

No. 48

Lafayette, Louisiana

April 11, 1968

LOS SPRING ACTIVITIES

Two auspicious events have been planned for the LOS members this spring. First we have the big day count at Cameron on the weekend of April 27-28 followed two weeks later by the outing at Chicot State Park on May 10-12.

Both the Cameron and the Chicot Park areas are becoming so well known to the members of the LOS that one hesitates to say much about them for fear of being repetitious. On the other hand, there are those members, especially new ones, that have not enjoyed the birding available in these two locales. There have been a number of requests made to the Secretary and to myself to the affect that some particulars be included in the News about these areas to help people find the better birding places. Consequently an article is included in this issue discussing these two fine birding regions. It is suggested that members bring this copy of the LOS News to Cameron and to the Group Camp at Chicot.

The Cameron area is unexcelled by any other birding area in the state. Since accommodations are somewhat limited in Cameron it is suggested that members make reservations ahead of time. There are two motels, Broussard's and The Gulf. Other possibilities are renting one of the private camps

located in Hollybeach or tenting along the beach between Hollybeach and Johnsons Bayou. The Saturday night supper meeting and program will be as usual, at Fred's Restaurant in Cameron. When you first arrive in Cameron it would be appreciated if you would stop at Fred's and sign the roster. Also, you may, at that time, pick up one of the maps of the Cameron area. We will plan on starting the evening program at 8 p. m. Saturday, so please judge your evening meal time accordingly. It is suggested that should you arrive late for dinner that you take a table near the back of the room or to the side, so that we can arrange the front tables by 8 p.m. for the program.

The major attractions on the program will be Miss Mary Lewis and Mr. Wayne Blank who will show Kodachromes and talk about their trip to Africa last summer. This should be a most interesting presentation.

Chicot State Park although not as prolific a place to bird as Cameron, as far as total number of species is concerned, is still a commendable birding area. We have never seen less than 100 species and some of these like the Swallow-tailed Kite, Anhinga, Pileated Woodpecker and Swainson's Warbler are rarely, if ever, seen at

Cameron.

Chicot State Park is in Evangeline Parish about 7 miles by paved road from Ville Platte. Group Camp Area I has been reserved for our exclusive use from Friday afternoon May 10 until Sunday afternoon. To get to the Group Camp after entering the main gate turn right just past the Superintendent's residence. Drive about 3/4 of a mile through lovely oak-hickory woods until you reach the Camp. The low gate at the Group Camp entrance may be closed to keep out non-LOS visitors but will not be locked, so swing it open and come on in. The Group Camp is located on the shore of 2400-acre Lake Chicot. The large mess hall will serve as our base camp. It is equipped with two gas stoves and ovens, a large walk-in refrigerator, large cooking pots and pans, dishes, cups, and silverware and plenty of hot water. A dozen or more picnic tables are located in the mess hall so you can eat inside without fear of mosquitoes or rain. All these facilities are there for your use as well as 20 rustic cabins, a large meeting hall where we will hold our evening programs, and four separate restrooms. The latter are with flush toilets, wash basins and hot showers.

The cabins have single or double bunk beds and can accommodate six to eight people. This makes it very convenient for a family group. On the other hand if you want to sleep alone you can have a whole cabin to yourself if we have room. There is electricity but no heat in the cabins. Each person must supply his own pillow, linens and blanket. Also bring your own food for as many meals as you and your family will need. Bring your perishables in a cardboard box and keep them in the walk-in refrigerator.

The charge for the use of the Group Camp including the cabins is only \$1.00 per night for an adult and \$.60 per child under 18, payable to the Secretary-Treasurer on arrival. We are hoping that if you come to Chicot that you will stay at the Group Camp since this affords an excellent opportunity for LOS members to become better acquainted.

There are also 12 rustic vacation cabins elsewhere in the park that can be rented for about \$9.00 per cabin per night. Each has two bedrooms with double beds and are furnished with linens, refrigerator, cooking and sanitary facilities. If interested, make your reservation in advance by writing the Cabin Custodian, Chicot State Park, Route 3, Box 494, Ville Platte, La., or by calling 363-2403 Ville Platte. There is also a tent-camping and trailer area near the south boat dock that may be used for a nominal fee. Several motels and restaurants are located in Ville Platte.

