

Mammals observed: Gray Squirrel, 13; E Cottontail, 11; E Chipmunk, 9; Bat (Red?), 2; Raccoon, 1; Whitetail Deer, 1; 6 species, 37 individuals.

Some of the species marked with * above were seen in higher numbers than ever before in the state because a large amount of birding effort was concentrated in woodland.

Thomas A. Imhof, Compiler

NOTES ON TRANS-GULF MIGRANTS OVER THE OPEN NORTH GULF OF MEXICO

The study of migrating birds during the spring is spectacular whenever weather conditions precipitate locally heavy concentrations. Generally, observations of this type are made from off shore islands or along the immediate coastal area. Most bird students do not have the opportunity to study this phenomenon in the open Gulf. However, personnel aboard vessels operating in the northern Gulf of Mexico have long been aware of this spring activity during inclement weather. On two separate occasions Bullis and Lincoln (1952) and Bullis (1954) again recorded sizeable trans-Gulf migrations from a ship. Additional data has already been summarized by Lowery and Newman (1954). The purpose of this note is to place on record several observations made from a vessel in the north Gulf of Mexico.

On April 6, 1971 the National Fisheries Service Exploratory vessel, the R/V OREGON II, was engaged in research operations in the Gulf of Mexico approximately 11 miles west of Panama City, Florida. Its position was Lat. 29 47' N., Long. 85 37' W. The weather conditions described in the captain's Log were as follows: 0000-0400 hrs.; NW 12-14 Knots; sea choppy, sky clear. Between the hours of 0400 and 0713 the winds had increased to 18-20 Knots out of the NW with moderate seas and the sky heavily overcast by mist. By 1200 hrs. the wind was out of the west at 20-25 Knots with rough seas and clear sky. Information from the U. S. Weather Bureau indicated that a front had passed through the Panama City area during the early morning. Pre-dawn light was reduced by a blanket of mist and the only other illumination came from the fire lights of the vessel. The following notes were taken on the morning of April 6, 1971:

- 0515 Many (100)? Orchard Orioles were on deck. Light poor. Unable to get an accurate count or to identify other possible species. Birds quickly departed when disturbed. Unable to determine direction of flight.
- 0725 Female Blue Grosbeak flushed from super structure of boat (did not see this bird approach vessel). Departed in northerly direction.
- 0915 Male Orchard Oriole approached vessel from south flying low (less than 20 ft.) above water. Bird attempted to land on boat, but continued flight in a northeastern direction.
- 0946 Prothonotary Warbler landed on cable of super structure and began looking for food. Remained on cable for 5-6 minutes then departed in northeasterly direction.
- 0955 Prothonotary Warbler landed on deck but quickly departed.
- 1005 One Reddish Egret flying in a northerly direction passed within 100 yards of boat.

1015 Single Reddish Egret flying in from south attempted a landing but due to pitching of vessel inadvertently flew into a cable and was knocked into the water. After floating in the wash for several 100 yards it feebly lifted itself from the water, circled the vessel once and continued in a northerly direction.

It is hoped that these few observations will add to our ornithological knowledge of trans-Gulf migrants. Special thanks are due to the National Marine Fisheries Service of the U. S. Department of Commerce and to the crew of the R/V OREGON II - Cruise 24 for making these observations possible.

References Cited

- Bullis, Harvey R., Jr. and Frederick C. Lincoln 1952. A trans-Gulf migration. *Auk*, 69(1) : 34-39.
- Bullis, Harvey R., Jr. 1954. Trans-Gulf migration, spring 1952. *Auk*, 71 : 298-305.
- Lowery, George H., Jr. and Robert J. Newman 1954. The birds of the Gulf of Mexico. Gulf of Mexico its origin, waters, and marine life. *Fishery Bulletin of the Fish and Wildlife Service*, Vol. 55, Fishery Bulletin 89 : 519-540.

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ANNOUNCING ---

OPERATION GULF COAST BANDING

Simultaneous Fall Netting on the Alabama Gulf Coast

This project is inspired by Chan Robbins' Operation Recovery which has been forced to terminate because of lack of funds.

In order to investigate the most interesting aspects of fall landbird migration on the coast, we plan to operate at the same time for about a week as many coastal netting stations as possible. For 1971 we plan to operate from Friday 17 Sep to Sun 26 Sep in the area south of the Intracoastal Waterway.

Tentative Station Assignments are as follows:

- 301 0881 Dauphin Island West --- Open
301 0880 Dauphin Island Pig Pen --- Margaret E. Miller, Ethel B. Floyd, A. G. Tait
301 0880 Dauphin Island Shell Mounds --- Richard E. (Tuck) Hayward
301 0880 Fort Morgan State Park --- Thomas A. Imhof, John M. Imhof
301 0875 Little Point Clear --- Harriett H. Wright, Richard J. Kittinger, Helen H. Kittinger, Michael L. Bierly
301 0874 Gulf Shores --- Andrew K. Bates, Raymond D. Bates, Dan C. Holliman, P. Fairly Chandler
301 0873 Orange Beach

The first bander named above is in charge of each area (usually a ten-minute block). Banders are asked to operate somewhere in the 10' block during the whole period, but if this is not possible, at least for the 2 weekends, 17-19 & 24-26 Sep. A.O.S. members and their friends are invited to help out so long as they remember not to go near the nets without permission of the bander in charge. Nets with people too close to them are apt to get torn and of course