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The **Spoonbill**

April 2000
Volume 49, No. 4

April Meeting Program

Monday, May 1, 2000 7:00PM
Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet

Birds of Belize
by
David Sarkozi

The former British colony of British Honduras, now known as Belize has been a popular low cost destination for birders for several years. This friendly country hosts about 500 species of birds in an area about the size of the Upper Texas coast. David will show and discuss some of the many birds he has photographed on his seven trips to Belize.

Learning Corner:

VOLUNTEER PLEASE! The ONG needs someone to coordinate the Learning Corner for future meetings.

Please call David Sarkozi to volunteer.

Chairman's Message

David Sarkozi

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is in the process of creating Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP) for each refuge. Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge now has their plan complete, and the Texas Chanier Plain Complex (Anahuac, McFaddin, Texas Point, and Moody Refuges) here on the Upper Texas Coast is in the process of creating theirs. We've got to be vigilant and make sure we have input during this process.

What is a CCP? I'm glad you asked. A CCP is what most of us would call a master plan for the refuge. It's a very detailed document that will be the guide to what happens to the refuge for a fifteen-year period. This document will contain the language that will guide the refuge management in how the refuge is run, what it will be managed for, and how that management goal will be met, and most importantly (in my opinion) how the refuge will be expanded.

Should the refuge be managed for public hunts, what will be hunted, should facilities for non-consumptive users (i.e. birdwatchers) be expanded, should the refuge be managed for migratory birds other than those that can be hunted, should there even be access by the public to the refuge? These are the types of questions that the CCP will answer for the refuge manager.

Right now the CCP for the Texas Chanier Plain Complex is in the beginning stage called Public Scoping. In this stage comments from the public are sought on what concerns to

address in the CCP. In other words we get a chance to influence the questions that the CCP will address. The Texas Chanier Plain Complex plan is meeting some angry opposition. This opposition wants to force the re-building of SH87 from Sabine Pass to High Island. On the surface that sounds like a boon to birders, we would be able to get from High Island to Sabine Woods and Sea Rim State Park in about 30 minutes. That road would use about 300 acres of McFaddin Refuge and unless there is an effective plan for erosion control wash in to the Gulf of Mexico in about 30 years. That would be the seventh road that has washed into the sea on that site. It's a waste of money and would damage our refuge with no benefit. The FWS service doesn't want to approve the road until there is a plan in place that would control the erosion and make the road a permanent road.

There is opposition mostly based in Jefferson County that is doing everything it can to force the quick building of SH87. One of the tools they are using is to fight everything they can in the CCP. They are holding meetings, flooding the papers with letters, and making *their wishes* know to the FWS as often as they can. We need to counter them everywhere and make sure the refuge is run to the benefit of all wildlife on it, and personally I would like to see that the refuge be allowed to aggressively expand where and when willing sellers are found on desirable lands.

To make your opinions known contact the Texas Chanier Plan Complex office at P.O. Box 278, Anahuac, Texas 77514, 409-267-3337, or via e-mail: "fw2 rw anahuac@fws.gov".

Beginning Birding **Migration and How It Works**

Don Richardson

We tend to think of Neotropical Migrants as birds that live in North America and winter in Central and South America. Try thinking about them and their home in a new way. Ask, for example, how the Hooded Warbler really lives and try this for an answer. It lives in Central America, spending the time from late summer to early spring (as much as eight months) nomadically moving about with flocks of its own and other similar species. As spring approaches, it moves north to take a short hiatus from home to breed and raise young. At least a month is spent in transit - to and from. This leaves only about three months of living in the southeastern U.S. It sounds a bit like this Hooded Warbler lives in Central America, doesn't it?

Scientists use words that describe plumage in a way that indicates that the breeding part of life is not the major part of

life. Winter plumage is called "basic plumage", while breeding plumage is referred to as "alternate plumage". "Basic" certainly describes a more primary state than "alternate". Although breeding may not occupy a majority of a bird's time, it is certainly one of the most important times of its life. Certainly, no species could survive without it, and there are several reasons why migration contributes to a successful breeding event.

Southern latitudes provide considerably better winter weather than most of us have here in North America. And during our summer, Central America is extremely hot while the southern temperate and Antarctic area is cold with ice and snow covering much of it. Insectivores (insect eaters) and frugivores (fruit-eaters) can find food, by moving south, that they could never find in a harsh winter environment. Certainly not all, but many of the birds that remain north in the winter eat seeds which are available in winter.