Programs are being planned for 8 PM for both Friday and Saturday in the meeting hall. A film is on the agenda for Friday and a Kodachrome slide presentation on "Colorful Colorado--and Some of its Bird Life" is planned for Saturday evening. Saturday morning there will be guided bird walks along some of the scenic foot-trails starting from the mess hall for those people that wish to participate. We can also have a conducted motorcade as we had last year to some of the nearby rice fields, Miller's Lake and the Arboretum. Row boats will be available if you wish to paddle around in the wooded coves on Lake Chicot. Bring a motor if you like.

#### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

In addition to the Lafayette count reported in the last LOS News we now have two other reports.

Hugh Land writes that "The fourth Natchitoches Christmas Count produced a record 97 species, one of which probably should not be counted--a crippled Purple Gallinule at the Federal Fish Hatchery. No large concentrations of blackbirds were encountered this year, but a good variety of waterbirds, warblers, and sparrows were seen. The number of participants was again about 15, with two visitors, James Stewart and Bob LaVal, turning in excellent lists." This was a worthy increase over their 85 species of the previous year.

Mrs. Cernicek, the Secretary-Treasurer, sent us information about the count at New Orleans. The seven participants recorded 104 species, 20 less than last year, but they obtained some good records. Unusual birds were two Bay-breasted Warblers, a Western Tanager, an Indigo Bunting and two Painted Buntings.

#### NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM

The NRC Program sponsored by the Laboratory of Ornithology of Cornell University is ready to start its fourth year. They are interested in accumulating data on the nesting of all species of birds, common and rare. Data from all active nests, even if the nest is only visited on one occasion, is desired. The data should be furnished on special cards which will be available at the Cameron and Chicot meetings. Cards are also available for the coming season from Hugh C. Land, Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, La. 71457. If each LOS member could locate just one nest in the coming season, our total could be one of the highest of any group in the country. The Brooks Bird Club of West Virginia apparently turned in the largest number of cards for 1967, a total of 401. The number of returns from Louisiana was relatively low, the greatest number coming from Mrs. Morton of Eunice. Let's really assist this year by turning in many cards.

#### HUGH LAND IN GUATEMALA

Hugh spent most of the month of January in eastern Guatemala on a trip sponsored by the Explorers Club and ABC-TV. Hugh was one of the 12 scientists (most were speleologists) that went to investigate caves mainly from the archeological viewpoint. Hugh, of course, was mainly interested in the birds in and around the caves, especially owls and swallows. He saw 116 species in all, two of which he had not seen in Guatemala before. The trip was filmed by two ABC crews for use as a special documentary program next fall or winter. They took about 30,000 feet of film, but only about 2,000 feet will be used in

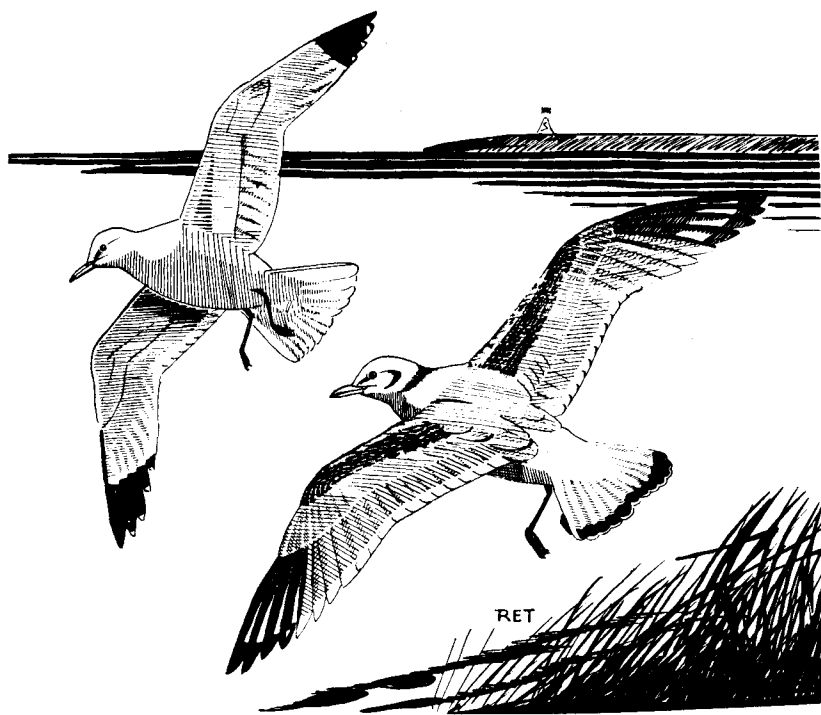
the program. What do you think Hugh will be doing when he appears on the program? Well, we will let you find out when the presentation is aired next fall. Dr. Land also took movies and slides and we hope that he will present these at a future LOS meeting.

#### WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

The 1968 meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society will be held from Thursday to Sunday, May 2-5, at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois. Registration begins Thursday evening and there will be papers presented on Friday and Saturday. Field trips are planned for early morning Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The meeting will be highlighted by a symposium on state and regional bird publications, organized and chaired by one of our LOS members, Chandler S. Robbins.

Everytime that your President sees Mr. Robbins it reminds him of a humorous incident that occurred while on the Cameron Christmas count in January 1954. Chandler and I were working the area between Willow Island and the East Jetty when we incredulously spotted an immature Black-legged Kittiwake. When we notified George Lowery of our find at lunch time he gave us "orders" to collect the bird as it was a new state record. Chandler and I spent the afternoon chasing the bird down the beach but it would always manage to stay just out of reach. About 3:30 PM the fog started to roll in off the Gulf and it became so thick visibility was restricted to ten feet. We were able to sneak up on other gulls and shorebirds but we lost track of the kittiwake. About 5 PM we decided we had better head back to the car which was several miles back down the beach. In the fog we knew that we would have trouble locating the car but we had eaten lunch on a log on the beach just opposite the road area where we had left the car. We started up the beach for a short distance when Chandler decided that he would work the marsh that ran parallel to the beach to see if he could pick up any rails, snipe or sparrows.

We kept in contact by shouting back and forth to one another. After a short period we lost voice contact because of the pounding noise of the surf. However, occasionally, I thought I could still hear him splashing along in the water of the marsh. I kept even with him until I found the log on the beach and then I cut across to where I could hear the splashing water. I was surprised to see that the splashing was created by several head of cattle. When I arrived at the car Chandler was waiting and I explained that next time I'll have to find a faster cow. The next morning John Gee and I went out to the spot where we had parked the car and surprisingly the kittiwake came flying right over us and John was able to collect it for Dr. Lowery.



A REVIEW

Birds in the Balance by Philip Brown. New York: October House. 1966.

This is the fifth in a Survival Series and certainly of special interest to bird watchers. Although the material concerns itself with Great Britain in particular there is much that is applicable to the

world of birds. The vast fund of knowledge that the author draws upon is based upon his years of work with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. This combined with his wit, wisdom and literary skill makes the book worthwhile reading. He believes that the USA is doing a great deal with national parks and refuges but feels that conservation of this type is limited on a world wide basis. Many knowledgeable people consider that the hope for the preservation of many wild species actually depends upon their commercial value as potential tourist attractions. It is difficult to educate people as to their worth, but very easy to demonstrate that in many instances their worth may prove to be a great source of income. An ardent but practical conservationist, Mr. Brown feels that there have been many occasions when photographers or bird watchers have unintentionally but inadvertently destroyed a nest. He decries the idiosyncrasy of British law which permits actually killing of a species but fines any person who keeps this same species in a cage. The book itself tends to treat rather lightly the fact that insecticides and the destruction of the environment are such important considerations survival-wise. Grace L. Eyster.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Lillie Hebert  
St. Landry Health Dept.  
Eunice, La. 70535

