

Padre Island National Seashore, Texas

Dec 31, 1983

Camped last night at 103 site N of headquarters area.

min. temp 30°F.

Between 6:30 A.M. & 7:00 no birds in air, water or beach; a (moon lost earth reflected light at 7:00 A.M.) 7:15 first ring-billed gull flew by. Sun up 7:25 A.M. First sanderling and water pipit. 7:35 first willet. 7:38 second sanderling, 7:40 black-bellied plover, second gull and ruddy turnstone. By 8:00 these birds left and a willet was the only bird on beach. At 9:00 A.M. counted birds on beach from our position in camp to barrier at beach house to S: 2 ring-billed gulls, 1 ruddy turnstone, 12 sanderling, 2 willet, 1 black-bellied plover.

at one point a willet fed on a 3" dead (fresh) fish on beach. A sanderling and ruddy turnstone attempted to also feed on some fish but unsuccessful. The sanderling would take chances at grabbing at the fish while the willet fed upon the fish. The willet is a scavenger of large prey.

One coyote washed 4/10 mile on beach sands. Its tracks were (front foot) 62 length, 40 wide.

Dead royal tern measured 450 mm total length.

Checked sand dunes N of camp (approx 1/10 mi. N of N end campgrounds road). Took 3 photos of a sand dune that I had photographed on April 24, 1983. To show change of sand & grass. 831231-1 "Alpine Peak", same setting as 830424-27. much more ^{less sand} grass and 831231-2 ibid but different lens. 831231-3 "Alpine Peak" same as 830424-28 831231-4 "Alpine Peak" same as 830424-29.

There is evidence of considerable more grass and less sand accumulation. ^{most of the} Sopher's activity now covered with grass.

Six sandhill cranes had used this prominent peak for curiosity or vantage point. There imprints (perfect in sand) measured 1 at 103 mm, one at 101 mm and 4 at 99 mm.

These birds walked at ^{N-E and S} bases of steep part of peak and some on slope below but definitely at base of peak. 3 of them "climbed" the peak by assistance of their wings which showed primary feather marks on the sandy walls. Their feet would slide down wall and create slow strial on the steep slopes. None of the birds gained the top. There was definitely a preference of these high sandy slopes for their activity.