Northern summers have very long days that provide many hours for gathering food. Tropical days are only 12 hours long. Days in the north may reach 16 hours or more. It takes a great effort and a lot of time to gather enough food to feed three or four youngsters that will increase to 50 times their hatching weight in just 13 days. Northward migration expands the available nesting and food gathering area of the world. Many migrating species occupy totally different areas, while some merely expand their range to the north in summer. Some individuals find nesting space to the north and others remain stationary. Eggs and nestlings cannot fly. Parents must be sure there is sufficient territory around the nest to support their voracious family. Predation is diminished by the fact that a predator species depending on a particular bird species for food cannot evolve since the bird species is not available as a food source full time.

"I got rhythm; I got rhythm; I got rhythm; Who could ask for anything more?" That's how the song goes and that's how the birds go. Phonology is the study of biological rhythms. Periodic activity such as flowering, reproduction, and migration all fall within this class of study. Words like circadian (daily), menstrual (monthly), circannual (annually) are used to describe these phenomena. Much of migration activity in birds is controlled by an internal clock operating on a circannual rhythm. Each year, at a certain time, their biological clocks signal that it's time to fly northward to breed.

Photoperiod (periods of light) actually refers to the ratio of day length to night length. Photoperiodicity may affect migration in some cases, when the birds are in the temperate zones where these ratios change. In the tropics, however, photoperiods don't have much effect. Days and nights are

always 12 hours long on the equator. The triggers for migration are actually a complex combination of things.

We are all certainly aware that in North America the weather in spring gets "nice" in the south before it gets "nice" in the north. People who live in the northern U. S. and Canada migrate in droves to the southern borders of the U. S. for the winter. I have heard many conversations among them, about the right time to go back north. It always seems to hinge around the question "Is it too early?" Migrating birds have obviously also evolved a sense for this. We find that birds that nest in the south migrate early. Of course, the area in which they nest is ready for habitation early. We begin to see the Prothonotary Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush in the latter half of March. Birds that nest in the north, however, migrate later since the area in which they nest is not ready for habitation until later. Gray-checked Thrushes don't show up in Texas until late April and early May. I plant most of my vegetables (Houston, Texas) around the first of March. My dad, I remember, always put the vegetables in on Memorial Day (in western New York). That's three months later, and it looks like birds have figured this out too.

The preparation for migration includes building fat reserves for energy. Southbound Yellow-rumped Warblers (which usually eat insects) are observed on Block Island (Rhode Island) gorging themselves on Bayberries (Wax Myrtle). Long distance runners and other endurance athletes often do a "carbohydrate load" just before a big event.

At first, one might think that birds would migrate in straight lines. "As the Crow flies" if you will. But there are many factors, variables, and reasons that cause birds to choose migratory routes other than straight lines. Some are well understood and some are not. Water provides an obstacle to some birds, while others cross it without hesitation. Many birds are not fond of flying over deserts or mountains, so they fly around them. Prevailing winds might cause a choice of different routes for movement north and south.

Loops represent a migration pattern with different routes for northward and southward migration. The American Golden-Plover moves north across the Gulf of Mexico to northern Canada and Alaska where it breeds. For the trip south, it moves east to Nova Scotia, then to the south over the Atlantic, returning to its winter home in Brazil.

A more local loop is seen in the Gulf of Mexico itself. Sometimes north winds accompany storms. In spring, these storms from the north present a serious danger to the birds migrating into them. In fall, the danger is less because the migration is southward (with the wind). In spring, many species tend to hug the Texas coast. This way a protective environment is more available should the birds get into

trouble. In fall, however, the birds need not fear those northern storms. The winds merely help them to cross the gulf more quickly. Many species tend to fly over the center of the gulf, showing no desire to hug the coast. The local loop then, represents a more western northbound migration with the southward travel finding a path more to the east.

Doglegs are patterns of migration that are not a straight line. The reason for doglegs is to avoid (fly around) unfavorable areas. California Gulls winter all along the southern half of the California coastline. Some of them breed in Yellowstone and near the Great Salt Lake. A direct route would take them across miles of Nevada desert, a relatively barren and inhospitable environment for a gull. Instead they travel north up the coast to the Oregon/Washington border. They turn right and follow the Snake and Columbia rivers to the breeding areas. In fall they reverse the route.