Mrs. John Paul King  
735 Cora Drive  
Baton Rouge, La. 70815

Mrs. L. B. McCurdy  
1644 Ingleside Drive  
Baton Rouge, La. 70808

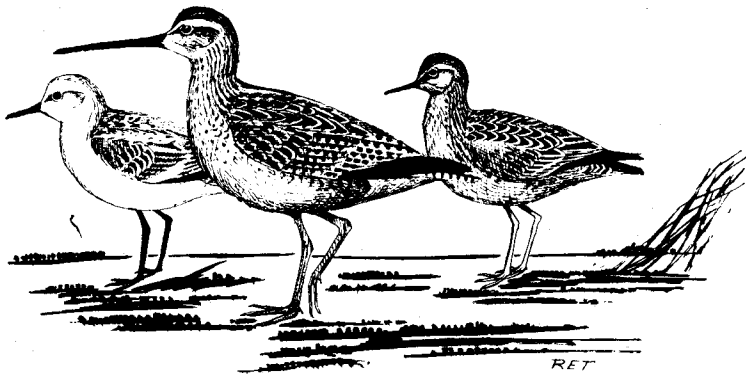
Dr. & Mrs. Bradley H. Patton  
2126 Highland Road  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Mr. Robert J. Pfrimmer  
4208 DeSiard Road, Apt. A  
Monroe, La. 71201

Dues! Dues! Dues!

Some members have not paid their 1968 dues. Dues are only one dollar and if you have not paid please do so at either Cameron or Chicot or by mail to the Secretary-Treasurer.

BIRDING IN THE CAMERON AREA  
by Marshall B. Eyster



Within a single day it is possible to cover a variety of habitats within the Cameron area. Seven of these better birding places warrant mentioning and will be marked on the map available in Cameron when you sign the roster.

1. East Jetty. This is usually the first spot that LOS members staying in Cameron will head for Saturday morning (or second if they stop at Fred's first for coffee). To reach the East Jetty turn south on the black-topped road one block east of Fred's. Follow it until it forks into a shell road on the left. Follow the shell road keeping to the right as you drive through a salt marsh. The Calcasieu Ship Channel will be on the right and you will reach a turn-around at the proximal end of the East Jetty. As you follow the road through the salt marsh watch for Clapper Rails, Seaside Sparrows, Long-billed Curlews, Whimbrels, Willets, and Black-bellied Plovers. Gulls

and terns of various species may be seen following the boats in the Ship Channel. At the turn-around and eastward along the beach very often one may observe Ruddy Turnstones, Avocets, Sanderlings and other shorebirds as well as White Pelicans, cormorants, Great Blue Herons and an occasional Reddish Egret. A few ducks are usually present on the water or flying over. Last April an excellent view was obtained of a Surf Scoter since it was close to the side of the channel.

2. East Jetty Woods. Retrace your path back the shell road and just a short distance before you come to the black-top turn sharply right on another shell road. This road is posted but usually nothing will be said about your birding in that area. You may secure permission at the Sacony-Mobil Oil Company office at the end of the black-top if you desire. A short distance down this road on the left is a grove of large oaks and these trees should be examined for warblers, vireos, orioles and other migrants. The road will dead-end at an oil well where you can park. From here you can walk some distance toward the Gulf. The woody and bushy areas on either side of the road usually will be full of small landbirds. Catbirds might be abundant. There should be three or four species of thrushes and vireos and possibly a dozen or more species of warblers. Look for orioles, grosbeaks, buntings and tanagers of various types.

3. Cameron Prairie and Back Ridge. Return to Cameron and continue past Fred's about two blocks. Turn right at the Parish Courthouse. The venerable live oaks around the Courthouse area are very rewarding for warblers and other small birds. To reach the Back Ridge area take the private oil field road which starts at the NW corner of the Courthouse. Mr. Burleigh, the man in charge, normally has no objection to people birding in this area. However, last fall we were politely asked to leave because an oil well had blown out. After you enter

the gate look in the marshes on either side of the road for various species of herons, ducks and shorebirds. After a short distance the road turns toward the right. At this bend there is a very short road that leads off to the left to an oil well. A large pond near this well may contain some interesting species. In past years the Black-necked Stilts have nested here. Following the main road to the right you will pass through a stretch of short grass prairie with marshes and small ponds further back from the road. Scan the prairie for American Golden and Upland Plovers which may still be present even though the main migration of these upland shorebirds has already passed through. This is one of the best places to pick up the Buff-breasted Sandpiper. In the marshy ponds and sloughs look for ducks, grebes, ibises, herons and other aquatic birds.

