



THE SPOONBILL

VOLUME XXIII, NO. 2
JUNE, 1974

PUBLISHED BY THE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, OUTDOOR NATURE CLUB, HOUSTON, TEXAS

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, MAY 19, 1974

The meeting was called to order by Harry Brister, Chairman, at 1:30 P.M.

There being no corrections or additions to the Minutes of the April Meeting, as published in THE SPOONBILL, the Group dispensed with the reading of those Minutes.

The Treasurer's Report for the period April 1, 1974 to May 1, 1974 was accepted as read. Receipts were \$269.56, disbursements were \$67.46, and balance on hand was \$777.10.

Mr. Brister said that he wanted to get our 1974-75 year started off with a big hand of appreciation for Mary Tigner for having us up to her place again for the Annual Picnic. The Group willingly obliged with a round of applause for Mary's hospitality, including delicious refreshments, good birding and fine weather.

Our Chairman then introduced the new officers who were present, as well as new chairmen, and extended a special compliment to Margaret Jones for her report at the ONC Business Meeting concerning the OG activities for 1973-74.

Our Chairman announced the Ornithology Group was joining with the Botany Group as co-sponsors of an ONC Field Trip to Sea Rim State Park in October.

He also mentioned we needed a display at the Fonde Recreation Center, Tuesday, May 21, and was hoping members who had arranged displays previously would do so again. With respect to displays, Gladys Galbreath stated she is still working on our exhibit at the Sanctuary but has not yet come up with a definite recommendation. Several members volunteered bird nests for this display and our exhibit. Mr. Brister recommended that those who could do so might very well drop by the Recreation Center to see our own and other displays of the many interesting activities which take place at the Center.

A discussion was held concerning the Group's library of books, including those bequeathed to us recently. Several suggestions were offered, including putting them in the Garden Center where only Group members could check them out. Another idea was to ask our Librarian to bring them to meetings - a form of mobile library. Gladys Galbreath agreed to check the economics of insuring our library, especially against fire. It was generally agreed, however, that putting our books into circulation was our most important concern.

Paul Nimmons agreed to be Apprentice Leader of the Christmas Count, working with Mr. Brister on the Count tentatively scheduled for Saturday, December 28, to be followed by dinner at the Bonanza Steakhouse in Baytown. Harry says the preparation of the material for Audubon is quite complicated and time consuming and he hopes to make the checklist easier to work with in the field.

It was reported that another set of SPOONBILLS is ready to be bound. We are now printing approximately 200 issues of which 126 are mailed to members, 56 to subscribers, and 19 go out as gifts or exchanges. Mr. T. Paul Jones mentioned that Dan Hardy would like for more contributors to turn in information to the Clearing House. Paul Nimmons said he thought it would be a good idea for Dan to explain at a meeting what should be reported and how.

Paul Jones requested some more ideas for bird trips, especially nearby, details of which could be printed in THE SPOONBILL, together with a map which Paul could draw up from the contributor's description. He added that Laura Greenbaum, THE SPOONBILL editor, would appreciate receiving for publication any birding or traveling anecdotes members might want to submit.

Marilyn Crane reported that the new checklist is not yet completed. Work is still being done on it.

Melba Drake and Sarah Gordon volunteered to hold the OG Planning Session for 1974-75 at their place Thursday, June 20, at 6:30 P.M. It will be a covered dish supper. Our hostesses will contact officers and chairmen individually.

John Tveten suggested that letters be written to the Editors of both the Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine and the Texas Magazine in The Chronicle if you like a particular article that has been published or if you want to see certain types of articles printed. This is the only way, he says, that they know what their readers want.

There being no further business and no further interruptions by Scarlet Tanagers the combination Meeting and Annual Picnic adjourned at 2:20 P.M. just as the rain started. Respectfully submitted,
Louise Rogers

GALVESTON ISLAND BIRD MORTALITY - sent in by Dennis Shepler

The following appeared in the SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION CENTER FOR SHORTLIVED PHENOMENA:

"An estimated 5,000 dead birds of more than 32 species washed ashore on Galveston Island beaches on 7 and 8 May (1974.) Migrating passerines including warblers, thrushes, flycatchers, and blackbirds accounted for 62% of the total with shorebirds (23%) and terns (8%) next in abundance. Rails, gallinules, gulls, skimmers, cuckoos, and nighthawks made up the remainder. Three blue-winged teal seen by state game wardens were the only waterfowl found dead. Carcasses were found along the entire coastline of the 29 mile island with concentrations up to 47 birds per 0.1 mile.