Leapfrogging occurs where different subspecies (races) occupy different breeding ranges on the same axis as migratory flight. The races breeding the farthest north often winter the farthest south. In migration, the more northern breeders leapfrog over the more central races. On the west coast, five races of Fox Sparrows find themselves in this sort of situation. Shumagin, Kodiak, and Valdez races live in separate areas in Alaska; they all winter together in the southern part of California. The Yakutat race breeds at the Alaska - Canada border and winters near San Francisco. The Townsend race breeds in northern British Columbia and winters in Oregon. The sixth race, Sooty Fox Sparrow, doesn't migrate but winters and summers in northern Washington and southern British Columbia.

Vertical migration is a bit more local but still provides solutions for birds that prefer to breed in a place that is inhospitable in winter. Many mountain birds find seeds, fruits, insects, and space for breeding at high altitudes on the mountain. Winter at those altitudes provides no food or comfort for them. To solve the problem, they simply move down to a lower altitude on the mountain or into the valley. A move of several hundred feet vertically can provide the same amount of climate change as several hundred miles of horizontal migration. Some gallinaceous birds like the Mountain Quail make the trip on foot. These quail start early enough in the fall so snow will not impede their trip.

Staging often occurs before migration. Many species migrate in large flocks and gather in staging areas. I believe that the large flocks of robins seen in early spring in the south are such groups.

Vagrant migration is a winter phenomenon. Birds, after reaching their usual winter location, may wander to other areas. Some of these wanderings are referred to as

"explosions". For example, some winters present Texans with high numbers of Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Red Crossbills.

Young Bald Eagles hatched and banded in Florida (this population is considered non-migratory) have been found wandering as far north as Quebec and Ontario, a distance of over 1500 miles from home.

Don is a regular writer and lecturer about birds and teaches a beginning birding field course in conjunction with the Houston Audubon Society. Contact him at (281) 997-0485 or cdplace@concentric.net

This is the sixth in a series of articles that he has generously agreed to do for the Spoonbill and for our beginning birders. The first was in the October/November 1999 issue. They have followed monthly after that. With Don's permission, we will be posting these articles on the OG web-site within 30-60 days after each has appeared in our newsletter. Don appreciates your comments on these articles.

A BASELINE SURVEY FOR COASTAL-BEND RAPTORS IN WINTER 2000

Daniel M. Brooks, Ph.D. and David Sarkozi

INTRODUCTION

The Ornithology Group (OG) and Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) teamed up to do the OG-HMNS Winter Raptor Survey. This study would not have been possible, without dedicated team of data collectors, who are to be commended for their help and cooperation; they are: Bill and Jean Harwell, Lu Skillern, Margaret Elliot, John Whittle, A.K. Stoley, Ron Anderson, Ken Sztraky, Matthew Whitbeck, Mary Dodson, Pat Pease, Phil Jones, Tracy and John Kleinhans. OG's Chair, David Sarkozi, was the project initiator and remains its most able Coordinator. Behind-the-scenes, Dr. Dan Brooks, Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at HMNS, provided technical guidance on study design, as well as data analyses and report write-ups. The objective of this study was to do a preliminary baseline raptor species inventory to provide us with important information for designing a larger, long-term study that will soon be initiated. This report presents some interesting preliminary results.

METHODS

Twelve 40 km transect routes were performed at the following 'site names': Austin Co., Brazos Bend, Fort Bend Co., Galveston Co., Katy-Hockley, North Chambers Co., North Jefferson Co., South Brazoria Co., South Chambers Co., South Jefferson Co., Todd-Road West, and Waller. Each transect was sampled once during the winter, between 1 January through 15 February 2000.

Count station stops were made every 0.8 km (50 stops/transect), and all raptors were counted for three minutes before moving on, for a total of 600 stops accomplished during 30 observer-hours. Data collected included stop number, time, cloud cover and other weather notes, sex-age class (where possible), behavior (soaring or perching), and habitat (short grass/grazed, agricultural field, prairie, brush/scrub, woodland, or urban/suburban).

