

# Postal Department Checks for Propaganda

By NEIL A. MARTIN  
United Press International  
Washington—(UPI)—The East-West cold war is a conflict being waged on many and varied fronts. And one of the more subtle struggles is currently taking place in U. S. post offices.



## BIRDING

By JOSEPH HICKS

The migration of birds in the county slowed down toward the end of May. Particularly noticeable was the absence of ducks and shore birds on the May 30 bird count. Most of the birders in this area turned to observation of the nesting species.

The department of zoology, University of British Columbia, has requested nesting records of Western North American birds. This gives the local birders the opportunity to participate in a scientific project, and to establish records of nesting birds not previously listed in southern Oregon.

Although the grasshopper sparrow discovered by John Linn Jr., on the May 30 bird count may have been nesting near Hoover lake, repeated search in early June failed to disclose its nest. However, there were a pair of grasshopper sparrows at the location from May 30 to June 17. One of them acted like other female nesting birds, leading the observer away from the nest with short flights.

On June 28 the sparrows were probably feeding their young, for they made flights to and from the nesting area at five minute intervals from 7 to 8:45 a.m. On July 1, I really was surprised to find their nest with four speckled eggs. Perhaps this is a second nest for this year.

Research by F. Sturgis disclosed there are records of only one or two previous sightings of this grasshopper sparrow in eastern Oregon and no records exist west of the Cascade Mountains.

This sparrow is famous for its ability to hide its nest. It nest of the blue gray gnatcatchers. The nest was a small, flies directly to or from its nest. As the nest is small, with a side approach, and generally hidden in grass over a foot tall, few nests are seen by observers.

After searching for the past two years I finally found a nest of the blue gray gnatcatchers. The nest was a small, lichen-covered cup saddled midway on the limbs of a chaparral bush.

The nest was finished on May 17; on May 24 there were four tiny eggs in the nest and the female was on the nest. On June 11, four young gnatcatchers hatched out and lived until June 15. Why they did not survive is inexplicable. Perhaps it was too much sun, since June 14 and 15 were very hot days. On June 27 I observed both the male and female gnatcatchers near to their old nest but I did not find a new nest.

The May 30 bird count recorded a black phoebe nest near a tributary of the Applegate river. On June 8 I visited this nest and found that the young ones had hatched and were being fed by the parents. The nest was located under a bridge, over a small creek, and affixed to the side of a concrete beam. It was impossible to look down into the nest, since the floor of the bridge was only a few inches above the nest.

On June 19 a check of the nest showed the young ones had left the nest and the phoebes were finishing the construction of a new nest. Apparently the young ones were still in the vicinity for the male adult phoebe chased a young phoebe away from the nesting area.

Although the young black phoebes were hatched out about June 1, and the young gnatcatchers about June 11, a western wood pewee did not sit on her eggs until June 12. The nest was located near the end of an oak branch about 10 feet from the ground. The four young were hatched out about July 1.

The gnatcatchers listed above are one of our most useful birds, as their diet consists mainly of insects, insect eggs and larvae. The black phoebe and wood pewee belong to the flycatcher family, and they subsist mainly on flying insects. The nesting cycles of all of these birds occur when their particular type of food is plentiful.

On June 25 my wife and I took a ride to the summit of Mt. Ashland, hoping the wild flowers would be as profuse as last year. Because of the cold spring there were only a few wild flowers in bloom, but on the south side of Mt. Ashland there were over a dozen rufous hummingbirds displaying their aerial proficiency alongside the road.

This display consisted of two or three dives in rapid succession, from about 150 feet high, then a pause for feeding and a repeat performance. Continuing to the top of Mt. Ashland we saw a pair of pine grosbeaks, a Hammond's flycatcher, a dusky flycatcher, an olive-sided flycatcher, Audubon's warblers, and numerous fox and chipping sparrows.

The wild flowers should be in bloom in two weeks or about July 10. I recommend anyone planning to take this trip to use the Tollman Creek road south of Ashland. About four miles up this road there is a new road that branches toward the south. This new road is well graded and a big improvement over the old road.

being fought through the mails. Since the cold war began in 1947, Communist presses in East Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Moscow and Peking have been sending unsolicited propaganda into this country at the rate of 2.5 million pieces per month—courtesy of Marxism-Leninism.

**Sent for Screening**  
During March, April and May of this year, postal officials reported they sent 8.5 million periodicals, magazines, tracts and newsletters to foreign propaganda units for screening.

Under this program which has been in operation since last January, the U. S. Customs bureau screens mail from Communist-bloc countries to determine whether it contains propaganda. If it does, the post office impounds the literature, notifies the addressee, and destroys it after 20 days unless he requests that it be forwarded.

The bureau employs a special staff of 39 translators, clerks, and technical specialists at propaganda check units in New York, Miami, New Orleans, Chicago, El Paso, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The program will cost the bureau \$230,000 in fiscal year 1964. In addition, the post office has spent considerable time, money and manpower to carry out its half of the program.

**Gives Department Task**  
Tyler Abell, associate general counsel of the post office department, told a house subcommittee last month that the law gave the department an "administrative task that we didn't want to be saddled with."

