



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

MEETINGS:

Tuesday
January 12
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 Harold Coates
on the design and construction
of various birdhouses.

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, Sunday
January 30, 31

The Louisiana Ornithological Society will be conducting a field excursion to the Shreveport-Bossier area to be hosted by the Shreveport Society for Nature Study-Bird Group. Those wishing to attend a part or all of the activities should call the Bird Alert Service or Laurence Hardy at the same number during business hours.

PAST FIELD TRIPS:

December 12

Thirteen persons tramped the sodden grounds of the L.S.U. Red River Agricultural Station on a sunny morning. Twenty-six species were seen. Noteworthy were >500 Water Pipits allowing as close a look as one is likely to get short of capturing them; Brewer's Blackbird; excellent views of Horned Lark and Lapland Longspur; and a Western Meadowlark (H. Jeter).

December 26

The Shreveport Christmas Bird Count was conducted during continuous rain. Even so, there were 27 participants, many of whom enjoyed the pot-luck dinner at Pat Lonnecker's that evening followed by the compilation. Species were most conspicuous by their absence on the count, e.g., LeConte's sparrow, Longspur species, Common Loon, etc. Icterids were well represented with Common Grackle by the thousands, Red-winged, Rust, and Brewer's Blackbird, as well as Brown-headed Cowbird. There was a total of 91 species sighted.

BIRD NOTES
(December)

There was apparently little activity by Birdwatchers outside of the scheduled Field Trips. Canada Goose was seen by PD near his farm as well as 4 others on a sand bar in the Red River 12-20 by VLG and SH; there was an immature White Ibis at PDs farm on 12-12; 15 Bonaparte's Gulls in addition to the customary Ring-billed Gulls were feeding at Bickham Dickson Park on 12-19 (SK); AE reports the residence of a Roadrunner on her property at Lake Bisteneau throughout the month; an adult male Rufous Hummingbird (PL) has been present in town for all of December and November; the Vermilion Flycatcher is still present at Loggy Bayou (PD). Reporting: Paul Dickson, Anne Elston, Vera Lee Grubbs, Shirley Huss, Steve Klotz, and Pat Lonnecker.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Old balance reported at the December meeting	685.82
Total revenue for the month (dues, seed & feeder sales)	979.35
Total expenses for the month	- 871.45
BALANCE	<u>\$793.72</u>

(Betty Mason, Treas.)

THE BEGINNING BIRDER

Hawk species rank among the most difficult of birds to separate and Accipiters require close scrutiny from the most expert birders. An article by Mueller, Berger, and Allez in American Birds (AB) 33: 236-240, 1979 did little in my opinion to clarify field identification, but provoked two informative Letters to Editor by W.S. Clark and P.J. Dunn, AB 33: 909, 1980 and M.E. Pramstaller and W.S. Clark AB 34: 216-217, 1980. I have attempted to summarize the most useful field marks presented in these 3 eminent articles. Please remember that no single field mark can be used to separate our two common Accipiters.

Size is the one feature which is universally acceptable, but it is often difficult to ascertain in the field and female hawks are much larger than males. The female Sharp-shinned Hawk measures 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 13 inches in length or about the size of a Mourning Dove; the male measures a mere 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The crow-sized female Cooper's Hawk measures 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 18 $\frac{1}{2}$; the male, 15 to 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. (Notice that there is no overlap between the two species.) This size difference affects the flight style, causing the Sharp-shinned Hawk to appear more bouyant in flight with more rapid wing beats.

The most frequently mentioned mark in field guides is tail shape. While Cooper's always have rounded tails, only male Sharp-shinned Hawks have

Square or notched tails. Female Sharp-shinned Hawks and soaring birds have shallowly rounded tails. Beware of molting birds with shortened or missing tail feathers.

Several other differences can be utilized provided the bird is perched in plain view. Adult Cooper's have a dark cap with a sharp demarcation from the back; in Sharpies there is never a strong delineation. Cooper's also appear to have slightly larger heads. In Cooper's the eye is closer to the beak tip than to the nape; the Sharpies larger eye is placed near the nape. In Sharpies the breast barring is wide at the shaft; the barring is of uniform width in Cooper's and appears finer and more regular. The legs of a Cooper's appear very robust, while the Sharpies appear twig-like. The tail of the Cooper's shows a broad white terminal band. The Sharpies has little or no white in the tail.

Immature Sharpies generally have breasts broadly streaked with reddish-brown tear drops; the breast is often buffy and very little white is visible. Immature Cooper's have uniformly narrow dark brown streaks which often higher on the belly; much white shows below. Most feathers on the back of immature Cooper's have white edges; the immature Sharpie has a few rufous-tipped feathers especially on the rump.

These features greatly aid field identification of Accipiters but the observer should never be too proud to list Accipiter spp. in his notes.

Until next time, Good Birding!

John McBride