SPECIES DIVERSITY AND DOMINANCE

A total of 593 individuals were accounted for, with 13 species observed, including (most to least abundant): Red-tailed Hawk (259), American Kestrel (180), Northern Harrier (90), White-tailed Kite (16), Red-shouldered Hawk and Crested Caracara (12 each), White-tailed Hawk (9), Cooper's Hawk (4), Merlin and Sharp-shinned Hawk (3 each), Osprey and Swainson's Hawk (2 each), and Harris' Hawk (1). Notably absent were rarer species such as Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, that are stronger habitat specialists, often being tied to freshwater drainages and ponds, and coastline, respectively.

The three most abundant species accounted for 89% of all individuals, which is interesting since these three species accounted for less than one-fourth of all species tallied. Additionally, it is interesting to note that Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel accounted for 44% and 30% of all observed species, respectively; the latter species' numerical dominance in the raptor community will no doubt change seasonally. This tells us the importance of sampling several times throughout the year to adequately assess raptor community 'phenology'.

BEHAVIOR

The behavioral trend of perched birds being observed more frequently than soaring birds was consistent across all habitats for several species with adequate sample sizes (Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk). Some species were observed perched exclusively and never soaring (Harris' Hawk, Merlin, and Osprey), and other species were observed

soaring more often than perched (Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara), but this is likely an artifact of more limited sample sizes of these species; the notable exception being Northern Harrier which is behaviorally constrained to frequent soaring behavior. None of the species observed soared exclusively.

This information tells us that nearly one-fourth of all species cannot be accounted for off a perch, and nearly two-thirds (62%) of all species were observed perched more often than soaring. The frequency of perched individuals observed more than soaring individuals is strengthened even more when considering perched (373) versus soaring (219) individuals total.

HABITAT ASSOCIATION

Habitats were divided into six categories: short grass/grazed (290 raptors counted), agricultural field (171), prairie (72), brush/scrub (43), woodland (9), urban/suburban (8). The two most abundant species (Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel) were the only species occurring in all habitats. Red-tailed Hawk, followed directly by American Kestrel, were the most numerically dominant raptors in short grass/grazed, agricultural field, prairie, and brush/scrub, and were equally the second-most numerically dominant species in woodland habitat, next to Red-shouldered Hawk. When considering urban/suburban habitat, American Kestrel was the most dominant raptor, followed by Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk. Northern Harrier was the third-most dominant in all habitats, except for woodland (least dominant of four species) and urban/suburban habitat, where this species did not occur.

Species found in four habitats include White-tailed Kites (all except woodland and urban/suburban) and Red-shouldered Hawk (all except agricultural field and brush/scrub). Species found in three habitats include Crested Caracaras (agricultural fields, short grass/grazed, and brush/scrub), White-tailed Hawks (agricultural fields, short grass/grazed, and prairie). Other species numbers were too low to draw any conclusions without more robust data, which will be obtainable through a longer study.

NOTES FOR FUTURE STUDY

One of the goals of the long-term study to be initiated is to obtain reliable and repeatable abundance estimates of density (number of raptors/km driven). While the count-stations are more time consuming, they will perhaps yield more raptors counted. However, unfortunately, there is no way to accurately assess density since the distance of the soaring

raptors (ranging up to and exceeding 1 km) is impossible to assess among separate observers. For this reason, it will be imperative that the long-term study focus only upon raptors that are perched and observed while driving at a consistent 30 m.p.h. pace. However, soaring birds can be recorded anecdotally.

Clearing House Electronic Submissions

David Sarkozi

You may now submit data to the Clearing House directly on-line via the OG web site. Go to and click on "Add Records to the Clearing House"

Now, you no longer need to fill out a sighting sheet and mail it to the Clearing House editor. No stamps, nothing to mail! If you were sending in data via e-mail you don't have to type up the data, just fill in the date, county, location, and your name, then add the counts for each species in the blank by the species and click on submit.

You may also search the database from the web site.

The Clearing House data sheet may also be downloaded now from the web site.

