



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; also selling thistle,
sunflower and mixed bird seeds
as well as bird feeders at the
L.S.U. Museum of Life Sciences.

MEETINGS:

Tuesday
March 6
7:00 to 8:00 PM

The program will be given by
Beth Leuck, a member of the
Biology Faculty at Centenary
College. The topic will be
"Mating Systems in Birds".

Tuesday
April 12

The program will be given by
Ralph Costa from the U.S.
Forestry Service, Natchitoches,

Louisiana. The topic will be the Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

FIELD TRIP:

Saturday
March 20
8:00 AM

A boating field trip is planned for Cross Lake for ducks, gulls and terns. The cost per person will be about \$3.50 for two hours to ride on a party barge. The leader is Susan Keener--those wishing to attend, please call her by Wednesday March 17 in order to reserve a spot. The field trip will begin at the city wharf next to the Fish Hatchery (near Ford Park) at 8:00 AM.

PAST FIELD TRIPS:

January 2

About 96 species were seen on the South Bossier Christmas Count. Noteworthy sightings were: Catbird, Snow Geese, Cooper's Hawk, and a flock of over 200 Horned Lark.

February 27

Six persons birded the area near the Cypress Nature Center and Black Cypress Bayou in Bossier Parish. Thirty-five species were seen in all including: about 75 Canadian Geese overhead; Greater Roadrunner; Brown Creeper; and COMMON MERGANSER.

BIRD NOTES
(February)

About 100 White-fronted Geese were seen overhead 2-27(PD); only Ruddy Duck and Gadwalls were seen on Caddo Lake 2-21 as well as 9 Forster's Terns (HJ & LR); a mature Bald Eagle was seen at Caddo Lake by the same observers 2-21; a Cooper's Hawk was seen in Broadmoor on 2-24 (SK); AE had a Sharp-shinned Hawk in Elm Grove; G. Roadrunners were conspicuous, with sightings by JMCC 2-24 at Pinefield Rd. as well as LR on 2-20 on LA-1; territorial Fish Crows were seen 2-20 by JMCB; an ARCHILOCHUS species (a probable Black-chinned Hummingbird

female, HJ) was present in the Highlands on 2-20; Purple Martins were present in the Broadmoor area 2-17 (SK) and at JMcC's 2-20; a lone RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH was seen at Walter Jacobs Park on 2-14 (HJ & SK); JMcC had Rusty Blackbird on 2-14; Fox Sparrows and Pine Siskins are still feeding in the yard of BD and CF is still visited by Purple Finches. Reporting: Paul Dickson, Betty Duvall, Anne Elston, Carole Foster, Horace Jeter, Steve Klotz, John McBride, James McCain, and Larry Raymond.

THE BEGINNING BIRDER

Most birders quickly learn to identify the Red-tailed Hawk, yet are continually amazed by the endless variations in plumage exhibited by this species. American Birds (40:197-202) presented a wonderful article by J.W. Lish and W.G. Voelker in their Summer 1986 issue. Using their paper and the various field guides, reliable separation of the "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk and the rare Ferruginous Hawk becomes possible.

The "Krider's" Redtail typically has immaculate underparts (light speckling across the belly may be present). The head is white, usually with a dark line through the eye; a faint collar or dark cheeks may be visible (some birds have a slightly speckled crown and nape). The wing-linings show the typical Redtail patagial mark (along the leading edge) and "comma" (at the wrist). The flight feathers are faintly barred. The outer primaries are white with black tips; a trapezoidal "window" is formed by the translucent inner primaries. Visible from above or below, this patch extends to the rear margin of the wing. The back is often speckled with dark feathers.

The tail of the "Krider's" appears all-white at a distance; at close range, the feathers show a pale rufous wash toward the tips. This rufous coloration extends farther up the outer edge of each feather than along its shaft, creating an interdigitated, or "angered" effect (fide J.R. Stewart). Light (non-Krider's) Redtails should show solid white (albino) or pink tail feathers. The underside of the tail is whitish.

The adult Ferruginous Hawk is rusty above with a lighter, streaked head (may appear white). Their undertail appears silvery, with a dusky band near the tip. From below, the unbarred flight feathers (including the inner primaries) have dusky tips, forming a complete marginal band. Patagial markings are absent. The legs form a conspicuous dark "V" against the undertail. The wings are proportionately longer than those of the Redtail, and soaring is more frequent. An oval white patch can be seen at the base of the primaries on the upper wing (whether this area is translucent is unclear).

The immature lacks the rusty back and dark legs; its immaculate underparts and tail and longer wings are distinctive. The legs of the Ferruginous are feathered to the toes; all Redtails have bare lower tarsi. Until next time, Good Birding!

JOHN MCBRIDE