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COMING EVENTS

Field Trips

- May 13, Sunday: Al Geis will lead a walk along the Middle Patuxent River. Before the walk, there will be a picnic at 6 p.m. at Pat Jackson's on Trotter Lane. Bring the whole family and the picnic basket. For specific directions or details call Nan Rhineland at 286-2427.
- May 20, Sunday: Sugar Leaf Mountain and New Design Road--an excellent birding area --good chance for the upland plover. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Swansfield Elementary School parking lot. Bring light lunch. Bob Herndon, leader--730-0942.
- June 9, Saturday: Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. Beautiful gardens as well as good birding. Larry Hood is the leader and will give information concerning camping in the area the previous night for those who would like to do so or names of hotels for those not camping. Phone 730-9251.

Program

June 14, Thursday: An evening with Bob Herndon. An excellent nature photographer, Bob will show slides of birds found in the West, California in particular.

Workshop

May 9, Wednesday: Hawks, Owls, and Night Singers. Program will be lead by Larry Hood and Jay Sheppard. Topics will be the songs and sounds, nests, habitat, and identification tips. The meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Jo Selem, 10614 Graeoch Rd, Hammond Village (725-5037).

TURKEY TALE

On April 15, Al Geis had his early morning turkey fans on the road at 4:15 a.m. on what turned out to be the prettiest day so far this Spring. The group met Bud Halla, head of forest game management for the Wildlife Administration, near Seneca on the C&O Canal. Al and Bud demonstrated their abilities to do the turkey call. The call is most important to get a gobbler's response or to bring him into the open because in the Spring the gobbler responds to the yelps of the hen.

Most of us know that Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey adopted as the national bird (National Wildlife Magazine, Oct-Nov 1972) because he thought it more respectable than the bald eagle and because the turkey is a true original native of America. But few of us know much more about this elusive and handsome bird. A Maryland State brochure calls the turkey "one of the State's finest resources for both the hunter and the nature lover".

The wild turkey was once near extinction but through proper management has come back in such numbers that there is an open season and licensed hunters with turkey stamp are allowed one wild turkey each per season (April 30-May 5 this year). The population is always under surveillance through census taking, banding, and recording kills.

The largest turkey population in Maryland is in Allegany County (44 were legally killed in season last year). Part of the management includes transplanting live turkeys from areas where they are plentiful to less populated ones by use of the cannon-net. Transplanting has been the most successful management technique. Stocking range areas with pen-reared turkeys has been abandoned because the birds were unable to compete in the wild environment.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife (Texas has the largest wild turkey population), "Biologists have established that, barring unusual circumstances, 25% of the population can be harvested annually. Turkey, like quail, cannot be stockpiled. The status of the population at any time is directly proportional to the quality of the habitat. When times are good, populations flourish; when drought and food shortage prevail, coupled with occasional outbreak of disease, these flourishing populations can decline sharply. Legal hunting has little to do with the annual ups and downs in turkey numbers."

There is an organization called National Wild Turkey Federation which publishes a magazine, Turkey Call. Membership in the Federation is \$10.00. For further information write: The National Wild Turkey Federation, 112 Pender St., Fredericksburg, Va, 22401. A recent book about the turkey is "The World of the Wild Turkey" by James C. Lewis, published by Lippincott (\$5.95).

Q U I Z B O O K

A quiz book, "What Bird is This?" by Henry Hill Collins, Jr. (Dover Publications-\$1.50) is a good book of quizzes for birdwatchers divided into sections for the amateur, advanced, expert, and specialist (answers are in the back). The book is for sale at the gift shops Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

T E D D Y ' S B I R D S

The air seems softer, more peaceful on Theodore Roosevelt Island. Except for the too-frequent airplanes zooming overhead, it is the "quiet place inside the city" that the National Park Service likes to call it. Though just across the river from the Kennedy Center, the island is a different world, alive with rabbits and squirrels, raccoons and maybe a muskrat or two; fragrant with honeysuckle and ablaze in springtime color.

The next two weeks are the perfect time for spotting birds on the island. Black ducks and mallards, great blue heron, the rose-breasted grosbeak and song sparrows and warblers will be migrating through or staying to build their nests on the island, which is a wildlife sanctuary.

To find out which birds have been spotted in the area before you go, you can call the Audubon Society's recorded "Voice of the Naturalist" at 652-3295.

The best way to get to know the island is to take the hour-long Nature Walk, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Sundays with Park Ranger Kathy Franklin, or call 557-8993 to set up a workshop appointment for a group. To reach the island, take the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge and turn off at the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

--from the Washington Post, April 29, 1973.

M O N K P A R A K E E T

There have been sightings in the area of a blue-gray parrot-like bird with a lemon yellow belly--another of the introduced species to follow up on the story in the April newsletter. This bird is a monk parakeet, so named because of its colors which is reminiscent of the dress worn by some religious orders.

Recently the New York Times reported the State of New York has declared war against this "flamboyant invader from South America that is threatening farmers' crops and suburban gardens as well as driving native birds from their nests". The bird, once a household pet, now largely living free probably numbers in the thousands--and multiplying.

New York State officials realize certain groups and bird lovers will oppose their plans for drastic action and contacted the National Audubon Society before beginning the campaign. The Society took the position that it would not endorse the move but neither would it openly oppose the war. The Society does believe there should be a permanent ban on the importation of monk parakeets. Thousands have been imported--12,000 in 1968 alone. Recently, importation has been halted due to a temporary ban on all bird importing because of Newcastle disease.

In Argentina, the bird is regarded as one of the worst enemies of agricultural crops, but control methods there have not been successful. The control methods to be used in New York will be, (1) stop importation by having the bird placed on the Department of Interior's list of wildlife prohibited from entry, (2) seeking new state laws to prohibit sale of the birds and (3) "eradicating" the wild population in New York and neighboring States.