4. Magnolia Road. Taking the main road west out of Cameron you will cross the Calcasieu Ship Channel by ferry and head towards Holly Beach. As you cross on the ferry scrutinize the gulls and terns as you might observe a Bonaparte or Franklin Gull or several types of terns. The highway at Holly Beach divides with the right fork heading north towards the Sabine Refuge and Hackberry. Just before reaching the southern boundary of the refuge a shell road owned by Sacony-Mobil Oil Company leads off to the right. This is Magnolia Road and leads through the marsh for about a mile. This is one of the best places during the winter to see ducks and other water birds. However, by late April most ducks have largely left for the north. Black-necked Stilts have been known to nest fairly close to the road.

5. Sabine Refuge. Leaving Magnolia Road and heading north again you will pass through the center of the Sabine Refuge. The refuge is best known for its wintering goose population consisting of five different types. The geese may have all migrated but look carefully on your right just as you pass the refuge headquarters as there may be a few Blue-Snow Geese picking up gravel in that area. You may see herons,

ibises and Roseate Spoonbills as you drive through the refuge. I observed about 65 spoonbills on the refuge in mid-February and they may still be somewhere about.

6. Hackberry Woods. Several miles north of the refuge you will enter the town of Hackberry. Turn left at the Catholic church and follow the zig-zagging road until it crosses a small bridge where there is a small pond on either side of the road. Stop a few minutes to examine these ponds for ducks, shorebirds, herons and rails. Just past the bridge on the right can be seen a large wooded area. This woods is best entered by driving a short distance along the shell road that runs by it and then parking. If conditions are right this woods can be fabulously productive. At times one can see the small land birds literally dropping out of the sky into the tops of the large live oaks and other trees. Sometimes the woods abounds with thrushes, vireos, warblers, grosbeaks, orioles and tanagers. At least four species of owls have been seen in this woods. Several other smaller wooded areas can be reached by returning to the main road and following it left at the bridge.

7. Peveto Beach Woods. Return to Holly Beach and turn right towards Johnson's Bayou by way of the coastal highway. Watch for shorebirds along the beaches on your left. The road will gradually move away from the beach and after about nine miles some low woods will appear on the left between the highway and the beach. After you pass a radio tower there is a private shell road that leads into some of this wooded area. These woods sometimes are very good for small land birds during migration. If the owners are present ask their permission before proceeding and take care not to spook their cattle.

8. Rockefeller Refuge. On your way home from Cameron on Sunday if you have the time take the coastal route east from Cameron towards Grand Chenier, Rockefeller Refuge and Pecan Island. This road is now hard surfaced all the way and passes through miles of marsh where there are many ponds

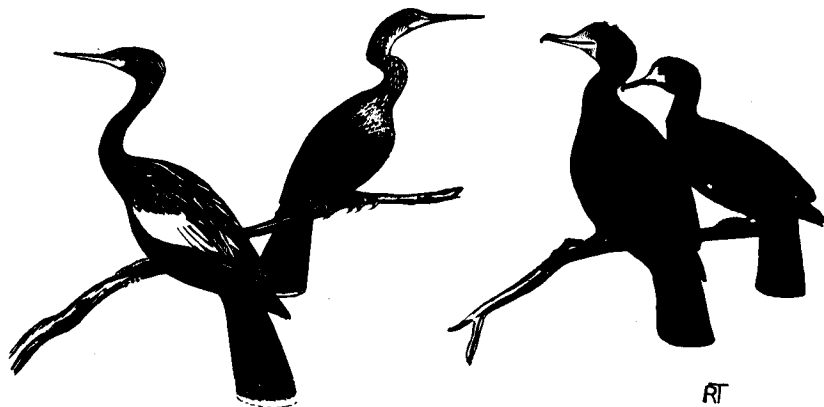
and sloughs. A stop off at the refuge headquarters is well worth the time. You can observe at close hand almost all the species of ducks and geese found in Louisiana as well as some exotic forms. Some of these are in large cages and others are free to move around. The gates are left open during the day so just walk in and enjoy yourself.

