SHREVEPORT SOCIETY
FOR
NATURE STUDY
NEWSLETTER
Vol. 2, No. 4
November, 1987

Operating a Bird Alert Service: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings after 5:00 PM, 226-7174; and a Seed Co-op at the L.S.U. Museum of Life Sciences

MEETINGS:

Tuesday
December 8
7:00 to 8:00 PM
The monthly meeting of the Shreveport Society for Nature Study-Bird Group will be held at the L.S.U. Museum of Life Sciences, 8015 St. Vincent Avenue, Shreveport. The program will be given by Paul Dickson.

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday
December 12
8:00 AM
A field trip with the purpose of looking for Horned Lark, Longspurs, Brewer’s Blackbird and winter resident sparrows will begin at 8:00 AM at the Headquarters of the L.S.U. Red River Agricultural Research Station on Hiway 71 south of Bossier City. Depending upon the luck at that location we may move to other local spots to be announced at the trip.
Saturday December 26
Shreveport Christmas Bird Count. Results of the count are published in American Birds. A tally of species and interesting sightings will be made the evening of count at an informal dinner. Any new participants should contact Horace Jeter or Steve Klotz by December 10. This is the oldest consecutive count in Louisiana.

Saturday January 2
South Bossier Christmas Bird Count. Results of the count will be published in American Birds. Participants should contact Paul Dickson as soon as possible. This will be the first official count for this area.

PAST FIELD TRIPS:

November 14
Ten persons birded Cross Lake from a barge sighting 25 species. Notable sightings included Common Loon, close observation of feeding Forster’s Tern and Bonaparte’s Gull; Horned Grebes were sighted several times as well as Ruddy, Ring-necked, Canvasback, Gadwall, Mallard and Bufflehead Ducks.

November 21
Eight persons manned mist nets at Wallace Lake where a Tree Swallow was sighted. American Woodcock, a female Purple Finch, Pine Warblers and other woodland birds were banded.

BIRD NOTES
(November, 1987)

Northern Shovelers were still present 11-22 along the Red River (PD); Accipiters were being seen frequently with a Cooper’s 11-1 (SK and JMB) and a Sharp-shinned Hawk being sighted almost daily around VLGS feeder; Bald Eagles, 2 adult and 1 immature were reported at Cross Lake 11-7 (JMK) for the first report this Fall; 3 Lesser Yellowlegs were present at the RR on 11-22 (PD) and 3 Semi-palmated Plovers at the river 11-1 (SK and JMB) along with 40 to 50 Least and 1 Spotted Sandpiper; Woodcock were sighted 11-16; a Vermillion Flycatcher has been present at Loggy Bayou
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**Total**

*Less 20% Discount for members*

**Grand Total**

Amount Paid $

Balance Due $

Large display at Museum.
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Shreveport Society for Nature Studies
Bird Study Group
Membership Application

Name ___________________________ Date ___________

Address: _________________________ Street ___________ City ___________ State ___________ Zip ______

Phone (at home) ________________ (at work) ______________

Membership category -- Regular($5.00) __________ Sustaining($25.00) ________________

Number of years as a birder? ____________________________

Special interests? ____________________________

Would you like to volunteer to work on group activities? __________

Preferred job(s)? ____________________________

Are you a member of the Louisiana Ornithological Society? __________

Are you a member of any other nature organizations? __________

Send to: Susan Keener, Membership Chairman
1951 Bayou, Shreveport, LA 71105
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR SSNS MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

During the last year, the Shreveport Society for Nature Study has undergone some big changes. After years of operating our well-known films at a deficit, the Board of our group voted to stop hosting the film series. Reasoning other than financial supported this decision, most specifically the wonderful quality of nature shows available on television and competition locally from a travelogue series.

Not wanting to disband completely, however, the Board, when presented with so much enthusiasm from members interested in birding, formed the Bird Study Group of the SSNS. With our typical spirit, the group grew quickly to include people who had never heard of the SSNS as well as several long-standing members.

The Bird Study Group of the SSNS has developed quite a program. Since the fall of 1986, the group has met on the second Tuesday of each month to discuss business and enjoy a variety of programs. The topics of the programs have ranged from the racing of homing pigeons to the habitat and birds of Kenya. Additionally, there has been at least one field trip each month, usually led by a member. Some of the places visited include Millwood Lake in Arkansas, Bickham Dickson park, and Cross Lake.

Not only have we enjoyed studying birds at our meetings and in the wild, but we have proudly supported many local and regional natural causes. The Bird Study Group has contributed to such worthy activities as the Red River Wetlands Coalition, the Caroline Dorman Reserve, the Holleyman Bird Sanctuary on the coast of Louisiana, and the LSU-S Museum of Life Sciences.

The Bird Study Group holds an appeal for the casual backyard birdwatcher, and also provides a forum for those that want to share an active responsibility for our natural surroundings. Whatever your level of interest, we invite you to join the fun.

We welcome any new members or interested parties. We also encourage you to support our fundraising efforts by purchasing quality bird seeds and feeders at some of the best prices in town (see enclosed ads).

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Noel Mason Perkins
BIRD SEED SALES

Sunflower $2.50
for 10 lbs.

Millet mix $2.00
for 10 lbs.

Thistle $4.50
for 3 lbs.

LSU-8 Museum
8015 St Vincent
since 11-6 (PD): Pine Siskins were seen 11-11 by VLG and BW; LeContes’s Sparrow 11-1 (SK and JMB), Fox Sparrow 11-21 (JMB) and Rufous-sided Towhee 11-18 (VLG); Purple Finches have been present at Walter Jacobs Park throughout the month (LR).


The Beginning Birder

Beginning birders often have trouble separating the Boat-tailed (BTG) and Great-tailed Grackles (GTG), despite the fact that many differences are described in the popular literature (National Geographic, 1983; Lowery, 1974). Eye color (bright yellow in GTG, brown in BTG) is tricky: some male BTGs show a yellowish cast, and immature GTGs have dark eyes during their first fall. Calls are recommended as a more simple method of identification. The BTG’s most common song is a series of “jeeb” or “shirb” notes, and its call is a soft “chuck.” Another call is described as a gurgling sound resembling the pattering of a coot’s feet during take-off. The GTG’s song is a harsher series of “clock” notes resembling a toy machine gun, but almost any sound may be expected from this unmusical songbird. A commonly described (and very distinctive) call is a clear ascending whistle which sounds like a very loud, protracted American Goldfinch. When singing, male BTGs appear to have larger heads with more rounded crowns; male GTGs have a sleek, flat-headed profile.

Plumages are also helpful. Male GTGs have extensive purplish iridescence on the head, breast, and back; male BTGs have a purplish head contrasting with a steel blue body. Female BTGs are much tawnier below than their olive-grey cousins.

Nally, habitat helps to separate the two species. The BTG is restricted to areas near fresh water, including nearby woodlands in which they often roost and nest. Along the coast, plowed lands, pastures, and feedlots are sometimes used. GTGs, however, may be found virtually anywhere, including dry fields, woodlands, and in cities and towns. (The range of the GTG extends across the arid Southwest and as far north as Kansas.) The town of Cameron offers excellent opportunities to study both species (mainly, GTGs around the houses and hotels, BTGs in the unimproved marshes). Until next time, Good Birding!

John McBride