February 2000 CLEARING HOUSE

Thanks to everyone who submitted these records:

CR	Cecelia Riley
DB	Dick Benoit
DLR	Don/Lee Richardson
DS	David Sarkozi
DV	Don Verser
MJA	Mike/Jan Austin
WB	Winnie Burkett
MG	Mike Gremillion
SM	Stuart Marcus
BG	Bob Galloway
DM	David Marrick
JWB	J.W.Buckman
MM	Mark Magruder
BS	Bill Saulmon
DB	Daniel Brooks
JH	Jean Harwell
BH	Bill Harwell
RT	Rob Thacker
JB	John Billard

AS Anne Shelton
 RW Rick Wilson
 DM1 Derek Muschalek
 MW Matthew Whitbeck
 SP Sumita Prasad
 PA Pat Ireland
 BG1 Bill Godley
 DH David Hernike
 BM Bill McClure
 KR Kathy Reiser
 JMH Jim Henson
 PK Paula Kennedy
 MS Mark Steuer
 MD Mary Dodson

Please continue to get those observations to:

Mike Gremillion
 3304 Rice Blvd
 Houston, TX 77005
 e-mail: mgremillion@houston.rr.com

Via e-mail in this format: species, date, county, location, count, observer. Clearinghouse submission forms are available at the meeting or for download from the OG web page at <http://texasbird.simplenet.com/hog>

Common Loon birds=3 reports=1
 Pied-billed Grebe birds=59 reports=7
 Eared Grebe birds=12 reports=1
 American White Pelican birds=17 reports=2
 Brown Pelican birds=4 reports=2
 Double-crested Cormorant birds=20 reports=4
 Neotropic Cormorant 2/5 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 5 RT
 Neotropic Cormorant 2/20 Chambers(Anahuac) 5 DS
 Anhinga 2/1 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 1 BG1
 Anhinga 2/5 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 5 RT
 Anhinga 2/21 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 5 KR
 American Bittern birds=10 reports=4
 Great Blue Heron birds=29 reports=6
 Great Egret birds=21 reports=7
 Snowy Egret birds=21 reports=6
 Little Blue Heron birds=16 reports=7
 Tricolored Heron birds=6 reports=4
 Reddish Egret birds=4 reports=1
 Black-crowned Night-Heron birds=3 reports=2
 White Ibis birds=100 reports=7
 Glossy Ibis 2/5 Chambers(Anahuac) 1 DS
 White-faced Ibis birds=23 reports=6
 Roseate Spoonbill birds=37 reports=3
 Black Vulture birds=19 reports=4
 Turkey Vulture birds=48 reports=6

Snow Goose (White form) birds=4,500 reports=1
 Snow Goose (Blue form) birds=500 reports=1
 Wood Duck 2/5 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 6 RT
 Wood Duck 2/21 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 6 KR
 Wood Duck 2/25 Harris(Bering Ditch @ Buffalo Bayou) 2 BM
 Gadwall birds=26 reports=5
 American Wigeon birds=8 reports=2
 Mallard birds=6 reports=1
 Mottled Duck birds=19 reports=4
 Blue-winged Teal birds=60 reports=5
 Cinnamon Teal 2/1 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 1 BG1
 Northern Shoveler birds=50 reports=6
 Green-winged Teal birds=130 reports=6
 Ring-necked Duck 2/5 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 6 RT
 Bufflehead birds=10 reports=1
 Osprey 2/21 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 1 KR
 Bald Eagle birds=1 reports=1
 Northern Harrier birds=18 reports=6
 Sharp-shinned Hawk birds=1 reports=1
 Cooper's Hawk 2/5 Chambers(Anahuac) 1 DS
 Cooper's Hawk 2/25 Harris(Bering Ditch @ Buffalo Bayou) 1 BM
 Red-shouldered Hawk birds=5 reports=3
 Red-tailed Hawk birds=18 reports=7
 Crested Caracara birds=2 reports=1
 American Kestrel birds=11 reports=4
 Common Moorhen birds=80 reports=4
 American Coot birds=85 reports=5
 Sandhill Crane 2/1 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 1 BG1
 Sandhill Crane 2/5 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 9 RT
 Black-bellied Plover birds=14 reports=2
 Killdeer birds=27 reports=6
 Black-necked Stilt birds=14 reports=2
 Greater Yellowlegs birds=10 reports=2
 Lesser Yellowlegs birds=10 reports=3
 Willet birds=24 reports=1
 Spotted Sandpiper birds=1 reports=1
 Long-billed Curlew birds=6 reports=1
 Marbled Godwit birds=4 reports=1
 Western Sandpiper birds=36 reports=1
 Least Sandpiper birds=1 reports=1
 Long-billed Dowitcher birds=48 reports=2
 Common Snipe birds=4 reports=2
 Laughing Gull birds=18 reports=2
 Ring-billed Gull birds=24 reports=1
 Caspian Tern birds=3 reports=2
 Royal Tern birds=1 reports=1
 Forster's Tern birds=1 reports=1
 Mourning Dove birds=39 reports=6
 Inca Dove birds=2 reports=1
 Great Horned Owl birds=1 reports=1
 Chimney Swift 2/25 Harris(Bering Ditch @ Buffalo Bayou) 1 BM

