about birds than a book about those who study them. An examination of the index bears out the statement: the more than 500 entries for birds are decisively outnumbered by the more than 600 entries for names of persons. Not all the latter pertain to bird enthusiasts: the book records, for example, a call on Vincent Price, the actor and art collector, and a "possum" hunt with Margaret Mitchell, who was later to become famous as the author of "Gone With the Wind." But Earle's contacts with real bird enthusiasts have been wide: they have included the great, the near-great, the not great, and the in-between -- scientists and plain birders, equally valued as friends. If you were acquainted at all with Earle while he was living in Louisiana, chances are that you are in the book. And his chronicle is likely to evoke for you memories of half-forgotten events or of mutual acquaintances of whom you have long since lost track.

As a devotee of natural history since childhood days, as an employee of the U. S.

Fish and Wildlife Service (at Lake Mattamuskeet, Key West, and the Okefenokee Swamp), as a frequent traveller, as an attendant at many ornithological meetings, and as a veteran Christmas "census" taker, Earle Greene does have a broad knowledge of birds. Whatever he has learned of ornithological importance, he has already promptly set down in a series of published writings that include five major titles and more than 50 shorter contributions. Among the items he has added, or has re-enforced by repetition in his Logbook, are such pleasant bits of curiosa as the Black Phoebes that built a nest on a clothesline, a hummingbird nesting atop the L on a neon COCKTAIL sign, observations of a lone Cliff Swallow nest on the side of a building, and the Palm Warbler that lit on his knee aboard a ship in the Atlantic.

To those of us who went afield with him during his years in Louisiana, Earle always seemed a placidly relaxed observer, not much affected by the lure of the big list. Yet late in life, at an age when succeeding did not appear too likely, he decided to qualify for the "600 Club" -- the exclusive group who have seen 600 or more species of birds in the wild within the limits covered by the 1957 edition of the Check-list of North American birds. So in April 1965, he set out alone on the longest automobile trip he has ever made -- a 19,094-mile loop through the United States and Canada. The book follows him on this itinerary, which produced the results he was seeking. In 1966, he was formally admitted to the Club. The fact that there were only 25 other members at that time is proof of the difficulty of his feat and the strength of his determination.

You may purchase A LIFETIME WITH THE BIRDS from Edwards Brothers, Inc., 2500 South State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. The price is \$6.00.