BIRDING IN THE CHICOT STATE PARK AREA  
by Marshall B. Eyster

1. Group Camp Area. Many interesting birds may be seen and heard right around the cabins and mess hall. There are several trails that lead off from the Group Camp area taking one through the upland forest. Start down the entrance road and about 500 feet from the mess hall there is a totem-pole on the left. Here there is a rolling trail that will take the birder to one of the many coves of the lake. Another hike can be taken down the road for about 1/2 mile until a cut through the forest for a power line is reached. Turn right and follow the power line and you will eventually arrive back at the water tower in the cabin area.

Row boats can be rented for the day for a nominal fee and parked at the private Group Camp dock. You may bring your own canoe or other small boat. One of the thrills at Chicot is paddling around in the wooded coves among the water tupelo and cypress trees festoomed with Spanish moss. Among the moss draped branches the Prothonotary and Yellow-throated Warblers may be observed at close hand. Wood Ducks nest in cavities in some of the trees in these coves. Anhingas and cormorants usually may be seen sitting on dead snags drying their feathers.

2. Chicot Park Arboretum. To get to the Arboretum leave the park through the main gate and turn right on route 373. After approximately a mile you will see the Arboretum sign. Park in the area provided by the side of the road and enter through the gate. There are five or six marked trails down the steep bluff into a beautiful



ravine. There are many old magnificent beech trees along these trails.

3. Miller's Lake. From the park entrance turn left and after a short distance take a gravel road on the right which will take you to highway 167. Follow 167 south for about two miles and then turn right on a paved road towards Miller's Lake. The extensive prairies of southwest Louisiana reached their northern most point in this area. Most of this area, however, is now under rice cultivation. These rice fields when flooded or containing mud flats are excellent for shorebirds. The main shorebird migration normally is over by mid-May but there should still be a fair number of species. Look for Semipalmated Sandpipers, Dowitchers, Dunlins and particularly for White-rumped Sandpipers. Proceed until you come to a gravel road on the right leading to the lake. Miller's Lake was formed by placing a levee across the Nezpique Bayou at the south edge of this swampy area. The southern part of this impoundment is largely open water and is used for rice irrigation. The northern portion is swampy and contains a heron rookery where Cattle Egrets and other herons nest. Roseate Spoonbills also have been seen in that area. The rookery can be reached only by boat. The lake is private but boats may be

rented. There are many ducks on the lake in season. It is possible to hike along the levee towards the west. Geese of several kinds have been seen in the ricefields from this levee. Southwest of Miller's Lake is Vidrine Lake which may have shore-birds and puddle ducks. You might augment your list with a Fulvous Tree Duck.

4. Turkey Creek. From Miller's or Vidrine Lake continue westward to highway 13 and turn north towards Turkey Creek or return to highway 167 and head northwest towards Turkey Creek. North of Turkey Creek there are some beautiful pine woods right along the roadsides. There are certain birds of the piney woods that are usually not found elsewhere. One should look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Pine Warblers and Bachman's Sparrows.

5. Cocodrie Swamp and Bayou. About eight miles north of Turkey Creek Cocodrie Bayou is crossed over by highway 167. This bayou forms the boundary between Evangeline and Rapides Parishes. There is an extensive cypress-tupelo swamp along the bayou on the left hand side of the road where Wood Ducks, Anhingas, Pileated Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Prothonotary and Yellow-throated Warblers are likely to be seen.

6. Mountain Bayou Lake. Leaving the park entrance turn right on highway 373 and follow it past the Arboretum until it dead-ends at highway 106. Turn right on 106 and proceed until highway 115 appears on the left. Drive north about one mile on highway 115 along Cocodrie Bayou. A short gravel road leads off the left side of the highway to a levee which impounds the bayou. The water in the impoundment is used for cooling purposes by Cleco. The impoundment contains many young cypress trees and you may walk the levee to the right until you come to a spill-way.

7. Negro Lake. Just north of Tate Cove is an extensive oil field which contains Negro Lake. Leaving the park entrance travel south on highway 373 until you cross over a tongue of Lake Chicot. About one mile south of this point a dirt road leads off to the left. There are many roads in this oil field so work your way along these roads northward until you come to the lake. It is largely a cypress-tupelo swamp much like parts of Lake Chicot.

With good weather and good luck, birding should be enjoyable in Chicot Park and its vicinity. Maps of the area will be available at the Group Camp.

