



# THE SPOONBILL

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## COMING EVENTS

[On all Upper Texas Coast field trips remember to bring lunch, Insect repellent, and sack for aluminum litter.]

- Tuesday  
Oct. 17 Brazosport Birders regular meeting, 7:30 p.m. in the classroom of the Center for the Arts and Sciences at 400 College Drive, Clute. John Ray, who is an instructor at Brazosport Junior College, will talk on bird physiology and anatomy. Houston birders are welcome, just take Hwy 288 south, turn right on College Drive (shortly after you pass FM 2004 inter-section you will come to College Drive....there is a traffic light there)
- Saturday  
Oct. 21 Brazosport Birders joint field trip with the Houston Audubon Society to West Columbia, Dow Nature Trail, Freeport City Park and Freeport marsh and area. Meet at 8 a.m. at the rest area in Bailey's Prairie on Hwy 35, west of Angleton. This will be an all day trip so bring lunch (and insect repellent!).
- Saturday  
Oct. 28 ONC field trip to Hookwood and The Woodlands. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Hookwood. Go north on I-45, take Exit 70A (Tomball exit), turn left under freeway on FM 2920, go 7 1/2 miles, turn left at Hookwood's brown and white gates. Park at farmhouse .2 mile inside gate. After walking the trails, we will leave at 11:30 and proceed to The Woodlands, where the Woodlands Ecology Group will lead us on their Nature Trail and show us areas of birding interest. Wear comfortable shoes and bring lunch, and insect repellent.
- Wednesday  
Nov. 1 Photography Group regular meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 S. Braeswood.
- Thursday  
Nov. 2 OG meeting, 7:30 at Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 S. Braeswood. Due to a conflict of dates which arose after the September SPOONBILL was mailed, Ben Feltner, who was to have presented our November program, switched dates with David Riskind, and gave the October program. We will have David as our November speaker, and are looking forward to having him with us. His topic will be on State Parks, as described in the September SPOONBILL.
- Friday  
Nov. 3 DEADLINE for Clearing House October observations.
- Wednesday  
Oct. 25 DEADLINE for SPOONBILL notices, articles, etc.
- Weekend  
Nov. 11-12 ONC field trip to Goose Island State Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Recreation Bldg. in the Park. The Conchology Group has planned a full weekend for shellers, birders, and photographers, but all ONC members are welcome. For camping at the park, phone: 1-512-729-2858 or write Goose Island State Recreation Area, Rt. 1, Box 105, Rockport, Texas 78382. Reservations are on a first come basis, so send \$6.00 to the above address to insure a campsite. Nearest motel is Seagun Sports Inn, there are others listed in Nature Notes, along with full details of the weekend.

## PAST EVENTS

Brazosport Birders Report: The last meeting of the BB's gave us an opportunity to see some beautiful pictures of birds many of us may never see. Glynn Irby, one of our members, made a trip to Europe this summer and brought back slides of birds and some spectacular scenery to share with us. One of his side trips was to Røst, a

small island off the coast of Norway, that holds the largest concentration of breeding sea birds of any place in Europe. The Puffin represented about 60% of the birds on the island. Also present were rafts of eider and both mature and immature white-tailed sea eagles. One of the best pictures was of an old friend of ours on the Texas coast...an oystercatcher that allowed Glynn to come within five feet of it as it attempted to lure him away from the nest. The area around Røst is an important commercial fishing area, and the presence of such a large food supply is probably one reason for such a concentration of birds.

From Røst Glynn went into Germany and added some land birds to his list. Among them was a robin which he described as about half the size of our American robin, a cuckoo which sounded like a clock ticking in the forest, and a titmouse which looks much like our chickadee. The "one that got away" was a hoopoe, a bird with a fan-like crest that was always "here just five minutes ago". Haven't we all heard that before? It was a most enjoyable meeting, and we were pleased to have the many visitors who joined us. --Sherry Collins

OG Field Trip to High Island and Bolivar Flats: On Saturday, September 16, about 40 birders met at High Island for what turned out to be a most exciting and rewarding day of birding. Splitting into 2 groups to go to the two woods separately, the dispersed groups were able to locate several good birds. The Veery, seen a week earlier, was still in Scout Woods. Also, a Prairie Warbler and a Mourning Warbler were found in Scout Woods, along with many other warbler species. Smith Woods was also productive, where the beautiful Golden-winged Warbler and an assortment of other warblers were found. By the old pump house a second Prairie Warbler was located and seen by many. As the two birding groups changed locations in the middle of the morning, many observers saw most of the warbler species.

Returning to the Rest Area brought the birders together at one large picnic table for a mid-day tally and lunch. A Wilson's Warbler was spotted above us, and then I spotted a most interesting bird. From my vantage point, directly underneath the bird, I thought it might be a Philadelphia Vireo from its underparts' color, its size and action. Further investigation of the bird revealed that it was not a vireo at all, in fact it was soon believed it could only be of the warbler genus *Oporornis*. The bird was then studied carefully, notes and photographs were taken, and a guarded conclusion was arrived at.....we had just seen a Connecticut Warbler! This is a very rare species on the UTC, with only two prior records, and much skepticism existing at the state level (TOS, etc.). Full details of the sighting are in the Clearing House.

About half the birders continued on to Bolivar Flats, where only a meager representation of shorebirds were present. The usually productive "flats" failed us this time but nobody seemed to care much after the excitement of the lunch hour.

Counting birds seen by the birders along the way, a final day-end tally showed 128 species seen, including 20 species of warblers. What more can I say about a field trip that produces a Connecticut Warbler? --Jim Morgan

#### SUMMER BIRDING ON THE UTC with Fred Collins

Summer in the UTC is hot! Birding is certainly not up to A.B.A. Big Day standards. However, many birders are discovering that it is a great time to be birding, no warblers to distract you, no great flights of geese to overwhelm you, just normal everyday common birds to get to know and appreciate. To illustrate my point, let me share a page of my field notes with you.

Pelican Island--July 16, 1978.....Debbie DeKeyzer, Walter Piper and I visited the gull colonies for the third time this year to band gulls. Our earlier visits this summer were unusual in their lack of discovery. Today was to be more like the summer Pelican Island days I had come to expect.

On an earlier visit we had found a small colony of about 20 pairs of gull-billed terns among a colony of black skimmers. We were banding the very fat downy seven-to-fourteen-day-old terns when we discovered one of the chicks had what appeared to be a stick or tail or some similar object projecting from its bill. Gently tugging at the object I was shocked to see emerge an adult *Anolis carolinensis*. The head of the lizard was mutilated beyond recognition but apparently still attached. The overall length of the anole was 6 3/4 inches. The tail which had extended from the chick's beak had completely dried out and was very hard and very stiff. The body of the anole, although still intact showed signs of softening with digestion. This chick was discovered about mid-day and one can only speculate how long it had been trying to digest the lizard. I wonder if it would have survived had it later swallowed that stiff pointed tail. I also wondered where the adult secured this prey. Green anoles favor brush and gardens. I've never encountered them in marshes or fields, or on Pelican Island.

Our next discovery was a black-necked stilt with two downy young in its shadow. We decided to catch them and band them; easier said than done. We were confused early in the chase, when four chicks ran and hid on the bare crackled mud. We were able to catch three but their size was deceiving and they proved too little to band so we settled for pictures. We returned them to their Oscar-award-winning, broken-wing-act parents.

The best discovery of the day was one I've been anticipating since 1974...the discovery of an adult Laughing Gull which I banded as a chick in the same colony. Let's hear it for good old 655-52256.....banded as a downy chick on the 29th of June 1975, recovered only a few feet from the nest where it was hatched three years and one month earlier.

#### BIRD BANDING NEWS

During the TOS April 1977 meeting in McAllen, the Texas Bird Banding Association held an organizational meeting, from which decisions were made to hold two meetings a year in conjunction with the TOS meetings, issue a newsletter four times yearly, post-season, and have dues of \$2.00 to cover printing of newsletter and postage.

The newsletter's intent is not to become a new journal. Rather, members are encouraged to send their research results to Bird Banding or North American Bird Bander or any of several recognized publications.

Reports of banding activities, unusual success, tips and helpful items, current projects announcements and requests for assistance, and announcements of meetings and symposia of interest to banders are all fair game for the Texas Bander.

The OG has joined this association and is receiving their newsletter, which will be placed in the OG Library. Anyone attending the next TOS meeting is welcome to "sit in" on the meeting of the Texas Bird Banders Association. This is an interesting part of our birding world too many of us know too little about.

#### THE A.O.U.....DO YOU KNOW WHO OR WHAT THIS IS?

If you keep any kind of bird list...life, state, year, etc....you know the contents to have any validity, must conform to species in the A.O.U.'s Checklist of North American Birds. Our UTC checklist follows the A.O.U. order of bird listings, the Clearing House editor asks that you follow that order when you send in observations, the field guides follow it, everyone does. Have you new birders wondered just what the A.O.U. is?

The American Ornithologists' Union, or A.O.U. as it is familiarly known, is the oldest and largest professional ornithological society in the Western Hemisphere. Its members represent interests in all aspects of avian biology, and they include professionals and amateurs dedicated to its aim, the advancement of ornithological science. Members receive The Auk, the quarterly journal and official organ of the A.O.U., now approaching its 100th year of publication, and containing almost 1000 pages yearly. Its primary object is the publication of the results of original studies of birds, but it also includes reviews of major new ornithological works, a bibliography and abstracts of recent periodical literature, ornithological news, reports and announcements of the Union. Among other publications is the Checklist of North American Birds, which treats the names, taxonomic status and ranges of all birds known to occur in North America. The "Check-list" has had five editions, the most recent published in 1957. Work on a sixth edition, to cover the entire continent south to Panama, is under way. Supplements to the "Check-list" are published in The Auk.

The A.O.U. came into being on September 29, 1883, following a meeting of 21 ornithologists in The American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The meeting was held in response to a letter signed by J.A. Allen, Elliott Coues, and William Brewster, inviting 48 leading ornithologists to attend a meeting for the purpose of "founding an American Ornithologists' Union". Its aim of furthering ornithological science has been achieved through the Union's publications, its annual meetings, its committees, and its membership.

The Annual Meeting of the A.O.U. usually takes place in late summer or autumn. Through a program of scientific papers, motion pictures, exhibits, field trips, informal gatherings, and a banquet the Annual Meeting has become a clearing house for the exchange of ideas, a forceful stimulus to further study, and a tradition of memorable fellowship.

In August, 1979, this renowned group will meet in College Station. The OG is furnishing 500 of our UTC checklists, and a like number of our birding maps. (These maps, by the way, will be brought up to date and redone sometime this winter).