"A severe spring storm hit the upper Texas coast on 5 May and was thought to be the probable cause of the bird mortality. April and May are the months of heavy spring migration along the Texas Gulf Coast. The four days preceding the storm were ideal for bird movements northward as there were prevailing breezes from the south and there was no precipitation. On 5 May a sudden storm from the north with high winds and thundershowers hit the upper coast. Two tornados touched ground on nearby Bolivar Peninsula. Prevailing winds continued from the north on 5 and 6 May, but changed to southeast by 7 May. Large numbers of dead birds first washed ashore on 7 May and this continued through 8 May. Carcasses were partially decomposed, indicating that the deaths had occurred about two days earlier."

The reporting source was the Denver Wildlife Resh. Center, Bldg.16, Denver Federal Center, Denver, Colorado 80225.

The source contact was Kirke A. King, U.S.Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 2506, Victoria, Tx. 77901.

SAVE THAT ALUMINUM!!

One of the reasons the cost of your SPOONBILL is so low is that the OG raises money by selling aluminum collected by its members. A recent article in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL announced that Reynolds Metals Co. has raised its price from 10 to 15 cents a pound, or a 50% increase! An enlightening fact brought out by the article stated that "Each time we recycle aluminum, we save 95% of the energy that would be required to make primary aluminum." So save all of anything aluminum and bring them to the meetings; you'll help in every way: ecology and in keeping the costs of the SPOONBILL down.

CLEARING HOUSE, MAY, 1974

('San Luis Pass' is used as shorthand for a grove of salt cedars on private property about 2 miles towards Galveston from San Luis Pass. 'p' following a number means \pm or $+$.)

- Loon, Common: (1)11, Offat's Bayou, J&BH; (2)12, 15, Offat's Bayou, A, B
 Pelican, White: (217)25, Galveston Bay near mouth of Clear Lake, DM
 Anhinga: (3-4)3, Sheldon, P&MJ
 Heron, Little Blue: (12)3, Sheldon, P&MJ
 Heron, Louisiana: (20)3, Sheldon, P&MJ
 Bittern, Least: (4)3, Sheldon, P&MJ; (7)10, Bolivar, J&BH
 Ibis, White-faced: (20)2, near Anahuac, C; (16)4, Galveston, TBF;
 (30)5, near Anahuac, D
 Ibis, White: (70)2, near Anahuac, C; (18)4, Galveston, TBF
 Spoonbill, Roseate: (45)12, Freeport, PJ
TREEDUCK, BLACK-BELLIED: (2)6, 9, 30, Jack Rd., PJ; (1)7, Jack Rd., MJ,
 see notes
 Treeduck, Fulvous: (24)2, near Anahuac, C; (100p)9, ricefields near Hwy.
 61 & 65 near Anahuac, E; (23)10, Hwy 562, P&MJ; (4)26,
 West Harris Co., MB & DH; (54)5, West Harris Co., FC
 Duck, Ruddy: (1)26, House and Hahl Rd., MB & DH
 Merganser, Red-breasted: (4)10, Bolivar Flats, J&BH; (2)5, Bolivar, D
Kite, Mississippi: (3)15, intersection of San Felipe & River Oaks Blvd,
 VE
 Hawk, Swainson's: (1)5, Alvin, D
 Hawk, Marsh: (1)10, Gulf Freeway at NASA Rd., DM; (1)7, Seabrook, F
 Osprey: (1)10, High Island, P&MJ
 Falcon, Peregrine: (1)April 7, Bolivar Flats, E
 Rail, Virginia: (1)10, Bolivar, J&BH
 Gallinule, Purple: (3)6, Anahuac, G; (4-5)3, Sheldon, P&MJ
 Gallinule, Common: (6)3, Sheldon, P&MJ
 Oystercatcher, American: (1)12, San Luis Pass, PJ
 Plover, Semipalmated: (1)9, ricefields near Anahuac, E
 Plover, Wilson's: (6)12, San Luis Pass, PJ
 Plover, Black-bellied: (29)2, near Anahuac, C
 Whimbrel: (22-in one flock)2, near Anahuac, C; (2)12, Galveston, F
 Sandpiper, Upland: (4)7, (1)12, Galv, F, A
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: (70p)9, ricefields near Anahuac, E
 Knot, Red: (25)4, (75)5, (261)11, Galveston, D, H
 Sandpiper, Pectoral: (35)5, Alvin, D; (400p)9, ricefields near Anahuac, E
 Sandpiper, White-rumped: (7)2, near Anahuac, C; (12)5, Alvin, D; (800p)9,
 ricefields near Anahuac, E; (NC)7, Jack Rd.,
 MJ, Margaret Anderson
 Dunlin: (2000p)9, ricefields near Anahuac, E
 Sooty, Short-billed: (8)5, Alvin, D
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: (250)2, near Anahuac, C
 Sandpiper, Stilt: (62)2, near Anahuac, C; (150p)9, near Anahuac, E;
 (50)11, near Hwy 61 & 65, VE; (3)17, Katy-Hockley
 Cut-off Rd., J&BH
 Sandpiper, Baird's: (20p)5, West Harris Co., some with every group of
 shorebirds, FC
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: (100p)9, near Anahuac, E
 Sandpiper, Buff-breasted: (9)2, near Anahuac, C; (100p)5, West Harris
 Co., FC
 Godwit, Marbled: (17)5, Alvin, D; (4)5, West Harris Co., FC
 Godwit, Hudsonian: (318)2, near Anahuac, C; (17)5, Alvin, D; (60)11, near
 Hwy 61 & 65 intersection, VE; (200p)9, near Anahuac,
 E; (3)10, Hwy. 562, P&MJ; (3)17, Katy-Hockley Cutoff
 Rd., J&BH; (50p)5, West Harris Co., FC
 Avocet, American: (100p)4, Bolivar Flats, J&BH