Belted Kingfisher birds=12 reports=7
 Red-bellied Woodpecker birds=14 reports=5
 Downy Woodpecker birds=6 reports=4
 Pileated Woodpecker birds=6 reports=4
 Eastern Wood-Pewee 2/25 Harris(Bering Ditch @ Buffalo Bayou) 1 BM
 Eastern Phoebe birds=10 reports=4
 Vermilion Flycatcher birds=2 reports=2
 Loggerhead Shrike birds=26 reports=5
 Blue-headed Vireo birds=3 reports=2
 American Crow birds=27 reports=6
 Purple Martin 2/5 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 6 RT
 Purple Martin 2/20 Chambers(Anahuac) 6 DS
 Tree Swallow 2/18 Brazoria(Brazoria NWR) 12 KR
 Carolina Chickadee birds=9 reports=3
 Tufted Titmouse birds=9 reports=3
 Brown Creeper 2/1 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 1 BG1
 Carolina Wren birds=12 reports=4
 House Wren birds=1 reports=1
 Sedge Wren birds=26 reports=2
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet birds=6 reports=2
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher birds=2 reports=2
 Eastern Bluebird 2/1 Fort Bend(Brazos Bend) 1 BG1
 Hermit Thrush birds=2 reports=2
 American Robin birds=237 reports=5
 Northern Mockingbird birds=25 reports=5
 European Starling birds=15 reports=3
 American Pipit birds=1 reports=1
 Cedar Waxwing birds=100 reports=1
 Orange-crowned Warbler birds=4 reports=4
 Yellow-rumped Warbler birds=66 reports=6
 Pine Warbler birds=2 reports=1
 Common Yellowthroat birds=4 reports=3
 Green-tailed Towhee 2/12 Brazoria() 1 MD
 Chipping Sparrow birds=10 reports=1
 Field Sparrow birds=8 reports=3
 Savannah Sparrow birds=33 reports=5
 Seaside Sparrow birds=16 reports=1
 Lincoln's Sparrow birds=2 reports=2
 Swamp Sparrow birds=11 reports=5
 White-throated Sparrow birds=6 reports=2
 Northern Cardinal birds=60 reports=8
 Red-winged Blackbird birds=241 reports=7
 Eastern Meadowlark birds=34 reports=4
 Brewer's Blackbird birds=1 reports=1
 Common Grackle birds=86 reports=4
 Boat-tailed Grackle birds=12 reports=1
 Great-tailed Grackle birds=45 reports=4
 Brown-headed Cowbird birds=1 reports=1
 American Goldfinch birds=26 reports=3
 House Sparrow birds=30 reports=1

Rare Bird Field Notes:

Species: Green-tailed Towhee, adult male

Location: Brazoria County

Date: 02 / 12 / 2000

Description:

Sparrow shaped bird with long green tail greenish back, green rump, no wing bars, rufous cap, dark lateral crown stripes that bordered the rufous crown, white supercilium that got wider behind the eye. The crown was raised like the bird was agitated. It flicked its tail up and down. This bird was large, close to or larger than white-crowned sparrows seen right after when we were trying to refind the bird. We were unsuccessful in refinding it. I think it flew across a little ravine into similar habitat with bunches of chipping & white-crown sparrows. Unfortunately that area was posted. This was just outside the gate to Brazoria NWR on the west side of the road.

Again, thanks to the people who went to the trouble to send these reports in.

Good Birding! to the people who will send next month's reports in.