## TRY A HUMMINGBIRD CAFETERIA by Anne B. Speers

When we lived in Sinton, near Corpus Christi, we had wonderful fall migrations of hummingbirds....Ruby-crowned, Black-chinned, occasional Rufous, and rarely, exciting Anna's or other western species. In late September, these hummer populations would build until, when the heaviest feeding hours of evening arrived, it almost seemed hazardous to venture into the back yard as the birds swooped, darted, and dived, and a distinct hum could be heard as they whizzed around your head.

Now hummingbirds are very territorial about their feeding stations, and we were awed by the energy expended as each bird tried frantically to establish dominance around a feeder, striving heroically to keep all others away. In spring and summer this results in nicely spaced nesting pairs, and you usually have only a couple of pairs utilizing your feeders. But in the fall, as the northern birds move south, and in their determination and need to build fat for migration, your yard can become a fascinating whirlwind of feeding birds, providing you can provide enough food through flowers or feeders to keep them happy.

In an effort to satisfy as many of these charming, tiny creatures as possible (and because it seemed almost painful to watch all that energy being wasted on chasing each other), we began experimenting with temporary, homemade feeders to supplement our larger commercial feeders. This resulted using, primarily, small 2 to 4 inch clear plastic pill bottles. With a few refinements, we found these so satisfactory that we ended with well over a dozen feeding stations spaced about 10 to 15 feet apart, roughly encircling our large back and side yard. When the migration was at its height, we found we could place lawn chairs within this circle, and quietly sit holding these bottles, and soon have the birds feeding from our hands. (We had to learn not to flinch as they zippered past our ears, but we were never even grazed, so skillful was their flight.) We think there were times when we had at least 30-40 or more birds at a time in Sinton. Here, we think about 15 is as many as we've had at one time. It's almost impossible to get an accurate count, they move so fast.

After reading Mrs. Donohue's account of wanting a hummingbird feeder while vacationing in New Mexico, but understandably being reluctant to invest in an expensive commercial feeder, and as it is now time for our fall migration, I thought other readers of the SPOONBILL might enjoy profiting from our experiments in cheap homemade feeders.

You will need: Some clear glass or plastic bottles, preferably with lids, but you can also use test-tubes, or small squat jars, such as pimentoes come in; a few sheets of red construction paper from the school supply counter (remember, red is the color hummers are first attracted, as opposed to yellow, for bees). Gather up scissors, Scotch tape, a bottle of red nail polish, or a red Marks-a-lot, several Twist-ems, such as come with your package of plastic baggies, and then make up a batch of hummingbird syrup. This is made by combining 1 part sugar with 3 parts water, and adding a few drops of red food coloring. We are told to never use a sweeter solution than the 1 to 3 ratio, or it may result in liver damage to the birds. (Many birders successfully use a ratio of 1 to 4....Ed.). Honey may be substituted, but it doesn't make any difference to the birds' health, and it does attract bees. Remember, hummers eat many tiny insects, and the syrup is really not the main item in their diet. I find making up a quart of this syrup in a quart size soft drink bottle will last several days, and is handy for carrying the bottle into the garden to fill the feeders as needed. (At the height of the season, you may find you will be making up a quart almost every day).

Begin assembling your feeders by cutting a circle about 5 or 6 inches in diameter out of the red paper for each bottle. You may lobe this gently, to resemble a flower, if you wish, but it is the color, rather than the shape that attracts the birds (somehow, the flower shapes do look better in the yard). In the center of this 'flower', make 3 slits which cross at their center, forming a \* shape. The outer diameter of this \* shape should be approximately the same as the outer diameter of the bottle you are using. Now, push the bottle through these slits so that the 'flower' forms a collar around the top of the bottle and the points hug the bottle underneath. Scotch-tape the points to the bottle to secure the 'flower'. Next, connect 4 or 5 twistems end to end to form one long twistem. It should be long enough to go around your container, be twisted tightly to secure the container, and still leave two long 'tails' to use as hangers to fasten your feeder in place. (Next time you buy a bunch of celery, save that nice long sturdy twistem that comes around the celery. They are just right for these feeders). You are now ready to take your feeders into the garden and hang them appropriately, then fill them. They may hang at a slight tilt, which is fine. Adjust the flower collar as needed, trimming or folding any part that interferes with the hanging. Be sure to remove any overhanging foliage or branches that might conceal your offering, or interfere in a retreating bird's flight. Birds almost always prefer feeders from which they can make a fast get-away.

It is best to first hang your improvisation near your established feeder, or whatever flowers the birds are utilizing in your garden. Leave the lid off the bottle until the birds find and become accustomed to using the feeder. Once the birds recognize your feeders as a source of food, you will find you can move your feeders at will. Also, once they become accustomed to a site, the red flower collar is no longer a necessity, if it is torn or wilted by rain, no need to replace it. However, it is still a good idea to use the collar for fast location by the birds of a new feeder.

As the idea is to lure as many individuals as possible, after the birds are acquainted with the style of feeder, space them so that one strongly dominant bird cannot maintain complete supremacy over more than one feeder. The immature and less aggressive females will soon learn to take advantage of his absence as he tries to 'cover all fronts', and as the numbers of birds increase, dominance becomes almost impossible.

If you find bees or wasps a problem, then get out the lid or caps you have saved and punch several small holes in them. Use a hot ice pick or nail to make a neat hole in plastic. These should be big enough to permit the birds' bills to enter, but not large enough for bees or those small pesky wasps to get through. You may want to ring the holes with red nail polish or the red Marks-a-lot, to resemble the center of a flower. It usually doesn't take the birds long to learn to utilize these holes, and otherwise, you may have a bottle full of insects.

The first Spring I got out these small supplemental feeders for the hummers, I fastened a couple, without lids, to our clothes line. I was delighted to discover that soon several other migrants were attracted to them. Tanagers, Orioles, Indigo Buntings, and 2 or 3 warbler species would perch on the line and dip their beaks into these feeders. Since then, each spring I usually put out a couple of feeders just for these song bird migrants, using larger bottles, such as those in which herbs are sold, or also using open clay saucers, usually the 3 inch size made to be used under a small flower pot. These heavier feeders are best hung in the Y branches of small trees and shrubs, or by using double strands of twisters, so that you have hangers from each side of the bottle, they can be secured most anywhere. The saucers are put on stumps, or yard tables, and it is well to scatter a little Sevin around the base of these to discourage ants. Otherwise, I find that bees and wasps are usually not as much of a problem in early spring as they are in the fall. Strangely, these hummer feeders never seem to attract these song bird migrants in the fall as they do in the spring. Perhaps in the spring they are starved for this quick energy food after migration, and then also, there are usually more fruits in the fall such as native beauty berries and elder berries, and in our garden, figs.

These suggestions for making supplemental feeders are only that. The idea is to have as many feeders as possible as inexpensively as possible. I have a friend who has used hamster water bottles as hummer feeders, and sometimes instead of the paper flowers, if I want a feeder in a hurry, I simply remove one or two of the plastic 'blossoms' from my commercial feeder and attach it to a bottle with a little floral clay, so, let your imagination take over, and probably improve on these suggestions. But do have fun, and the next time you have to get a prescription for pills from your doctor, you can at least find some comfort in reflecting that you are also thusly acquiring a potential new hummingbird feeder.

[This is a timely contribution to THE SPOONBILL, for Margaret Anderson will soon be putting out the word to fill and hang the feeders in expectation of our wintering hummers. Anne, an OG member, was formerly on the staff of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, where Dr. Clarence Cottam got her in the hobby of feeding birds. After moving to the Houston area, Anne had the position as head of the Information Center and Libraries of the Houston Museum of Natural Science for eight years. She lives east of Conroe in a wooded area, where her winter daily count at her feeders is around 20 to 25 species, including wintering hummers. --Ed.]

#### A DINNER GUEST TO REMEMBER by Margaret Jones

Have you ever noticed a rather glazed look creep into the eyes of a non-birder when he is surrounded by a group of enthusiastic birders talking about their hobby? I recently found the perfect solution for preventing boredom overcoming that type of guest when the feathered talk starts flying fast and thick--provide live entertainment!

Recently a call for help came from a lady who had rescued a small bird from her swimming pool, had no idea what it was, but wanted someone to take it. Calls to qualified people being in vain, I finally told her to bring it over, and she arrived about an hour before my dinner guests. The bird, which was an immature Sora, was docile and quiet, standing wherever he was put, with no apparent mark on him. He couldn't or wouldn't fly when taken from the pool, and had been put in a box for his protection.

Fortunately for the bird and me, Avis Brister was among my expected guests, and I knew she had had a bit of experience in feeding injured or young birds. The two non-birders among our guests sat bemused and entranced while Avis attempted to force-feed the little thing with cat food. Holding him gently in her left hand, and forcing open his bill with her left thumb and forefinger, she would place a small ball of food on her right forefinger and push it down his throat. Each time he would stand quietly for a moment, the bill would open slightly and the food would be ejected (rather contemptuously, we thought). When it was obvious he wouldn't eat at that time or that food, we left him in solitude.

We truly didn't think the little bird would last the night, for Avis said the crow appeared empty. Since he wouldn't fly, if we turned him out of doors the neighbors' cats would have a meal in a minute, so we left him on the screened front porch, with some water and cat food at hand, and hoped. Before bidding him good night, I noticed a cricket, caught and crippled it, and left it beside him, hoping the movement would arouse the bird from its lethargy and provide a meal. Maybe it did, we don't know, but the bird was active the next morning and the cricket was not to be seen. He was so active, in fact, he climbed out of the large grocery sack (paper clipped at the top) in which I had placed him while taking him to the Arboretum! Try that for a thrill...drive down a busy street, glance at the sack and see a small Sora perched up on the top edge, apparently observing the scenery going by! There was no place to stop, so I grabbed him, thrust him back in the sack, and held it closed with one hand while driving the last few blocks to our destination.

When the bird was released by the edge of a small stream, he stood quietly for a few moments, then flew strongly across the stream to the other bank, and there I left him, on his own and apparently ready to resume his interrupted flight to southern parts. He'll never know he was the star performer at our dinner party!

[From Bird Life of Texas' account of the haunts and habits of a Sora: This small short-billed rail breeds chiefly north of Texas in freshwater marshes, sedgy, cattailly or reedy ponds, beside rivers and sluggish streams, and in similar oozy situations. Wintering places extend from Gulf of Mexico marshes to those of the West Indies and South America. Some individuals thus transit approximately three thousand miles each spring and fall.....In Texas, the winter birds occur mostly in fresh or tidal marshes along the coast--rarely inland.....Observers of a flushing Sora find it difficult to believe that this short-winged, feebly fluttering, hesitant species is capable of overseas travel, but weak wing-beats of a frightened bird are transformed during migration to strong steady, sustained flight. *Porzana carolina* is a low-flying nocturnal migrant. Consequently, primary hazards on its journey are buildings, utility wires, and other man-made obstacles.]