Phalarope, Wilson's: (5)2, near Anahuac, C; (5)4, Galv, TBF; (35p)9, near Anahuac, E; (2)11, Galveston Airport, J&BH; (13)5, West Harris Co., FC

GULL, GREAT BLACK-BACKED: see notes

Gull, Franklin's: (3)12, Galv, A; (1)15, San Luis Pass, B; (9)26, Bear Creek Park, MB & DH

Tern, Gull-billed: (4)5, 7, Galveston, D, F

Tern, Forster's: (1)4, (25)5, Galveston, D

Tern, Common: (400)4, (15)5, (300p)12, Galveston, D, A

Tern, Least: (60)4, (30)5, Galveston, D; (9)12, Freeport, (16)12, San Luis Pass, PJ

Tern, Royal: (450)4, (20)5, Galveston, D

Tern, Sandwich: (60)4, (1)12, Galveston, D, A

Tern, Caspian: (1)4, (2)5, Galveston, D

Tern, Black: (3)4, Galveston, TBF

Skimmer, Black: (270)4, Galv, TBF; (22)12, Freeport, (63)12, San Luis Pass, PJ

Dove, White-winged: (1)5, Bolivar, D

Dove, Ringed Turtle: (1-6)10 days, yard, MJ

Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: (2)2, High Island, C; (7)7, (3)12, West Galveston, F, A; (4)11, High Island, (2)11, Bolivar area, VE; (14)11, Bolivar & Galv, J&BH; (2)11, Galv, "Old House," DS

Cuckoo, Black-billed: (1)2, High Island, C; (3)7, (1)12, West Galv, F, A; (1)6, near Russ Clapper's house, (2)6, High Island, G; (2)11, Galv, 11-mile road, J&BH; (1)18, San Luis Pass, I

Owl, Barn: (3)5, High Island & Bolivar, D; (1)7, West Galv, F; (1)15, near 13-mile road, B

Nighthawk, Common: (10)12, West Galv, A

Nighthawk, Lesser: (1)7, San Luis Pass, F; (2)12, San Luis Pass, A;

(1)18, San Luis Pass, DH - see notes

Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: (6)7, (2)11, (8)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (1)26, Bear Creek Park, MB & DH

Kingfisher, Belted: (1)26, Katy-Hockley Cutoff, MB & DH

Flicker, Common: (2)2, near Russ Clapper's house, C; (1)11, near Russ Clapper's house, VE

Woodpecker, Red-headed: (4)2, near Russ Clapper's house, C

Kingbird, Eastern: (26)5, (40)7, (8)11, (30p)12, West Galv, D, F, H, A;

(4)11, Galv, "Old House," DS

Kingbird, Western: (3)7, (4)11, (2)12, (4)15, West Galv, F, H, A, B; (2)11, Galv, 11-mile road, J&BH; (2)11, Galv, "Old House," DS

Flycatcher, Great Crested: (1)11, West Galv, H; (1)6, High Island, G; (3)11, Bolivar area, VE; (1)11, Galv, (1)22, Herman Park, DS

Flycatcher, Empidonax species: (15)11, West Galv, H; (2)6, High Island, G; (15)11, High Island, (5)11, Bolivar area, VE; (4)11, Galv, J&BH; (2)7, (1)27, Herman Park, (3)11, Galv, (2)12, yard, DS

Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied: (2)7, (4)11, West Galv, F, H; (1)11, Bolivar area, VE; (1)10, High Island, P&MJ; (1)7, Herman Park, (2)11, Galv, "Old House," DS - see notes

Flycatcher, Acadian: (3)26, Bear Creek Park, MB & DH

Flycatcher, "Traill's": (1)12, San Luis Pass, A-netted and "keyed out." Key did not include Willow or Alder.