"Nevertheless," he added, "we are doing our best to enforce the program properly." The law, enacted over Kennedy administration opposition, has been criticized in various quarters as "censorship" and "unconstitutional." And most of the foreign publications affected have sneered at it as a "mockery" that destroys the "illusion of a free press in America."

The screening of mails for

propaganda is nothing new. During World War II units were established to separate Nazi literature from the regular mail. The practice was resumed in 1948 to combat Communist propaganda. This program remained in effect until 1961 when it was cancelled by the administration on grounds that aggravated efforts to improve East-West relations.

**Not To Stop Reading**  
Customs officials are quick to point out that the program was never designed to stop Americans from reading Communist propaganda. Rather, they say, the law is intended to stop the flow of material to people who never requested it and do not want it.

"This is not, or ever has been, a censorship program," Irving Fishman, deputy collector of the customs port of New York, told UPI. "Whoever wants the literature is welcome to it. We just want to stop it from being mailed to people who do not want it."

About half the propaganda is in foreign languages. It is sent chiefly to emigrants from the Communist lands, Fishman said. Names and addresses are found through telephone books, city directories, subscription lists and membership charters of groups like the Polish-American Congress, he said.

"The last thing in the world

these people want is propaganda from their former homelands," Fishman added. A Russian emigre living here complained:

"Shortly after I came to America, I began to receive Russian language propaganda. I moved twice before coming to Washington, and still I receive it. I wish it would stop."

Fishman concedes the hardest part of the operation is defining what is or is not propaganda. The law defines propaganda as material which is "intended to influence the recipient with reference to political... policies of a foreign government or foreign political party or the foreign policies of the United States..."

Fishman said the technical assistants and translators in the various check units were "well qualified to carry out this end of the operation."

**Made More Difficult**  
But the overall task is made more difficult because much of the material is lot labeled as having been printed in Communist countries. Also Communist publishing houses stamp unsolicited literature "subscription copy" so that it can pass through customs "exempt," Fishman said.

During May, 2.57 million pieces of literature screened by customs, 978,256 were exempt as subscription copies, or material intended for govern-

ment, school, library or professional institutions.

"Many people could be receiving and reading Communist material without knowing its origin or purposes," Fishman said.

**One such person turned out to be a Congressman's wife.**  
**Finds Wife Reading**  
At recent hearings by the house postal operations subcommittee, which was studying how the law was operating, Rep. Morris K. Udall, D-Ariz., said he came home one evening to find his wife

reading a copy of "Women of the Whole World."

"She had received it in the mail and had no idea that it was Communist literature," Udall said. "She was quite surprised when I told her."

Typical of the anonymous propaganda sent to U. S. citizens is a small, three-page tract entitled "What You Should Know About the Wall." Referring to why the Communist wall dividing East and West Berlin was built, the tract offered:  
"Bonn propaganda de-

scribes the wall as a 'monstrous evidence of the aggressiveness of world Communism.' Have you ever considered it to be a sign of aggressiveness when someone builds a fence around his property?"

Most of the recent propaganda barrage, officials said, has emphasized the U. S. racial problem and U. S. Cuba policy, besides repeating the Soviet line of "peace," "coexistence" and "disarmament." Whether the law is made

stronger or even weakened, postal and customs officials agree that their job will not be any easier in the future. An elusive opponent, the Communist propagandists, they say, are finding new ways to challenge government precau-

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**Belt Is Good Long Term Investment**

Ft. Smith, Ark.—(UPI)—Conveyor belts usually are purchased as a long-term investment, but the Arkola Sand and Gravel company here had to wait 20 years to realize any return.

The company now is installing a 500-foot conveyor belt that it purchased in 1943—then promptly lost in a flood on the Arkansas river.

The belt was unearthed recently when company employees were dredging for sand under the river. It had been buried under seven feet of silt, still in the crate in which it was shipped from Goodyear's plant in Akron, Ohio, in 1943.

A short length of belt that obviously had been damaged by water soaking into its four plies of cotton fabric was discarded from its exposed end and a sample was cut for testing in Goodyear laboratories. Test engineers, watching an impending sale fly out the window, found the belt in like-new condition.

To the sand and gravel firm, it was like finding the world's largest gold nugget in the river.

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**Volatile Liquids Cause Farm Fires**

Champaign, Ill.—(UPI)—Carelessness in using and storing gasoline, kerosene and other petroleum products is responsible for the annual loss of 500 lives and more than \$5 million damage from farm fires.

University of Illinois safety specialist O. L. Hogsett says farm families can safeguard their lives and property against the hazards of fire and explosion by careful storing and handling of inflammable liquids.

Hogsett says never pour kerosene into a stove or furnace that is still warm from a previous fire.

Keep lamps, lanterns, heaters, stoves and brooders in a safe place and guard against overheating.

If home dry-cleaning must be done, do it out of doors and use a non-flammable cleaning fluid.

Store gasoline in an underground tank or a shade steel drum away from all buildings, says Hogsett, and never handle gasoline or kerosene in an open container.

**WHOLESALE MILK**

Skimmed milk or dry skim milk contains as much protein as whole milk but a glass of skim has 90 calories compared with 165 for whole milk.