#### AROUND AND ABOUT

\*\* A new sighting for the UTC was made September 20, when David Paul Nimmons was first observed, banded, and weighed (a hefty 9 lbs, 8 oz.). Are you going to enlist him for the Christmas Count, Paul?

\*\* Dick Peake, a subscriber from Virginia, who spent 8 weeks at Rice University this past summer, reported flickers nested on the campus, also robins. One day, after a rain, he counted over 40 robins and their young gathered to feed in an open space. White-breasted Nuthatches were seen at Huntsville State Park this summer, and Dick, who has them nest in his yard in Virginia, passes on the tip to look for this nuthatch in white oaks.

\*\* Dee Ross sends greetings from Ohio. "Leaves are beginning to turn and we are busy preparing for winter. We sure miss Texas. Birding is not as exciting as Houston; I've seen several Barred Owls, but somehow they don't look the same without Spanish Moss surrounding them. Spring migration was late and short. At the rear of our property is a swale that holds water in the spring. This was a great area to visit after work. Got a lifer here--Cape May Warbler.

"We have become involved with a nature sanctuary, Hach-Otis, which is owned by Cleveland Audubon. The property overlooks the Chagrin River and has a 150' wash bank. A large colony of bank swallows breed here. The Sanctuary is 81 acres of second growth hardwoods and deep ravines of virgin hemlock. It has a good bird variety, but we still have our heart at the Moore Sanctuary.

"My job as Sanitarian for Geauga County Health Dept. takes me into the country and I see the same area every week...there is a lot of development in the county...much bobolink habitat is destroyed. Since early August hawks/falcons have been moving through, mostly red-tails and kestrels. Warblers, particularly Bay-breasted are passing now (September 17)....."

\*\* A note from David Marrack says: "The end of August found son Paul and I in the National Forests of New Mexico. In the Pecos Wilderness we found Houston's winter feathered friends in abundance still in their family groups.....many would be unidentifiable without their parents.

"The grandest sight was a Goshawk. We were sitting on the edge of a precipice to which we had climbed by an untracked route, eating a snack in the midmorning sun, when we spotted 'him' over the forest below. He soared up a thermal in front of us and then to the left, and then flapped right in front not 50' away and slid into the scrub trees behind us. This place is less than 3 miles from where we saw one 15 years ago with young.

"The experiment of transplanting northern peregrine falcon eggs to nests of pairs with defective eggs in New Mexico is producing a new peregrine population slowly, but it is a success".

#### A LEARNING CORNER QUESTION

Anne Speers has a question to put to the birders of this area. "Does anyone have valid information on the movement of our birds in late summer and early fall. For years I have watched my resident feeders thin out and practically disappear in late September and October, then in November they--or others of the same species begin to trickle back. The question is, are these the same birds that nested and raised their young, or is this another population of wintering birds? (Or, a little of each?) I have asked this question of some pretty noted authorities, and so far have not received any hard and definite answers. Maybe someone out there has done some banding and really knows the answer. With the jays and the cardinals, I find that they linger at the feeders until the last set of young are capable of taking care of themselves, and the parents have completed molting, then they all seem to vanish for several weeks. Do Mom and Dad take the kids out into the world and put them on their own, then return to home base? Or, do the nesting populations move, perhaps only a short distance on down the coast and stay there for the winter, and we have a slightly more northern population move into our area and stay with us until nesting time the following spring. All I am very sure of is that in late September and October, the feeders remain full of uneaten seed, and the birds are few and far between, and I have seen this happen year after year, and others remark they have the same experience. I am sure that a few individuals remain year around but I suspect these are often unmated birds." [If you have some knowledge of this subject, share it with us. We would like to know the answers. --Ed.]

#### A NEW FIELD GUIDE OF INTEREST

Jon E. Rickert, in a monumental undertaking, has put together and published A GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN BIRD CLUBS. The book lists over 800 birding-oriented clubs, from Alaska to Panama. The section for each state and province includes a map showing the location of each club. The format makes it very easy to quickly locate a club in any area in which a birder might have an interest. Club listings contain local birding contacts, information about membership and newsletter (including cost of subscription), time and place of meetings, general ideas of field trips and some favorite birding areas. For stay-at-homes and travelers this is a good book to add to your collection. Available for \$15.00 postpaid from Avian Publications, Inc. PO Box 310, Elizabethtown, Kentucky 42701. An added feature coming soon is a newsletter supplement, BIRDING NEWS SURVEY, which will update information in the book, as well as include articles from some of the club publications and other sources on a wide range of subjects. This will be a quarterly publication, costing \$5.00 a year from Avian Publications.

#### SINGLE PARTY SETS ALL-TIME HIGH TEXAS ONE-DAY SEPTEMBER RECORD OF 153 SPECIES

--by Noel Peffingell

On September 2, 1978 a team of four birders consisting of David Dauphin, Ted Eubanks, Holly Hobart, and Jim Morgan established a new Upper Texas Coast and State record of 145 species in Harris, Chambers, and Galveston Counties. Three weeks later, on Friday, September 22, Ben Feltner, Elaine Robinson, and the writer found 153 species in the same three counties but not entirely along the same route taken by the September 2nd party. The combined total for both groups was 168 species--12 more than the current U.S. record for September.

The September 22nd day began with the call of an Upland Plover at 5:30 a.m. at the writer's home in SE Houston and ended with the call of the Common Nighthawk at 9:30 p.m. in downtown Houston. A summary of the birding highlights during the 16 hours between the first and last species follows.....

\*\* NE Harris County: In the vicinity of Ralston Road, west of Sheldon Reservoir, we recorded two important "area exclusives"--Barred and Screech owls. The latter

finally responded to its imitated call in broad daylight (7:45 a.m.) after we had tried in vain to call it up for nearly an hour before sunrise and had turned our attention to other species responding to its eerie whinny, which included our one and only Kentucky Warbler of the day.

At Sheldon Reservoir we found 23 Anhingas, a pair of Wood Ducks, Kestrel, Blue Grosbeak, and the first and most unexpected member of the swallow family, a lingering immature Purple Martin--a bonus bird and the only swallow on our list until after the noon hour.

Shortly after entering Deussen Park at the south end of Lake Houston we were surprised by a flock of 13 White Ibises feeding in the grass--untypical habitat in an unusual locality. We also added such other essentials as Eastern Bluebird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Pine Warbler, and both vultures while in the park, plus four unexpected bonus species: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Osprey, Flicker, and Yellow-throated Warbler. A brief stop at nearby Eisenhower Park yielded a Hooded Warbler but we were unable to call up Swainson's Warbler, nor could we find the only important area essential still missing from our list, the Wood Thrush. Enroute to Buckhorn Lake, near the eastern end of Garrett Road, we saw our only Wood Stork and a brief stop at Buckhorn added Pied-billed Grebe.

By the time we left Harris County via I-10 (just before 11 a.m.) we had found a total of 72 species.

\*\* Chambers County: Lake Charlotte, just east of the Trinity River and south of the Liberty County line, was unproductive, so we decided to skip White Memorial Park (at I-10 and Hwy 61) inasmuch as we had already gotten virtually all of the essential woodland species in the Sheldon-Lake Houston area.

At Anahuac Refuge 6 more duck species were added to the list, two of which were unexpected at this time of year: Gadwall and American Wigeon. Other essentials found here included Black-crowned Night Heron, Marsh Hawk, Avocet, and Black Tern. We left Chambers County (at Hwy 124 bridge over the Intracoastal waterway) just after 3 p.m. with 99 species on our list.

\*\* Galveston County: Our 100th species was a bonus Common Snipe spotted by Elaine just before reaching our next important birding site, High Island. Shortly after entering Smith Woods we called up one of the day's most exceptional rarities, a male Black-throated Gray Warbler. By the time we left this popular migrant trap we had added 7 more warbler species, including a bonus Worm-eating.

At a stand of salt cedars not far from the Bolivar Flats we flushed out the other exceptional rarity of the day, a Veery, the only thrush we were to find and least expected of them all. Our 18th and last warbler was also here, the Chestnut-sided, as well as an Olive-sided Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher (bonus) and Dickcissel.

Bolivar Flats really lived up to its reputation as one of the top North American shorebird areas for it was here that we added another 23 species to our list--10 essentials, 12 common, and one bonus: Snowy Plover.

With less than an hour of daylight left we headed toward the Bolivar Ferry via FM 2612, totally unaware that we had already listed 147 species at this point (none of us wanted to miss any birds by taking the time to add up the list before dark). A Gull-billed Tern, two Solitary Sandpipers (bonus), and Clapper Rail made it 150 by the time we arrived at the ferry. In the four hours of birding High Island and Bolivar Peninsula we had recorded a total of 51 new species.

We reached Galveston Island at 7:20 with just enough light to try for one of our missing species, the Least Sandpiper, at the South Jetty. The effort was unsuccessful so we drove to the County Courthouse to seek out roosting White-winged Doves by flashlight! We walked the entire square looking into every tree and finally found a single bird in the very last life oak--No. 151! Our final Galveston Island check-point was the University of Texas Medical Center, site of a Barn Owl stake-out at the Students Book Store Building. The owl never put in an appearance while we were there but the visit to the Medical Center was not a wasted stop for roosting under the eaves of the Book Store Building was what we had feared would be the biggest "Shame-bird Miss of the Day", none other than that King of Junk Birds, the lowly Rock Dove--No. 152 at 8:15 p.m.!

\*\*\*\*\* Before adding up the day's species, we each estimated what the final total would be. Elzine guessed 130, Ben 133 and I said 135. Never were three birders as elated over miscalculating a Big Day list since none of us thought we had any chance at all of exceeding the September 2nd record when we hadn't been able to find 100 species until after 3 p.m. As a matter of fact, had we been able

to bird the eastern third of Galveston Island before dark we could have added Inca Dove, Robin, and one or more of the missing warblers we had expected to find (i.e., Tennessee, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Mourning, Canada) at Kempner Park, as well as such expected marshy-area birds as Pectoral and Least Sandpipers and/or Long-billed Dowitcher--and in so doing exceed the U.S. record of 156 by four California birders on Sept. 27, 1973. Another footnote of interest: There are only three other months during which UTC one-party counts have exceeded 150 species in a single day--March (173), April (193), and May (181) (all-time highs in parentheses).