Wood Pewee, Eastern: (5)7, West Galv, F; (12)6, High Island, G; (20)11, High Island, (10)11, Bolivar area, VE; (2)11, Galv, (1)12, yard, (NC)22, 27, Herman Park, DS

Flycatcher, Olive-sided: (1)11, West Galv, H; (1)6, High Island, G; (1)11, White Memorial Park, (1)11, near entrance to Anahuac Refuge, VE; (3)11, Galv, J&BH

Swallow, Tree: (60)4, Galv, TBF; (1)11, Galv, DS

Swallow, Bank: (21)4, (15)5, West Galveston, TBF, D

Swallow, Rough-winged: (1)11, Galv, DS

Swallow, Barn: (30)5, West Galv, D; (200)11, Galv, seen over a two hour period moving north along the dunes, DS

Swallow, Cliff: (1)5, Bolivar, D

Catbird, Gray: (35)2, High Island, (9)7, (3)11, (6)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (6-7)6, High Island, G; (5)7, Herman Park, DS

Thrasher, Brown: (1)15, Galv, LaFitte's Grove, singing, B

- THRASHER, CURVE-BILLED: (1)April 25, Galv, Nottingham Ranch Rd., Linda Snyder et. al.; (1)11, same site, J&BH; (1)12, 15, same, A, B; (1)18, same, DH, Orlyn Gaddis - see notes
- Thrush, Wood: (2)2, High Island, C; (1)11, West Galv, H; (3-4)6, High Isl, G
- THRUSH, HERMIT: (1)2, High Island, TBF - see notes
- Thrush, Swainson's: (1)2, High Isl, C; (2)5, High Isl & Galv, D; (4)7, (1)11, (2)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (8-10)6, High Isl, G; (2)7, 9, (4)22, (NC)13, 27, Herman Park, DS
- Thrush, Gray-cheeked: (15)2, High Isl, C; (16)5, High Isl & West Galv, D; (35)7, (3)11, West Galv, F, H; (2)6, High Isl, G; (2)7, Herman Park, DS
- Veery: (2)2, High Isl, C; (20)5, High Isl & Galv, D; (25)7, (5)11, (2)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (7-8)6, High Isl, G; (NC)22, Herman Park, DS
- Bluebird, Eastern: (3)3, Deussen Park, P&MJ
- Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: (1)11, 12, San Luis Pass, H, A-netted and banded
- Waxwing, Cedar: (70)12, Galv, A; (75p)11, High Isl, (60p)11, Bolivar area, VE
- Shrike, Loggerhead: (5-with nest and young)12, West Galv, A
- Vireo, White-eyed: (1)7, Galv, F
- Vireo, Solitary: (1)4, yard, DH
- Vireo, Red-eyed: (1)2, High Isl, C; (6)7, West Galv, F; (2)6, High Isl, G; (1)11, High Isl, VE
- Vireo, Philadelphia: (11)2, High Isl, C; (1)7, 12, West Galv, F, A; (3)6, High Isl, G; (1)yard, DS
- VIREO, WARBLING: (1)2, High Isl, C; (1)22, Herman Park, DS-see notes
- Warbler, Black-and-white: (35)2, High Isl, C; (2)4, (11)7, (2)11, (3)12, West Galv, TBF, F, H, A; (15-20)6, High Isl, G; (5)11, High Isl, VE; (1)10, High Isl, (1)9, yard, P&MJ; (3)4, (2)11, Galv, J&BH
- Warbler, Swainson's: (1)6, High Isl, G
- Warbler, Worm-eating: (1)7, Galv, F; (1)6, High Isl, G
- Warbler, Golden-winged: (1)4, Galv, TBF; (1)7, West Galv, TBF; (2)6, High Isl, G; (1)4, Galv, (3)10, Galv Co. Park, J&BH; (1)7, Herman Park, DS
- Warbler, Tennessee: (16)2, High Isl, C; (3)4, (8)7, (4)11, (2)12, West Galv, TBF, F, H, A; (27)5, High Isl & West Galv, D; (10)6, High Isl, G; (2)11, City Hall, (1)11, High Isl, (3)11, Bolivar area, VE; (1)4, City Hall, (3)10, High Isl, (1)9, yard, P&MJ; (3)10, Galv, J&BH; (1)11, Galv, DS
- Warbler, Nashville: (1)4, Galv, TBF; (1)6, High Isl, G; (1)4, City Hall, (1)12, yard, P&MJ
- Warbler, Northern Parula: (1)5, High Isl, D; (2)7, West Galv, F; (1)6, High Isl, G
- Warbler, Yellow: (2)2, High Isl, C; (25)5, High Isl & West Galv, D; (4)7, (2)11, (14)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (1)1, yard, P&MJ; (2)11, Galv, J&BH
- Warbler, Magnolia: (20)2, High Isl, C; (1)4, Galv, TBF; (6)5, High Isl & West Galv, D; (55)7, (30)11, (150)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (100-150)6, High Isl, G; (100p)11, High Isl, (10)11, Bolivar area, VE; (1)4, North Blvd., (30)10, High Isl, (1)9, 10, yard, P&MJ; (2)4, Galv, (20p)10, Galv Co. Park & Galv, J&BH; (7)7, (3)9, (2)10, Herman Park, (3)11, Galv, (2)12, yard, DS; (1)26, Bear Creek Park, MB & DH
- Warbler, Cape May: (1 male)2, High Isl, C; (2-male & female)5, Galv, D; (1-female)7, Galv, F
- Warbler, Black-throated Green: (4)2, High Isl, C; (1)4, Galv, TBF; (3)5, Bolivar & West Galv, D; (9)7, (3)11, (7)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (7-8)6, High Isl, G; (3)11, High Isl, VE; (2)4, North Blvd., P&MJ; (1)4, Galv, (6)10, Galv. Co. Park, J&BH; (2)11, yard, DS
- Warbler, Cerulean: (3)2, High Isl, C
- Warbler, Blackburnian: (1)2, High Isl, C; (1)11, (4)12, Galv, H, A; (9-10)6, High Isl, G; (3)11, High Isl, VE; (20)10, High Isl, P&MJ; (7)10, Galv Co. Park, J&BH
- Warbler, Chestnut-sided: (8)2, High Isl, C; (2)5, Bolivar & West Galv, D; (3)7, (4)11, (3)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (50)6, High Isl, G; (22)10, High Isl, P&MJ; (3)4, Galv, (20p)10, Galv. Co. Park, J&BH; (1)11, Galv, (1)12, yard, DS