\*\* Summary: Total species by party--153; total species by everyone--144; personal totals--Ben Feltner/151, Elaine Robinson/149, Noel Pettingell/146. Car miles (first to last species)--220; foot miles--7. Weather: Clear and windless in morning, partly to mostly cloudy in afternoon with NE winds 10-15 mph near coast. Temp. Houston: 73-90/Beaumont: 73-92/Galveston: 79-88.

TRESPASS! from "Outdoor California" via "The Quail"

Each year recreation seekers meet more trespass signs in the outdoors. Reactions vary widely to the closing of favorite recreation spots---apathy, anger, defiance, and revenge are often reflected in the actions of restricted people. Unfortunately, some people fail to demonstrate maturity in judgement and take their anger, defiance or revenge out on the landowner by destroying his property, cutting fences, or letting livestock out of fields. Most people control their feelings and attempt to do something constructive about the increasing number of such signs.

Many organizations are trying, successfully, to improve citizen-landowner relations and have been able to enter into agreements for entry rights. Individuals have taken time to contact owners or tenants of posted areas to convince them they will use good judgment and caution while enjoying the area without causing problems for landowners. As a result, relations are improved and many posted areas are open to the public if they ask permission.

We must realize that there is usually a good reason why property is posted, in many cases to protect crops, livestock or range and to prevent the land from being used as a garbage dump. Others wish to reserve recreation on the land for family and friends. Whether private lands remain open or are closed depends on how well people respect property rights. ALWAYS obtain permission before entering private property; NEVER leave a mess behind. Remember, unauthorized entry on enclosed or cultivated lands for any purpose and trespass on unenclosed or uncultivated lands properly posted are misdemeanors.

#### PLACES TO GO

\*\* How many of you know the actual area encompassing the property leased by Amoco to Lamar University for a biological laboratory? This is in the area traditionally known as Scout woods in High Island, but by no means does it comprise the entire woods, as many have thought. In fact, the genial gentleman named Smith who tends the garden near the entrance so well, is the owner of a large portion of the woods, and the land all the way, fronting the road, to Hwy 124. Mr. Smith, as some of you know who have taken the time to chat with him, is a very obliging man, interested in the people who come to see the birds, and glad to have them bird on his property, as well as the Lamar U. area. However, he was highly incensed earlier this year, and justifiably so, we think, by the thoughtless actions of the members of an out-of-state Audubon tour group. These people, in their avid eagerness to "see the birds", encroached on the rim of the little pond which is directly in back of the small garage, trampling the iris and other plants in their heedlessness. There was, and has been for some time, a wire stretched along some of the outer edge of this lovely spot, but this has now been reinforced, a warning to you to please stay off the plants. Also Mr. Smith is beginning a fence, and you will be startled to see how much of the woods belongs to him. Apparently we birders will be welcome as long as we comport ourselves with thoughtfulness for the rights of the property owner. So, if Mr. Smith is around the next time you go there to bird, make yourself known to him, and express your appreciation for the privilege of birding on his portion of Scout Woods.

We think all our readers know that Smith Woods in High Island is private property, owned by the heirs of a couple named Smith who farmed that area for many years. They, too, are agreeable to birders to enjoy their property, and Mr. and Mrs. Brannan, who live there and look after the property, everyone knows as eager and knowledgeable birders themselves. But remember, it is a privilege to visit Smith's Woods, not a right.

\*\* Fred Collins says October is rice combining time in West Harris County. It is also arrival time for migrant and wintering waterbirds. Among the arrivals is the Yellow Rail. This bird can at times be abundant in rice fields. The combining

technique lends itself to bird watching. The fields are mowed from edge to center. The rails in the field continue to move toward the center, and when the final cuts are made rails and bitterns flush with each swipe. They fly clear of the combine and settle in the stubble. An hour or so of observation usually produces a nice variety of marsh birds. There are large rice fields near Cypress Creek on the Katy-Hockley Cut-off Road. [If you take your West Harris County map with you, you will notice a number of roads to explore which may have rice fields alongside].

\*\* Ted Eubanks recommends a place for sure viewing of numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers when you are through birding White Park and are on your way to Anahuac NWR or High Island: on Hwy 61, go past White Park about a mile, when you will see several small lanes leading into dead end clearings on the left. This is an area of many, many dead pine trees, victims of the pine bark beetle. Ted says to drive into any of these clearings, park and watch the Red-headed Woodpeckers.

\*\* And at Anahuac NWR, the long-awaited major construction work on the Shoveler Pond dike and road has begun. This work is designed to restore Shoveler Pond to its former productive excellence by allowing the refuge to manage water levels and plant growth. Therefore, for the next few months, Shoveler Pond road will be closed to vehicles.

#### CHRISTMAS COUNTS ARE PLACES TO GO!

Houston Christmas Count - Dec. 16... Under Paul Nimmon's able direction, the coverage of this count has steadily increased. Last year a high of 130 birders reported 183 species, which placed us 10th in a list of over 1200 counts reporting. This species total has been exceeded only once by the Houston group, and then years ago before much of our count areas were covered by sprawling industrial complexes and other developments. Paul's theory has been that no matter what degree of birding experience you possess, or lack thereof, you can be an asset and a positive factor on this count. Call Paul Nimmons, 682-3597 or 224-6968, or write him at 7702 Westview, Houston, Texas 77055, to get your name in the pot!

Galveston Christmas Count - Dec. 23... This long-lost count was first conducted by Dr. George Williams in 1946, and limped along until 1966, when it met its untimely end. If you would be a part of this historic revival, call compiler Ted Eubanks and place your name on the registration list. The count circle will include the Texas City area (including the Dike), Bolivar Flats and the tip of Bolivar Peninsula, and Galveston Island from East Beach to Sportsmen's Road. So hurry and sign up!

Freeport Christmas Count - Dec. 17... This count is undergoing a period of revitalization and renovation, including the appointment of a co-compiler, Ted Eubanks, to facilitate organization of the count on a local level. To register for the count call or write Ted Eubanks, 4012 Childress, Houston, Texas 77005, phone 661-8082. It is vitally important for all those planning to participate in the count to register ahead of time. In this way each area of the count can be assured of having adequate help, thereby maximizing count productivity. Let's be number one this year!

#### CLEARING HOUSE September, 1978

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made in the six counties comprising the upper Texas coast: Jefferson, Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Ft. Bend, and Brazoria. Those common species which can be readily identified and are widely distributed in the UTC will be listed, followed by number of reports, with lowest and highest numbers seen in parentheses, i.e. (1-42). If any of these species is reported in unusual habitat or numbers that will be noted separately. How to read the CH: Species: Location--(how many)date, observers.

Grebe, Eared: High Island--(1)16,OG; Baytown--(2)23,D; Houston--(2)29,WC, (White Oak Bayou)

Grebe, Pied-billed: 7 reports (3-70)

Pelican, White: 10 reports (4-250)

Pelican, Brown: Galveston--(1)2,E, (1)16,24,NP, Atkinson's Island--(5)17,Barbara Duryea (DD reported this at the OG meeting, and said there were also 3 seen in Galveston on the 17th by a friend of Jane Hamilton.....8 in one day!)

Cormorant, Double-crested: Baytown--(2)23,D; Bryan Beach--(5)23,BB; Bolivar--(1)30,C

Cormorant, Olivaceous: Trip--(15)2,E, (20)9,TE,JMo; Bolivar--(2)16,OG, (15)30,0, (12)30,PM; Baytown--(25)23,D

Anhinga: Ft. Bend Co.--(5)4,TE,JMo, (13)23,J&BH; W.Harris Co.--(6)4,TE,JMo, (12)27,ERE; Maner Lake--(3)10,TC; High Island--(2)16,OG; Sheldon Res.--(23)22,R

Frigatebird, Magnificent: W.Galveston--(9)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo; Bryan Beach St.Pk.--(2)5,TC; Bolivar--(8)16,OG

Heron, Great Blue: 14 reports (3-30)

- Heron, Green: 13 reports (1-10)  
Heron, Little Blue: 13 reports (1-15)  
Egret, Cattle: Harris Reservoir--(100,000+)1, Maurice Garner, fide TC (see notes);  
16 additional reports (6-2,000)  
Egret, Reddish: Trip--(25)2,E, (15)9,TE,JMo; Bolivar--(10)16,OG, (1)19,JHa, (20)23,D  
(30)30,O; Brazoria Co.--(12)23,BB; W.Galveston--(1)23,JHa,DM, (3)23,JB; Houston--  
(2)27,WC(Mercury Dr.)  
Egret, Great: 10 reports (5-100)  
Egret, Snowy: Baytown--(500)23,D; 10 additional reports (1-200)  
Heron, Louisiana: 10 reports (1-40)  
Night Heron, Black-crowned: Anahuac NWR--(15)2,B; Brazoria Co.--(2)23,BB, J&BH,  
(4)30,L&MB  
Night Heron, Yellow-crowned: Trip--(2)2,E, (4)9,TE,JMo; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo;  
Brazoria Co.--(2)10,TC, (1)23,J&BH; High I.--(1)16,OG; W.Galveston--(1)26,JHa  
Bittern, American: Anahuac NWR--(2)30,J&BH  
Stork, Wood: Bolivar--(15)2,E; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo, (65)23,J&BH; Houston--(1)7  
WC(Mercury Dr.); W.Galveston--(2)9,TE,JMo, (1)9,(4)23,JHa, (4)23,JB,DM; Maner Lake  
(5)10,TC; Sheldon Res.--(1)22,R; Baytown--(4)23,D  
Ibis, White-faced: 11 reports (5-360)  
Ibis, White: 13 reports (1-100)  
Spoonbill, Roseate: 12 reports (1-160)  
Goose, Canada: W. Harris Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo (see notes)  
Goose, Snow: W.Harris Co.--(2)4,TE,JMo, (2)8,PJ; Bolivar--(5)30,0 (see notes)  
Whistling Duck, Black-bellied: Ft. Bend Co.--(5)23,J&BH  
Whistling Duck, Fulvous: W.Harris Co.--(100)4,TE,JMo (25)4,J&BH  
Duck, Mottled: W.Harris Co.--(2500)4,TE,JMo; 9 additional reports (2-75)  
Duck, Gadwall: W.Harris Co.--(2)4,TE,JMo (see notes); Anahuac NWR--(4)22,R (see  
notes); High I.--(2)23,D  
Pintail: 5 reports (10-40)  
Teal, Green-winged: W.Galveston--(30)23,DM  
Teal, Blue-winged: 11 reports (3-5000)  
Wigeon, American: Anahuac NWR--(14)22,R, (50)23,D; High I.--(2)30,0  
Shoveler, Northern: High Island--(2)2,E, (40)23,D, (20)30,0; Houston--(8)2,(10)7,  
WC(Mercury Dr.)  
Duck, Wood: Ft. Bend Co.--(15)4,TE,JMo; Sheldon Res.--(2)22,R; Lake Charlotte--(1)  
23,DE  
Vulture, Turkey: 8 reports (2-15) Duck, Ruddy: Baytown--(3)23,D  
Vulture, Black: Ft. Bend Co.--(150)4,TE,JMo; 4 additional reports (2-20)  
Kite, White-tailed: Houston--(1)3,WC (White Oak Bayou); Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo;  
W.Galveston--(1)9,TE,JMo, (2)14,(1)19,JHa; High I.--(1)23,D, (1)30,J&BH  
Kite, Mississippi: Lake Jackson--(7)3,TC, (2)3,22,L&MB; Houston--(1)5,(2)10,JMo  
(Memorial), (2)11,ERe(South Blvd); Bellaire--(1)15,DM (yard)  
Hawk, Sharp-shinned: Deussen Pk.--(1)22,R; High I.--(1)23,D  
Hawk, Red-tailed: High I.--(1)16,OG; Brazoria Co.--(1)23,J&BH  
Hawk, Red-shouldered: White Memorial Pk.--(3)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo; Ft. Bend Co.--(6)4,  
TE,JMo, (4)23,J&BH; Houston--(1)9,JB(ELMS); Clute--(1)30,L&MB  
Hawk, Broad-winged: Trip--(1)2,E, (8)9,TE,JMo; Brazoria Co.--(1)6,TC, (1)30,L&MB;  
High I.--(8)16,OG, (3)23,D, (5)30,0; Ft. Bend Co.--(100)21,JB; Houston--(50)21,  
(300)22,(400)24,J&BH(Memorial); Baytown--(50-1 kettle)20, (1000-8 kettles)21,  
(1000-6 kettles)22,DD; Bellaire--(2)24,DM(yard); Katy--(29)27,ERe  
Hawk, Swainson's: Ft. Bend Co.--(2)4,TE,JMo  
Eagle, Bald: Brazoria Co.--(1 adult)10,TC (no field notes)  
Hawk, Marsh: Houston--(1)4,NP(SE area); W.Harris Co.--(1)4,J&BH, (1)27,ERe; W.Gal-  
veston--(2)9,TE,JMo, (1)26,JHa; Chambers Co.--(1)16,OG, (5)22,R, (4)30,0; Brazoria  
Co.--(2)23,BB, (1)23,J&BH  
Osprey: Chambers Co.--(2)2,E, (1)23,D; Brazoria Co.--(1)all month, Maurice Garner,  
fide,TC; Deussen Pk.--(1)22,R  
Caracara: Fulshear--(3)3,Polly Moore  
Merlin: Baytown--(5)25,DD (no field notes); Bolivar--(1)30,0 (see notes)  
Kestrel, American: Baytown--(100)25,(50)26,DD; 9 additional reports (1-10)  
PHEASANT, RINGED-NECK: Chambers Co.--(2)16,OG (prior reports)  
Bobwhite: 8 reports (1-20)  
Rail, King: Anahuac NWR--(1)2,E; Bolivar--(1)30,0  
Rail, Clapper: 5 reports (1-10)  
Rail, Virginia: Brazoria Co.--(2)23,BB; Galveston--(1)28,JHa (yard, walking down  
the driveway!)  
Sora: Freeport Marsh--(1)6,TC; Bellaire--(1)17,P&MJ, et al (see article)  
Gallinule, Purple: High I.--(1)23,D; Anahuac NWR--(1)2,E; High I.--(1)23,D  
Gallinule, Common: 6 reports (1-15)  
Coot, American: 6 reports (1-20)  
Oystercatcher, American: Bolivar--(6)2,E, (15)9,TE,JMo, (2)16,OG, (15)22,R, (6)30,);  
Roller Pass--(2)23,D  
Plover, Semipalmated: Bolivar--(30)2,E, (20)9,TE,JMo, (8)16,OG, (1)19,JHa, (40)23,  
D, (30)30,0  
Plover, Piping: Bolivar--(25)2,E, (20)9,TE,JMo, (40)16,OG, (2)19,JHa, (40)23,D;  
Surfside--(20)12,TC; Freeport--(8)23,J&BH

Plover, Snowy: Bolivar--(1)22,R, (1)30,0; Freeport--(2)23,J&BH  
 Plover, Wilson's: Bolivar--(25)2,E, (30)9,TE,JMo, (1)16,OG, (10)23,D, (5)30,0  
 Killdeer: 10 reports (3-30)  
 Plover, Black-bellied: Bolivar--(300)23,D, (300)30,0; 7 additional reports (2-100)  
 Turnstone, Ruddy: 9 reports (1-50)  
 Snipe, Common: High I.--(1)22,R; Chambers Co.--(2)30,0  
 Curlew, Long-billed: 9 reports (1-40)  
 Whimbrel: Bolivar--(1)22,R  
 Sandpiper, Upland: Chambers Co.--(1)2,E; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo; Houston--(1)22,  
 R(SE area)  
 Sandpiper, Spotted: 5 reports (1-3)  
 Sandpiper, Solitary: Bolivar--(2)22,R  
 Willet: 8 reports (5-75)  
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 8 reports (1-40)  
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: 6 reports (10-200)  
 Knot, Red: Bolivar--(5)2,E, (4)9,TE,JMo, (6)19,JHa, (20)23,D, (20)30,0; Surfside--  
 (1)12,TC  
 Sandpiper, Pectoral: 5 reports (1-75)  
 Sandpiper, Least: 7 reports (1-200)  
 Dunlin: Bolivar--(1)16,OG  
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: Trip--(50)2,E, (300)9,TE,JMo; Bolivar--(5)16,OG, (100)30,0;  
 W.Galveston--(10)23,JHa  
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: 6 reports (1-800)  
 Sandpiper, Stilt: W.Harris Co.--(30)4,TE,JMo; Houston--(2)11,WC(Mercury Dr.); Bra-  
 zoria Co.--(25)23,BB; High I.--(1)30,0  
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: Trip--(20)2,E, (20)9,TE,JMo; Bolivar--(20)23,D, (20)30,0  
 Sandpiper, Western: 6 reports (75-1500)  
 Sandpiper, Buff-breasted: Ft.Bend Co.--(30)4,TE,JMo; Texas City--(5)17,J&BH  
 Godwit, Marbled: Bolivar--(2)2,E, (20)9,TE,JMo, (1)16,OG, (4)22,R, (30)23,D; W.  
 Galveston--(10)23,(8)26,JHa, (11)23,DM, (12)23,JB  
 Sanderling: Warren Lake (1)4,TE,JMo; 7 additional reports (10-500)  
 Avocet, American: 8 reports (1-43)  
 Stilt, Black-necked: 13 reports (1-150)  
 Phalarope, Wilson's: Houston--(4)1Aug.17,(30)11,WC(Mercury Dr.); Bryan Beach--(5)5,  
 Gull, Herring: 6 reports (2-10)  
 Gull, Ring-billed: 7 reports (6-200)  
 Gull, Laughing: W.Harris Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo; 8 additional reports (6-5000)  
 Tern, Gull-billed: Anahuac NWR--(3)2,E; High I.--(1)23,D  
 Tern, Forster's: 7 reports (1-75)  
 Tern, Common: Bolivar--(25)2,E,(1)16,OG, (10)23,D, (100+)30,0; Brazoria Co.--(1)23,BB  
 Tern, Least: 6 reports (1-200)  
 Tern, Royal: 8 reports (3-2000)  
 Tern, Sandwich: 7 reports (2-200)  
 Tern, Caspian: 6 reports (2-250)  
 Tern, Black: 5 reports (5-750)  
 Skimmer, Black: 5 reports (2-100)  
 Dove, Rock: 7 reports (1-200)  
 Dove, White-winged: Galveston--(2)2,E, (2)all month,JHa(yard)  
 Dove, Mourning: 10 reports (6-100)  
 DOVE, RINGED TURTLE: Bellaire--(1)9,ERe, (3-7)all month,P&MJ (prior reports)  
 Dove, Inca: 8 reports (1-14)  
 Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: 12 reports (1-10)  
 Ani, Groove-billed: W.Galveston--(1)2,TE; High I.--(2)30,J&BH, (2)30,0  
 Owl, Barn: San Jacinto Battleground--(5)2,E; High I.--(1)16,OG; Texas City--(1)17,  
 J&BH  
 Owl, Screech: San Jacinto Battleground--(5)2,E; Houston--(1)2,23,J&BH(yard), (1)4,  
 WC(yard); White Memorial Pk.--(2)16,OG  
 Owl, Barred: Chambers Co.--(2)2,E, (1)23,D; Ft. Bend Co.--(4)4,TE,JMo, (1)23,J&BH;  
 Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)15,TC  
 Chuck-will's-widow: High I.--(4)2,E, (5)9,TE,JMo; (5)16,OG, (3)22,R, (6)23,D, (2)  
 30,0; Brazoria Co.--(4)6,TC; Houston--(1)9,2,22,WC(White Oak Bayou); Bellaire--  
 (1)16,26,DM(yard)  
 Nighthawk, Common: 6 reports (2-75)  
 Swift, Chimney: 8 reports (1-89)  
 Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: 11 reports (1-50)  
 Hummingbird, Rufous: W. Harris Co.--(1-female)27,ERe (see notes)  
 Kingfisher, Belted: Brazoria Co.--(1-2)all month,TC, (1)10,L&MB, (5)23,BB; Houston--  
 (1)2,WC(White Oak Bayou); Trip--(4)2,E, (5)9,TE,JMo; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo,  
 (1)23,J&BH; Chambers Co.--(3)16,OG, (5)23,0, (3)30,0; W.Galveston--(2)23,(3)26,JHa  
 Flicker, Common: Houston--(1)15,ERe(Sunset Blvd.), (1)17,28,WC(yard)  
 Woodpecker, Pileated: 7 reports (1-15)  
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 8 reports (1-10)  
 Woodpecker, Red-headed: Chambers Co.--(5)2,E, (3)16,OG, (12)23,D