- Warbler, Bay-breasted: (25)2, High Isl, C; (2)4, Galv, TBF; (6)5, Bolivar & West Galv, D; (8)7, (4)11, (2)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (5)6, High Isl, (10)11, Bolivar area, VE; (18)10, High Isl, P&MJ; (2)4, Galv, (15)10, Galv. Co. Park, J&BH; (1)11, Galv, DS
- Warbler, Blackpoll: (15)2, High Isl, C; (2)5, Bolivar & Galv, D; (2)7, 11, West Galv, F, H; (1)6, High Isl, G
- Ovenbird: (8)2, High Isl, C; (2)5, (1)7, West Galv, D, F; (1)6, High Isl, G; (1)4, City Hall, (1)10, High Isl, P&MJ; (1)10, Galv, J&BH
- Waterthrush, Northern: (8)2, High Isl, C; (8)5, High Isl & West Galv, D; (5)11, (3)12, West Galv, F, A
- Waterthrush, Louisiana: (1)6, High Isl, G
- Warbler, Kentucky: (1)10, Galv. Co. Park, J&BH
- Warbler, Mourning: (1) male 15, San Luis Pass, B
- Yellowthroat, Common: (6)2, High Isl, C; (1)5, High Isl & West Galv, D; (4)7, (6)11, (7)12, West Galv, F, H, A; (1)6, High Isl, G; (2)11, Galv, J&BH; (2)11, Galv, DS
- Chat, Yellow-breasted: (1)6, High Isl, G; (2)4, City Hall, P&MJ
- Warbler, Hooded: (3)2, High Isl, C; (1)7, "Old House," Galv, D; (1)6, High Isl, G; (2)17, Bear Creek Park, J&BH; (6)26, Bear Creek Park, MB & DH
- Warbler, Wilson's: (1)11, West Galv, H; (1)6, High Isl, G; (1)4, City Hall, (1)10, High Isl, P&MJ
- Warbler, Canada: (3)5, (8)11, West Galv, D, H; (5)6, High Isl, G; (34p)11, High Isl, VE; (2)10, High Isl, P&MJ; (3)10, Galv. Co. Park, J&BH; (2)7, 22, Herman Park, (2)11, Galv, (1)12, yard, DS
- Redstart, American: (4)2, High Isl, C; (4)5, Bolivar & West Galv, D; (1)11, (4)12, West Galv, H, A; (8)6, High Isl, G; (5)11, High Isl, (1)11, Bolivar area, VE; (10)10, High Isl, P&MJ; (10)10, Galv. Co. Park, J&BH; (1)11, Galv, DS
- Bobolink: (1)2, High Island, Boy Scout Woods, VE, Ann Follis, Nancy Strickling
- Oriole, Orchard: (1)12, West Galv, A
- Oriole, Northern: (2)11, West Galv, H; (5)11, Bolivar area, VE; (1)1, yard, P&MJ; (1)11, Galv, DS
- Tanager, Western: (1)7, San Luis Pass, F - see notes
- Tanager, Scarlet: (3)5, (1)7, (1)11, West Galv, D, F, H; (1)6, High Isl, G; (2)11, Bolivar area, VE; (1)10, High Isl, P&MJ
- Tanager, Summer: (2)5, West Galv, D; (2)6, High Isl, G; (2)11, High Isl, VE; (1)11, Galv, DS
- Grosbeak, Rose-breasted: (7)5, (8)7, (6)11, (1)12, West Galv, D, F, H, A; (15)6, High Isl, G; (2)11, Galv, DS
- Grosbeak, Blue: (2)5, (1)11, 12, West Galv, D, H, A
- Bunting, Indigo: (3)15, (15)7, (12)11, West Galv, D, F, H; (1)11, Galv, DS; (1)26, Bear Creek Park, male singing and seen, MB&DH
- Sparrow, Henslow's: (12)7, (11)15, (7)27, SE Houston, SW of Hobby Airport, NP - see notes
- Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: (6)6, Anahuac Refuge, G
- Sparrow, Seaside: (4)6, Anahuac Refuge, G
- Sparrow, Lark: (2)11, San Luis Pass, H
- Sparrow, Bachman's: (1)2, near Russ Clapper's house, C; (1)6, same site, G - see notes
- Sparrow, Lincoln's: (3)11, Galv, H