- Woodpecker, Hairy: Houston--(1)9,JB(ELMNS)  
 Woodpecker, Downy: 6 reports (1-20)  
 Kingbird, Eastern: 13 reports (1-200)  
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: 15 reports (1-150)  
 Flycatcher, Great Crested: 10 reports (1-15)  
 Phoebe, Eastern: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo; High I.--(2)9,TE,JMo; W.Galveston--(1)19,JHa; Brazoria Co.--(1)23,BB  
 Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied: High I.--(1)2,E  
 Flycatcher, Acadian: Chambers Co.--(3)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo, (6)16,OG, (2)23,D; Ft. Bend Co.--(3)4,TE,JMo  
 Flycatcher, Empidonax: Trip--(4)2,E, (4)9,TE,JMo, (4)16,OG, (5)23,D, (4)30,0; Ft. Bend Co.--(10)4,TE,JMo; Brazoria Co.--(1-5)all month,TC, (3)23,BB  
 Pewee, Eastern: High I.--(3)2,E, (10)9,TE,JMo, (5)16,OG, (5)23,D, (1)30,J&BH, (1)30,0; Ft. Bend Co.--(2)4,TE,JMo, (3)23,J&BH; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)7,TC; Galveston--(1)23,JHa  
 Flycatcher, Olive-sided: High I.--(7)2,E, (6)9,TE,JMo, (5)16,OG, (2)30,J&BH, (1)30,0; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)7,TC; Houston--(1)28,TE(yard)  
 Flycatcher, Vermilion: Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)18,TC  
 Lark, Horned: Bolivar--(10)2,E, (3)9,TE,JMo, (2)16,OG, (2)23,D, (25)30; Surfside--(5)12,TC; Galveston--(2)23,JB  
 Swallow, Tree: Trip--(4)2,E, (10)16,OG  
 Swallow, Bank: Trip--(30)2,E, (6)9,TE,JMo, (2)16,OG  
 Swallow, Rough-winged: Galveston--(4)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo; Lake Charlotte--(1)23,D; Brazoria Co.--(3)23,BB  
 Swallow, Barn: 10 reports (2-400)  
 Swallow, Cliff: W.Harris Co.--(3)4,J&BH; Anahuac NWR--(3)22,WC; Brazoria Co.--(12)23,BB  
 Martin, Purple: Lake Jackson--(3)1,SC; Ft. Bend Co.--(6)12,JB; Sheldon Res.--(1)imm 22,R  
 Jay, Blue: 9 reports (1-20)  
 Crow, Common: 9 reports (6-30)  
 Chickadee, Carolina: 7 reports (1-30)  
 Titmouse, Tufted: 4 reports (5-15)  
 Nuthatch, Brown-headed: Houston--(2)3, (1)6,26,29,JMo(yard)  
 Wren, House: Houston--(1)29,TE(City Hall)  
 Wren, Carolina: 7 reports (2-30)  
 Mockingbird: 10 reports (2-30)  
 Catbird, Gray: High I.--(3)23,D, (1)24,WC, (3)30,J&BH, (5)30,0; Houston--(1)28,30, WC(White Oak Bayou)  
 Thrasher, Brown: Bolivar--(1)22,R; High I.--(1)23,D, (1)24,WC, (12)30,J&BH, (35)30,0; Houston--(1-3)24-30,WC(White Oak Bayou), (1)25,JMo(yard); W.Harris Co.--(1)27,ERe; Algoa--(1)30,Oct.1,DW  
 Robin, American: Houston--(6)1,ERe(Rice U.); Galveston--(1)2,E, (2)23,JB  
 Thrush, Wood: Houston--(1)20,24,26,J&BH(yard); High I.--(1)30,0  
 Thrush, Swainson's: Houston--(1)23,NP(yard); High I.--(1)23,D, (1)30,0, (1)24,WC; Galveston--(1)23,DM; Bellaire--(1)30,DM(yard)  
 Veery: High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo (see notes), (1)16,OG, (1)30,0; Bolivar--(1)22,R (see notes); Kempner Pk.--(2)27,PJ(no field notes)  
 Bluebird, Eastern: Ft. Bend Co.--(6)4,TE,JMo; Lake Jackson--(1-3)all month,TC; Deussen Pk.--(18)22,R  
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 10 reports (1-75)  
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: High I.--(1)23,DD, (3)30,0  
 Pipit, Water: W.Galveston--(2)23,JHa(no field notes), (5)23,DM  
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 11 reports (2-40)  
 Starling: 9 reports (10-1000)  
 Vireo, White-eyed: 8 reports (1-25)  
 Vireo, Yellow-throated: Trip--(8)2,E; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo; White Memorial Pk.--(1)9,TE,JMo, (3)16,OG; High I.--(2)30,0  
 Vireo, Red-eyed: High I.--(50)9,TE,JMo; 11 additional reports (1-10)  
 Warbler, Black-and-white: 12 reports (1-30)  
 Warbler, Prothonotary: 9 reports (1-15)  
 Warbler, Worm-eating: Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1-5)1-10,TC; White Memorial Pk.--(2)2,E; Houston--(1)6,ERe(yard), (1)9,TE,JMo, (1)28,TE(City Hall); High I.--(2)9,TE, JMo, (1)22,R  
 Warbler, Golden-winged: High I.--(1)16,OG  
 Warbler, Blue-winged: High I.--(4)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo, (3)16,OG, (1)23,D, (2)30,0; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)22,TC, (1)30,L&MB  
 Warbler, Tennessee: White Memorial Pk.--(1)16,OG; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)22,TC; High I.--(1)23,D, (2)30,0  
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo (see notes); Kempner--(1)27,PJ  
 Warbler, Nashville: High I.--(5)23,D, (4)30,J&BH, (6)30,0; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)30,LB  
 Warbler, Northern Parula: Chambers Co.--(3)2,E, (1)30,0; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo; High I.--(3)9,TE,JMo, (1)16,OG, (1)23,D, (2)30,0

Warbler, Yellow: Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1-3)1-10,TC; Trip--(5)2,E; Ft.Bend Co.--(2)4,TE,JMo; High I.--(5)16,OG, (1)30,J&BH, (1)30,0

Warbler, Magnolia: Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)23,TC, (1)23,BB, (1)30,L&MB; High I.--(2)23,D; Houston--(1)26,JMo(yard)

WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED BLUE: High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo (see notes)

Warbler, Black-throated Gray: High I.--(1)22,R (see notes)

Warbler, Black-throated Green: High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo, (1)12,PM, (2)16,OG, (1)23,D

Warbler, Blackburnian: High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo, (1)16,OG; White Memorial Pk.--(2)16,OG

Warbler, Yellow-throated: Chambers Co.--(2)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo; Deussen Pk.--(1)22,R

Warbler, Chestnut-sided: Kempner Pk.--(1)23,DM; High I.--(1)30,0

Warbler, Bay-breasted: High I.--(1)23,D, (1)30,0

Warbler, Pine: White Memorial Pk.--(1)2,E, (3)9,TE,JMo, (1)23,D

Warbler, Prairie: High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo, (2)16,OG; W.Galveston--(1)21,JHa

Ovenbird: High I.--(1)2,E, (2)9,TE,JMo, (1)12,PM, (3)16,OG, (1)30,0; Bellaire--(1)11,MJ (yard)

Waterthrush, Northern: High I.--(3)2,E, (3)9,TE,JMo, (1)30,J&BH; Ft.Bend Co.--(1)4,JMo,TE

Waterthrush, Louisiana: High I.--(1)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo, (1)30,0; Houston--(2)2,WC (White Oak Bayou); Ft. Bend Co.--(2)4,TE,JMo

Warbler, Kentucky: High I.--(4)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo, (5)16,OG, (1)30,J&BH, (1)30,0; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)10,TC, (1)30,L&MB

WARBLER, CONNECTICUT: High I.--(1)16,OG (see notes)

Warbler, Mourning: High I.--(1)2,E, (2)16,OG

Yellowthroat, Common: 7 reports (1-2)

Chat, Yellow-breasted: 10 reports (1-6)

Warbler, Hooded: 7 reports (1-8)

Warbler, Wilson's: Houston--(1)2,17,25,WC(White Oak Bayou), (1)24,26,ERe(yard); High I.--(2)9,TE,JMo, (8)16,OG, (4)23,D, (1)30,J&BH, (10)30,0; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)22,TC, (3)30,L&MB

Warbler, Canada: 12 reports (1-15)

Redstart, American: Bolivar--(1)2,E; High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo, (3)16,OG, (3)23,D, (9)30,J&BH, (5)30,0; Freeport Municipal Pk.--(1)22,TC, (1)30,L&MB

Sparrow, House: 8 reports (9-500)

Meadowlark, Eastern: 10 reports (1-25)

Blackbird, Red-winged: 7 reports (10-100)

Oriole, Orchard: W.Galveston--(5)9,TE,JMo; High I.--(10)16,OG, (2)30,0

Oriole, Northern(Baltimore): Trip--(5)2,E; Ft. Bend Co.--(5)4,TE,JMo; Alcoa--(2)7,DW; High I.--(5)9,TE,JMo, (25)16,OG, (2)23,D; W.Harris Co.--(1)9,TE,JMo; W.Galveston--(1)19,JHa

Grackle, Boat-tailed: Chambers Co.--(3)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo, (10)16,OG, (1)23,D, (5)30,0

Grackle, Great-tailed: 6 reports (5-100)

Grackle, Common: Galveston--(1)2,E, (10)23,D; 4 additional reports (21-2000)

Cowbird, Brown-headed: 6 reports (3-10,000)

Tanager, Scarlet: Lake Charlotte--(1)2,E; High I.--(1)9,TE,JMo

Tanager, Summer: Lake Charlotte--(2)2,E; High I.--(3)4,TE,JMo, (4)16,OG, (5)23,D, (1)30,0; Houston--(1)12,ERe(yard); W.Galveston--(1)19,JHa

Cardinal: 8 reports (2-60)

Grosbeak, Blue: Bolivar--(1)16,OG; Sheldon Res.--(1)23,R

Bunting, Indigo: Lake Charlotte--(4)2,E; Ft. Bend Co.--(15)4,TE,JMo; High I.--(2)16,OG, (4)23,D

Bunting, Painted: Lake Jackson--(1)3,TC; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)4,TE,JMo; High I.--(1)16,OG

Dickcissel: Anahuac NWR--(3)2,E; Bolivar--(1)23,R

Sparrow, Savannah: Lake Anahuac--(1)30,J&BH (see notes)

Sparrow, Henslow's: Houston--(1)4,NP (SE area) (see notes)

Sparrow, Seaside: Bolivar--(2)2,E, (1)9,TE,JMo, (1)23,JB, (3)23,D, (10)30,0; Bryan Beach St.Pk.--(1)5,TC