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS

| | | | |
|-----|----------------|------|-----------------------|
| MB | Mike Braun | J&BH | Jean & Bill Harwell |
| FC | Fred Collins | P&MJ | Paul & Margaret Jones |
| VE | Victor Emanuel | DM | David Marrack |
| TBF | T. Ben Feltner | NP | Noel Pettingell |
| DH | Dan Hardy | DS | Dennis Shepler |

- A Fred Collins, T. Ben Feltner, Victor Emanuel, Dan Hardy
 B Elric McHenry, T. Ben Feltner, Dan Hardy
 C T. Ben Feltner, Dan Hardy
 D T. Ben Feltner, Elric McHenry
 E James Wolstencroft, Victor Emanuel
 F Victor Emanuel, Fred Collins, James Wolstencroft, T. Ben Feltner
 G Margaret Anderson, Ann Follis
 H Jerry & Nancy Strickling, Elric McHenry, T. Ben Feltner, Victor Emanuel
 I Orlyn Gaddis, Victor Emanuel, Fred Collins, T. Ben Feltner, Jerry & Nancy Strickling

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES

Notice: We regret to learn of the death of Arlie McKay's mother and extend our condolences to him. Arlie was unable to contribute to the Clearing House this month.

BLACK-BELLIED TREEDUCK: On Monday, May 6, 1974, about 10 AM, two Black-bellied Treeducks were observed in rice field at northwest corner of Jack Rd. and Katy-Hockley Rd. They were about 200 ft. from edge of Jack Rd. near first irrigation dike in the field. Prominent features observed: "hot pink" bill, long goose-like neck, bright russet color of neck below head, black belly and plain russet back. One duck climbed up on the dike (the better to observe me, I suppose!) so long pink legs could be seen. When ducks flushed and flew about 50 yards the broad white band across top of wings was plainly seen. The two ducks were again seen flying across the same field on Thursday May 9, 1974 about 5 PM. Also were seen May 30, 1974 on Jack Rd., just west of above field. --T. Paul Jones

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: On March 24, 1974, Victor Emanuel, Fred Collins, and Dan Hardy discovered this bird at the Bolivar Flats. The following are the notes taken on the spot: 10:15 AM; windy, 18 knots NE wind; sky gray, overcast. Dump road to Bolivar Beach on Gulf beach side; We stopped to observe a large black-billed gull. Field Marks: Bill all dark, possibly lightened at base, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ lighter, but all dark. Eye dark. Head: entire head white with very faint grayish flecking on crown, some on nape. Underparts: white. Sides of breast spotted with brownish-gray spots. Upper back: large grayish spots. Wings and Lower back: dark and light brown spotted with grayish spots, giving checkered appearance. Primaries Black, wing-tips extend beyond tail. Gape: pink. Tail: white with blackish-brown terminal band, $\frac{1}{3}$ proportion--white of tail extends to include rump. Legs and feet pink. Distance: 70 yards, good light, not direct sunlight. Size: at least $\frac{1}{2}$ more than Herring--massive. Has been observed with First and Second-year Herring and 3rd year Ring-bill. A dominant gull--seen to eat a dead mouse and take a fish carcass from several Herring Gulls.