Sparrow, Lark: W.Galveston--(2)25,JHa; High I.--(2)30,0

#### CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS September 1978

L&MB--Larry & Martha Ballard; JB--Jennifer Backo; T&SC--Tom & Sherry Collins; WC--Wesley Cureton; DD--David Dauphin; TE--Ted Eubanks, Jr.; JHa--Jane Hamilton; J&BH--Jean & Bill Harwell; P&MJ--T.Paul & Margaret Jones; DM--David Marrack; PM--Peggy Milstead; JMo--Jim Morgan; NP--Noel Pettingell; ERe--Ellen Red; DW--Diane Wise; BB--Brazosport Birders Field Trip, fide LB; D--party of DD,TE, Holly Hobart & Burt Ellis; E--Party of DD,TE, Holly Hobart & JMo; O--Outdoor Nature Club Field Trip, fide JMo; OG--Ornithology Group Field Trip, fide TE; R--Party of T. Ben Feltner, NP, Elaine Robinson

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES

Cattle Egret: Estimated to be over 1/4 of state's population of Cattle Egrets. Mr. Garner was making a site study with Parks & Wildlife group when they encountered this colony. --Tom Collins

Canada Goose: Large; dark grayish-brown body, and black head and neck with white chin strap. Seen at 250 yards with scopes by both observers for 2 minutes. --JMo

Snow Goose--One goose was white with black wing tips, the other blue phase (dark body with white head and neck). Seen at 300 yards with scopes by both observers for 3 minutes. --JMo

Two "blues", three "snows"; large; blues with dark body, white heads and necks; Snows with all white body, black wing tips. Seen flying near Mottled Ducks along Bolivar Peninsula. Seen by all observers at 200 yards. --JMo

Gadwall: Brownish gray body and black rump. When birds came ashore from water the white belly could be seen. Also, bird flapped wings, and white speculum was noted. Seen at 200 yards with scope for 2 minutes in good light. --JMo

All four birds seen at rest and in flight by TBF & ER. Large Gray-brown ducks with clearly-visible white, black and chestnut speculums seen in bright sunlight at 250 yards with 8x40 binoculars and 30x scope. --T. Ben Feltner

Merlin: Seen in characteristic rapid flight heading towards woods. Larger than Kestrel, smaller than Peregrine, this falcon was grey above, dark banded tail, pointed wings and streaked on sides of breast. Undersides not seen. Seen by this observer, Ted Eubanks and David Dauphin at 20-50 yards with naked eye for 10 seconds. --JMo

DD reports that the Broadwinged Hawks, Merlins and Kestrels reported by him were moving through rapidly on the dates shown. --CH Ed.

Veery: When first seen in flight the bird was believed to be a thrush from its size and actions. Upon alighting the cinnamon-reddish brown upperparts were noted as were the clear white belly and very light spotting on the breast. Tail and head color was same as rest of upper body. Seen by both observers in good light at distances of 30 to 50 feet for 20 seconds using binocs. Noel Pettingell says this is the earliest fall UTC record. JMo

Seen well in good light from about 35 feet in salt cedar hedge. Following details noted by all 3 observers using 8x40 and 7x35 binoculars: No eye-ring, uniform warm brown back, upper breast with suffused light buffy wash and faint spotting. --T. Ben Feltner & Noel Pettingell

Orange-crowned Warbler: Greenish warbler with faint breast streaking and no wing bars. Yellow-green undertail coverts. Faint line above eye. Seen for 2 minutes as close as 10 feet by both observers. --JMo

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER: Female bird; olive blue-green upperparts; somewhat lighter underparts; dull whitish superciliary eye line; no wingbars but white spot at base of primaries clearly seen (which appears at bottom of folded wing); darkish cheek patch. Well studied by both observers in good light with binocs as close as 25 feet for 5 minutes. Bird also independently identified by two other observers in woods, and subsequently shown to another two observers, all agreeing on the identification. JMo

Black-throated Gray Warbler: Medium-sized warbler seen as close as 10 feet by all 3 observers (and shown to Mrs. Wesley Brannan) using 8x40 and 7x35 binoculars. Bird was feeding on terminal twigs of live oak grove in Smith Woods and following details were clearly seen during several minutes of careful observation: Male with black throat, cheeks, and crown; white eye-line, malar stripe and underparts with black streaks on flanks. Upper parts gray, wings grayish-black with two white bars. Yellow spot in front of eye also noted. --T. Ben Feltner & Noel Pettingell

CONNECTICUT WARBLER *Oporornis agilis*: Location--Roadside park at High Island, Tex. Date--9/16/78. Time seen--1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.; 4:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.. Description--Large *Oporornis* warbler feeding in hackberry; upper tail surface, rump, back, nape, crown and auriculars brownish olive-green, auriculars blending into yellow/gray and throat and upper breast instead of ending abruptly as in the Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*, or the Nashville warbler *Vermivora rufi-*

*capilla*; undersides generally yellowish, becoming more intensive towards rear; throat ashy to smokey gray, with gray becoming interfused with olive/yellow on breast; grayish coloration stopped at mid-breast, yet extended down flanks; light orange/pink legs (near flesh-colored); yellow under tail coverts, extending to within at most 1/8 inch of terminal end of inner rectrices; under surface of rectrices dark gray, contrasting with the yellow undertail coverts; tail very slightly notched; distinct, complete buffy eyering; darkish eye; long heavy bill, proportionately more extensive than that of nearby Wilson's Warbler *Wilsonia pusilla*; maxilla brown and slightly curved; mandible straw with brown tip; lores light; bodily the Connecticut appeared bulky and massive, easily dwarfing the adjacent Wilson's; growth of rectrices appeared to be complete, as from the back the bird did not exhibit a short or "stubby"-tailed effect, a trait characteristic of some juvenal birds. Description of voice: When Eubanks and Morgan returned to look for the bird at 4:00, the Connecticut responded to their pishes by vocalizing several distinctive call notes. These notes were quite loud, certainly approaching the call notes of a Hooded Warbler, *Wilsonia citrina*, or a waterthrush, seiurus species, in volume. Unlike these other species, however, the call notes of the Connecticut were flat and metallic, lacking any ringing quality. The notes phonetically approached a "chick" sound. Description of Behavior: As one would normally expect out of such a large warbler, the Connecticut appeared to be quite sluggish and deliberate. This behavior led several observers to first mistake the bird for a vireo. The bird fed at heights ranging from 8 to 15 feet, and concentrated its activities towards the most dense foliage. This combination of deliberate movements and an affection for the dense foliage could, at times, make the bird difficult to locate. In general, therefore the Connecticut was more vireo-like than warbler-like in its activity, refraining from the fluttering and fly-catching one often sees the smaller warblers engaged in. When Morgan and Eubanks saw the bird again in the afternoon, the bird appeared to be more active, though never as active as one of the smaller warblers. Habitat, general--coastal motte; specific--bird occurred in a roadside park, feeding in Sugar Hackberries, *Celtis laevigata*, and Live Oaks, *Quercus virginianas*; bird was also observed frequenting a nearby stand of woods with similar species of trees yet possessing in addition an extensive growth of yaupon, *ilex vomitoria*. Similarly appearing species which can be eliminated: 1) Philadelphia Vireo, *Vireo philadelphicus*, eliminated by the light lores of the Connecticut, the thinner bill of the Connecticut and by the difference in leg color--the Philadelphia's being blueish-gray and the Connecticut's orange-pink. 2) Bay-breasted Warbler, *Dendroica castanea*, can immediately be eliminated by the Connecticut's lack of wing-bars. 3) Nashville Warbler, *Vermivora ruficapilla*, can be eliminated by size, the Connecticut being much larger, the gray on the throat and upper breast of the Connecticut, and by the Connecticut's lack of a Nashville-type cheek patch. 4) Common Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis trichas*, can be eliminated by size, the gray on the throat and breast of the Connecticut and by the length of the Connecticut's undertail coverts. The belly of the Connecticut was yellow, the Common Yellowthroat's white. 5) MacGillivray's Warbler, *Oporornis tolmiei*, can be eliminated by the complete eyering of the Connecticut, by the Connecticut's body size and by the length of the Connecticut's undertail coverts. 6) Mourning Warbler, *Oporornis philadelphia*, same as for *tolmiei*. Distance: from five to 25 feet. Optical Equipment: 7 to 10x glasses. Light: excellent to good, partly cloudy skies, bird observed in numerous light positions, front to back lighting, in direct light and in shade. Previous Experience: Matson with Connecticut; observers familiar with similar species which were eliminated. Documentation: Four photographs (Eubanks') documenting above-mentioned field marks. Observers: Ted L. Eubanks, Jr., David Dauphin, Jim Morgan, David Matson, also seen by approximately 20 other observers on OG field trip. [Scrutiny of photographs clearly show the complete eyering, the tail coverts which extend to within 1/8" of end of tail, grayish breast "drape" and the long bill. --CH Ed.]

Henslow's Sparrow: Seen in breeding area SW of Hobby Airport. Didn't hear any vocalizing whatever during the hour (9:45-10:45 a.m.) spent in the prime habitat where 18 individuals were heard and seen on Aug. 13. Sky was hazy and temperature at Hobby Airport 89° at 11 a.m. --Noel Pettingell

Savannah Sparrow: Seen in bright sunlight, 5 minutes, 50-75 ft. 7x50 binocs and 7x50 Baiscope. On fence wire. Sparrow with striped crown; buffy yellow lores; streaked breast, clear belly, pink legs. --Jean & Bill Harwell

#### A GALVESTON PARROT by Allan J. Mueller

In the past two months I have twice seen a parrot-like bird on Galveston Island. Both times it was flying over the port area and I had no binoculars. Just as I was almost convinced the bird was not a parrot, I saw it again.

In the evening after work, on September 19, I decided to check out West Galveston Island for new fall migrants. There were no Upland Sandpipers at the golf course

and the tide was up at Sportsman's Road so no shorebirds, but the sun was shining and the mosquitoes were not too intolerable....all in all, a nice peaceful evening for birdwatching.

As I was driving west on Stewart Road ready to turn down Nottingham Ranch Road, a short-winged heavy-bodied bird flew east over the car. My parrot! A quick turn around and all I could say was "Go Vega go!" I soon caught up with the bird as it flew 20-30 feet high parallel to Stewart Road. I was able to get a fairly good look at it as I drove along, but it is very difficult to keep a car on the road while looking out the side window through binoculars. The bird was about the size of a Rock Dove or a little smaller, with short, rounded tail and wings, dirty orange underparts, dark brown wings, and a blunt head consistent with a curved parrot beak. The parrot was missing the first or second secondary flight feather on the left wing and gave an occasional coarse "squawk, squawk".

The bird flew east along Stewart Road for about a mile and then veered left, and I turned down a side road to follow. Of course as soon as I did, the bird flew back to Stewart Road! I hit a driveway for a quick turn around, the muffler hit bottom. Why can't people fix their driveways!! Go Vega go!