Lesser Nighthawk: All individuals were seen at the San Luis Pass salt cedars. (For May 7 and 12 birds) Observed in flight down to 25 feet. Underparts more obscure than Common Nighthawk. Feeding low, no call noted. White in wing much closer to end of wing than Common Nighthawk. About $\frac{1}{3}$ down from tip to elbow. Three observers separately concluded it to be Lesser. --T. Ben Feltner
(May 18 bird) Flushed from salt cedars, it flew a short ways into field and dropped to ground where it allowed very close approach. Flushed 3-4 times, each time it would fly only a short distance before it dropped again to the ground. Description: White stripe on wing was close to the tip of the wing, i.e., stripe is about $\frac{2}{3}$ distance down wing from "elbow" to tip. On Common Nighthawk, as I judge it, the stripe is about $\frac{1}{2}$ distance from elbow to tip. Also, the white in the wing seemed smaller than the Common's. Sitting appearance: white on throat very small, almost lacking. This gave the throat and breast an even, mottled aspect. The bird never called. --Dan Hardy

Chimney Swift: First brood of Chimney Swifts left the nest at 420 Mulberry Lane, Bellaire and moved to adjacent tree tops on 31 May. Swifts settled in chimney in second week of April. --David Marrack

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: (May 7 bird) Eye ring yellow. Yellow from the throat to the undertail coverts. Very yellow Empidonax. --Dennis Shepler

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER: This bird was discovered on April 25, 1974 by Linda Snyder, Bud Fry, and others. Her description (over phone) is: red eye, decurved bill, spots on breast, light brown. On May 11, 1974, Jean and Bill Harwell independently discovered the Thrasher. They did not know of Linda's sighting. The following account was submitted by the Harwells: The bird was seen about 11:00 AM on May 11, 1974, on Galveston Island, on 11-mile road, just after that road makes a left turn to continue toward Eckert Bayou. The bird was seen in a small tree along the right side of the road. We

were looking for a Black-billed Cuckoo, and a cuckoo of undetermined type had just flushed from this tree, when movement of the leaves indicated that the bird was some type of thrasher, when it flew from the tree to a small shed in the field north of the road, where it was observed through a 30X60 Baiscope at a distance of some 200-300 feet. It then returned to the original tree, thence to the barbed-wire fence on the opposite side of the road. There it remained for some 15-20 minutes, in the open in bright sunlight, about 20-25 feet from us. It seemed oblivious to our presence, and hopped back and forth from the fence to the grass along the fence row, feeding in the grass. The bird was closely scrutinized in varied positions in good light through 7X50 binoculars by both of us. The bird was essentially the size and shape of a Brown Thrasher, but was a fairly uniform, dull, light brownish gray above, with no irridescence or sheen. Underparts a pale gray, with faint darker flecks or poorly defined spots on the breast. Bill uniformly dark and decurved, seeming longer and larger than Brown Thrasher's. The eye was striking, a bright reddish-orange. We could not detect any hint of a wing bar, nor any white in the tail feathers, as is indicated by illustration in Peterson. Did not hear song or note. --Bill Harwell

HERMIT THRUSH: Very late: with Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes. Seen twice; once very briefly; second time for about 20 seconds. Very rufous tail in comparison with the gray-brown notes. 35 feet, shaded, but good light with 8X40 glasses. --Ben Feltner

WARBLING VIREO: (May 22 bird) faint white eye stripe, dark eye (not red), no dark cap, white underneath, grayish towards the sides of the breast. Uniform gray on back from head to tail. Vireo bill, vireo movements. 8X40; good light; 15-20 feet. --Dennis Shepler

Western Tanager: Striking yellow, orange-red face, black wings and tail; Yellow shoulder and wingbar. Under observation on and off for about an hour. All observers. At distances down to 20 feet in open. --Ben Feltner

Henslow's Sparrow: May 7--all birds singing, one of which was seen while singing; 12:40-1:05 PM; Temp. 80°; May 15--all birds singing; 1:20-1:35 PM; Temp. 85°; May 27--all birds singing 1:35-1:40 PM; Temp. 82°; --Noel Pettingell

Bachman's Sparrow: On July 22, 1972, Paul and Phyllis Nimmons found a Bachman's Sparrow near Russ Clapper's house in Chambers County. Just east of the intersection of FM 562 and FM 1985 is a road that veers off of FM 1985. About .8 mile down it is the location of the sparrow. Investigating their report, Ben Feltner and I found a Bachman's Sparrow singing there at 8:15 A.M. on May 2, 1974. It was singing from the tip of a pine branch. The song is a slow trill with a lower introductory whistle, and variously with trills and whistles on different pitches. Visually, the bird is nondescript, long-tailed and clear-breasted. Bachman's Sparrows were formerly recorded around Lake Houston. But in recent years none have been reported. This sighting seems to represent a rediscovery of the bird in the UTC area. --Dan Hardy

YEAR LIST CONTEST: Are you keeping a year list? This is the year to do it. Add it up and send it to Dan Hardy (only UTC checklist area--next report is the end of August). 300 species is possible for some lucky person. The following competitors have submitted their totals as of the end of May.

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Ben Feltner..... | 271 |
| Dan Hardy..... | 270 |
| Fred Collins..... | 263 |
| Victor Emanuel..... | 261 |
| David Deifik..... | 213 |
| Paul Jones..... | 202 |
| Noel Pettingell..... | 193 |

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE ORANGE ON THE CROWN OF AN ORANGE-CROWNED
WARBLER? - by Kenneth Seyffert; reprinted from THE PHALAROPE,
who reprinted it from THE PRAIRIE HORNED LARK

If you have, I'll bet not many times. In all my years of birding I can recall seeing the orange crown clearly and distinctly only once. When I saw it, I said to myself, "What species could this be that looks like an Orange-crowned Warbler but has an orange crown?" Of course this was nonsense, for any fool knows that it wouldn't be called an Orange-crowned Warbler without reason. Both Peterson and Singer portray it in their bird guides with an obvious orange patch on its crown. I believe they did this only because they were afraid other people would consider them to be poor artists if they didn't have enough sense to put an orange patch on an Orange-crowned Warbler, regardless of whether or not they had ever seen it there on a live bird. I would probably have done the same thing under the circumstances.

What I don't understand, though, is why they didn't show the dingy white, or pale yellow, patch that can often be seen at the base of the bird's secondaries. This shows up as a rather thin strip right along, or near, the bend of the wing. This feature is one I keep stumbling across as I closely scrutinize the bird in the hope of seeing its orange crown. Yet I don't recall ever seeing it portrayed in any artist's depiction of the species.

The only way out of this delima that I can see is to call the bird something else. That appears to be a common practice these days. As long as we don't fool around with the scientific names we ought to have the freedom to call a bird by a more appropriate or satisfying name than it has heretofore been called. But what to call the Orange-crowned Warbler? I dug through some ancient bird books to discover what the old timers may have called it. I discovered Pearson's BIRDS OF AMERICA (1917) and A.C.Bent both state the western variety of the Orange-crowned Warbler was known as the Lutescent Warbler. I like that. I think "lutescent" means "yellow". If so, it's appropriate because some Orange-crowned Warblers are yellowish. Sometimes though, they are grayish. In that case, we could always call it the non-Lutescent Warbler. There's more than one way to pluck a feather!

LIST OF NEW OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN OF THE OG FOR 1974-75

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Chairman..... | Harry L. Brister |
| Vice-chairman..... | Margaret Jones |
| Secretary..... | Louise Rogers |
| Treasurer..... | Melba F. Drake |
| Spoonbill Publisher..... | Margaret Jones |
| Spoonbill Editor..... | Laura Greenbaum |
| Spoonbill Mailer..... | Maxine Davis |
| Spoonbill Resident Artist..... | Paul Jones |
| Rare Bird Alert Chairman..... | Margaret Anderson |
| Clearing House Editor..... | Dan H. Hardy |
| Program Chairman..... | Sarah Gordon |
| Field Trip Chairman..... | Charles V. Campbell |
| Publicity Chairman..... | Gladys M. Galbreath |
| Librarian..... | Leota Stillwell |
| Aluminum Chairman..... | Jerry Baker |
| Christmas Bird Count Chairman..... | Harry L. Brister |
| Christmas Bird Count Co-chairman..... | Paul W. Nimmons |
| Side Librarian..... | Dr. Frank Hsu |

WORD FROM MAINE

Josiephine Wilkin got a note from Ellen Greer, who was active in the OG when in Houston and who now lives in Maine: this is what she had to say concerning birds:

"This past 2-3 weeks has been disastrous to birds here in Maine, too cold. Not enough insects stirring. Hundreds of Scarlet Tanagers have been on ground or in sight feeding. Many died and lab tests showed only exhaustion and malnutrition not pesticides. Many warblers, purple martins, goldfinch succumbed, too. I didn't know there were that many tanagers in the whole state." With it so hot here it is hard to think of it being so cold up north.

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- Spoonbill: Mrs. Irving (Laura) Greenbaum, 5615 Portal Dr.
Houston 77035 721-1310
- Clearing-House Mr. Dan Hardy, 10215 Chatterton,
Houston 77043 468-2748
- Rare Bird Alert: Mrs. L. W. (Margaret) Anderson, 2913 Amherst,
Houston 77005 668-6405