Back on Stewart Road the bird continued east at about 23 mph. Approaching town, the bird turned toward the new water slide. A ride perhaps? No, Searama is also in that direction. This may be one of their parrots. But the bird flew past Searama without the slightest hesitation.

We, the bird and I, were now in the developed part of town with many roads for me to choose from. Again the bird veered left and I followed. Again the bird turned back right. This time I lost him. I had followed the parrot for about 4 miles and when last seen he showed no sign of stopping, still flying east with a steady flap, no glide.

The bird could have been flying to roost, it was certainly a steady determined flight. In any case, somewhere on Galveston Island there is a healthy free-flying parrot.

[Allan, an OG member, is with the Fish & Wildlife Service in Galveston. Have any of our other Galveston members or subscribers seen this bird?

#### MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, 7 September, 1978, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP

The regular meeting of the Ornithology Group was called to order by Chairman Ted Eubanks at 7:30 p.m. Chairman Eubanks requested that all reporting chairmen make their reports as brief as possible, thereby giving the guest speaker adequate time to make his presentation. The minutes from the August OG meeting were published in the August SPOONBILL, and were approved as published by the membership. Chairman Eubanks gave the Treasurer's report in the absence of Treasurer Mary Gillette as follows: Income: \$1095.42; Expenses: \$99.94; Balance on hand August 31, 1978: \$2879.14.

Resource Chairman Avis Brister announced that several books had been checked out recently, a marked increase over previous months, and she brought several books to the meeting to be viewed by the membership. Rare Bird Alert Chairman David Dauphin reported on the rare birds in the area, including a reported Ruff. Field trip Chairman Jim Morgan reported on the August 26 OG field trip to Galveston Island, and announced an OG trip to High Island on September 16, and an OG pelagic trip out of Galveston on October 8. Publicity Chairman Gladys Galbreath reported that response to her publicity releases had been excellent. Aluminum Chairman Jerry Baker reported that aluminum sales had brought the group over \$40 during the preceding month. Chairman Eubanks reported that the Galveston Christmas Count would be resurrected on December 23, 1978, under his leadership. Sarah Gordon welcomed all the new OG members, and Registrar Wesley Cureton reported that a total of 96 people were in attendance. Program Chairman Bob Moulton reported that Ben Feltnor would present a seminar in October, and that David Riskind of Texas Parks and Wildlife would speak to the group on the creation of state parks at the November meeting. Harry Brister, chairman of the Photography Group, announced that a course in Nature photography would be given by the Photography Group in the upcoming months. Dick Pratt announced the upcoming field trips and programs of the Houston Audubon Society. David Dauphin announced that he will be giving a course in birdwatching in Baytown beginning September 26. Melba Drake reported that the Conchology Group will go to Goose Island and Aransas National Wildlife Refuge the weekend of November 10, 11. Noel Pettingell announced that bird stamps are now available at your local post office. Owls are the subject. Chairman Eubanks announced that the Ornithology Group would sponsor the ONC meeting on September 12, the speaker being Randall Beavers of the Robert Vines Environmental Center. The Chairman also reported that a recent meeting of the ONC Board had voted to open the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary to membership camping.

Under new business, the designs for the OG armpatch were submitted, some 14 in all, and voted on by the membership. The results will be announced at the next meeting. Chairman Eubanks announced that the OG had, largely through the efforts of David Dauphin, received a grant of \$1000 from the Exxon USA Volunteer Involvement Program. This grant is to be used to develop the educational and instructive resources of the club. Chairman Eubanks will appoint a committee to determine how the money is to be spent, and expenditures will be reported to the group. A motion was made that the OG send Exxon USA a Certificate of Appreciation for their generosity in making the grant, and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Eubanks then introduced the evening's speaker, Jim Tucker. Tucker's appearance was sponsored by funds from a gift to the OG by Katrina Ladwig and Pat Sullivan. Tucker spoke on the various aspects of bird song, and it was obvious from the many smiling faces that left the auditorium that evening that it was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Eubanks, Secretary

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, 5 October, 1978, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP

The October Meeting of the Ornithology Group was called to order by Chairman Ted Eubanks at 7:30 p.m. The minutes of the September meeting will be published with the October Meeting's minutes in the next SPOONBILL. Treasurer Mary Gillette gave the treasury report as follows: Income: \$73.51; Expenses: \$169.77; Balance on hand September 30, 1978: \$2782.88.

Resource Chairman Avis Brister again requested that members bring their slides to add to the slide library. She also brought several books to be viewed and checked out by the members. Rare Bird Alert Chairman David Dauphin reported on the rare birds in the area including the Connecticut Warbler seen on the September 16 field trip to High Island. Clearing House Editor Paul Jones asked everyone to continue submitting their clearing house reports. Field trip Chairman Jim Morgan gave a report on the upcoming field trip which is to be a Pelagic trip on October 8. Aluminum Chairman Jerry Baker announced that last month she turned in \$38.00 to the treasury for aluminum collected. Reports were made on the progress of all the checklists presently being compiled. Alfred Chandler reminded and invited everyone to visit the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary on the 12th, 13th and 14th of October which will be the Open House Weekend. Noel Pettingell gave status of the A. McKay records. David Dauphin announced that the Chambers County Historic Society has requested a copy of all of the McKay records.

Christmas Count Chairman Paul Nimmons reported that this year's count will be held on Dec. 16th, in Baytown, from 5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. After the count everyone will meet at Wyatt's Cafeteria in Baytown. Last year Houston was 10th in the nation for number of birds reported and we hope this year will be as productive if not better. Chairman Eubanks urged members interested in participating in the count to call Paul early and not wait until the last minute to volunteer. Chairman Eubanks also reminded everyone that the Freeport count will be the 17th of Dec. and the Galveston count will be on the 23rd of Dec.

Vice-Chairman and Registrar Wes Cureton introduced the new members who were welcomed by all. Chairman Eubanks gave the program report on the upcoming months. The speaker for November will be David Riskind of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., and for December the speaker will be Vic Emanuel. Chairman Eubanks then reported that there was no unanimous selection in the Arm Patch designs so he suggested that members decide on the bird to be used and then have all designs be submitted at the November meeting. The motion was made to do this by Avis Brister. The motion carried, and the Roseate Spoonbill was chosen. Chairman Eubanks reported on the results of the meeting of the Resources Committee to decide the budget for the Exxon Grant we received. It was as follows: \$400 for Slide Projector, screen; \$100.00 for book cart; \$125.00 for cassette recorder and Eastern & Western Bird Song tapes; \$200.00 for the Library; \$175.00 for the duplication of slides.

Chairman Eubanks then gave the report on the last ONC Board Meeting and urged OG members to become more active in the ONC. He then announced the nominating committee to select officers for the next year. They are Jim Morgan, Mary Ann Chapman and Paul Nimmons. It was announced that the annual Hawk Watch will be October 7th headed by David Wolf and will be held all along the coast. Anyone wishing to participate may do so. Bill Mealy announced a new shop and bookstore now open featuring everything for the birder including rare and out of print books and also original paintings. There will be monthly specials for all ONC and OG members. It is called The Chickadee and The Naturalist's Emporium, and is located at 702 Marshall in Houston, open only on evenings and Saturdays. Louise Rogers then announced upcoming ONC field trips. Chairman Eubanks then announced the speaker for the evening, Ben Feltnor. After a very interesting, informative and very helpful program on field identification of sparrows and sparrow like birds, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Eubanks, Secretary

SKINNER'S SPARROW, AN EXOTIC BIRD

[This is taken from The Phalarope, newsletter published by Midland Naturalists, Inc.]

According to a very complete article in the May 22 issue of The New Yorker, the honor of being the first to introduce the House Sparrow to the Western Hemisphere belongs to a Dr. Salmon Skinner, a Brooklyn dentist. An old sea captain taking the chair found on his clothing some of the measuring worms which destroyed the foliage of the shade trees each June. He remarked that such a thing could not happen in London as the sparrows would exterminate them. At Skinner's request he brought over a crate of 100 sparrows in 1848. They did not survive their release.

In 1850 the Brooklyn Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which Skinner was a member, sponsored the importation of eight pairs in an attempt to control the worms, but in spite of careful attention, they did not survive their release either. A committee of the Institute in 1852, headed by Nicholas Pike, subscribed two hundred dollars for the purchase of more sparrows and hired a man to care for them. They prospered and Pike documented the spread of the sparrow for another 50 years, dying convinced that he had rendered a service to his country.

Other cities with insect problems quickly began to import sparrows. They were well established in Quebec by 1864, brought to Galveston in 1867, San Francisco soon afterward, and then Michigan, Wisconsin, Utah. Philadelphia bought 1000 sparrows in 1869. They were welcomed everywhere. Clubs were formed, and the sparrow became a status symbol. Arthur Bent's wealthy uncle maintained an elaborate aviary and when cats attacked the overflow, he had the cats exterminated. However, when the native birds disappeared from the neighborhood, he baited trenches with food and eliminated the sparrows with buckshot.

Paradise did not last. Philadelphia found that the inchworms were gone in five years, but they were replaced with a hairy caterpillar the sparrows would not eat. By 1885 complaints were heard from around the country and bounties were put on the sparrow. The birds ate large quantities of grain, fruits, vegetables, they drove away native birds, and they soiled the cities. It was discovered that the English were amazed that Americans would deliberately import such a worthless bird. Anti-sparrow organizations had existed in England since 1744 and almost every parish was spending money to destroy sparrows.

A government report in 1888 outlined the magnitude of the problem. In 1880 the sparrows occupied 15,650 square miles; by 1886 they had invaded 885,000 square miles. An estimate of 40,000,000 sparrows for Ohio alone was considered an extremely low figure. Stomach examination showed that insects were eaten only to be fed to nestlings, otherwise 96 1/2% of the year round diet consisted of grain and weed seeds - only 3% of insects. The impact of this report did not prevent the introduction of the Starling in 1890.

The Golden Age of the Sparrow was still ahead, for it coincided with the Golden Age of the Horse. The arrival of the Machine Age did not diminish the sparrow's increase - it is still spreading worldwide, and the embargo on importing these birds into the U.S. has been lifted. It was not until 1927 that it became known that the House Sparrow is really a Weaver Finch. --TSJ

A NOTE FROM THE SPOONBILL EDITOR

I want to thank all of you who have contributed to THE SPOONBILL during the past four years while I have been editor. You are helping to make our newsletter the unique, highly regarded publication it has become. Your participation keeps me enjoying the job of editor of your newsletter. Those of you who have not yet contributed an item, an article, a clipping, an anecdote, be assured your efforts will be welcome. If you do send in a contribution and don't see it the following month have patience, it will appear. Thank you again, all of you who have, and you who are going to participate in these pages. --Margaret Jones

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