Bird Blitz at Anahuac NWR

May 6, 2000

7:00AM

Join the Friends of Anahuac NWR for Bird Blitz, 2000 at 7:00AM. During Bird Blitz, we will see how many species of birds we can locate on Anahuac NWR during the day. Field trips into several closed area will be lead by David Sarkozi and the Staff of Anahuac NWR. Think of it as a Christmas Bird Count with Warblers. For information call David Sarkozi at 713-520-5906 or Michele Hannon at 409-267-3337.

Activity Reminder List

(These activities or field trips have been announced in detail in previous issues of the Spoonbill.)

VOLUNTEER PLEASE! The ONG needs a coordinator for week day field trips. Please contact David Sarkozi to volunteer.

Saturday-Saturday June 10-17, 2000 CFD
OG Mexico Field Trip: See July 1999 Spoonbill for details. Contact Michael Delesantro at 956-969-8610 or mdele@worldnet.att.net. Fees.

March 2000 Meeting of the Ornithology Group

Pat Pease, Recording Secretary

There were no meeting minutes for March 2000 due to the fact that the ONG met with the Audobon Society and did not conduct any formal business.

June Meeting

Monday, June 5, 2000 7:00PM, Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet. **Save the date!**

2000 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

TIME TO SEND THEM IN!

It's that time again. Time to renew your Outdoor Nature Club and Ornithology Group membership. While you are at it, invite a new member. Please note that Ornithology Group dues have increased by \$2.00 this year to \$14.00 to cover the increased costs of mailing the Spoonbill.

Some people have already sent in their 2000 membership dues using the old OG amount of \$12.00. If this means you: To remedy this situation, please either give Pat Pease your remaining \$2.00 at the next meeting or send it into the address below in the Membership Renewal Form.

*Many thanks to this month's contributors.
This newsletter would not have happened
without you!*

Membership Renewal

Mail your check and this completed form to:

Outdoor Nature Club
P.O. Box 270894
Houston, TX 77277-0894

Name

Street Address

City State Zip

Phone (please include the area code)

e-mail address

New Rejoining Renewal

ONC Annual Dues (payable to ONC)

Regular \$8 Family \$15
 Supporting \$40 Life \$100

Ornithology (\$14 per person in addition to ONC dues)

Total ONC/OG Dues \$ _____

Other Donation \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

*Botany, Entomology, Conchology and Photography Group dues (\$2.00/year/group) are paid separately to group treasurers at the monthly meetings.

About the Ornithology Group

The Ornithology Group (OG) is a member of the Outdoor Nature Club (ONC), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing greater knowledge about the environment and wildlife on the Upper Texas Coast.

The OG is a club of individuals interested in birds, birding, and bird watching. Some members focus on bird identification and listing, some enjoy studying bird behavior and habitat, and some just enjoy watching birds. The OG is organized to accommodate all of these diverse birding interests. Members also benefit from the synergism of getting together to share knowledge and interests during the club's activities. OG activities make learning about birds fun!

Officers:

Chairman	David Sarkozi	713-520-5906
Vice-Chairman	Skip Almony	713-524-4285
Secretary	Pat Pease	713-789-3306
Treasurer	Bob Simmons	713-776-2511
Clearinghouse	Mike Gremillion	713-665-8502
Spoonbill Editor	DK Smith	713-522-7990

To Start or Renew Membership:

Members receive both the Spoonbill and the ONC Nature Notes. Send us a note containing the following information along with \$22.00 annual dues:

Your name
Your address: street, city, state, zip
Your telephone
Your e-mail

Send this to: Outdoor Nature Club
PO Box 270894
Houston TX 77277-0894

You can also enroll from our web site.

OG Website: <http://texasbirding.simplenet.com/hog/>

To add your name to our e-mail list:
Send a message to listserv@listserv.uh.edu. On the first line of the message put: "subscribe HOUSTON-OG your_firstname your_lastname. You will get a confirmation echoed back in a few minutes.

Clearing House List Submissions:

Birds for the Clearing House list can be sent to:

Mike Gremillion
3304 Rice Blvd
Houston, TX 77005
e-mail: mgremillion@houston.rr.com

Clearinghouse submission forms are available at the meeting or for download from the OG web page at <http://texasbird.simplenet.com/hog>

You can also send in sighting information via e-mail in this format: species, date, county, location, count, observer.

Newsletter Submissions

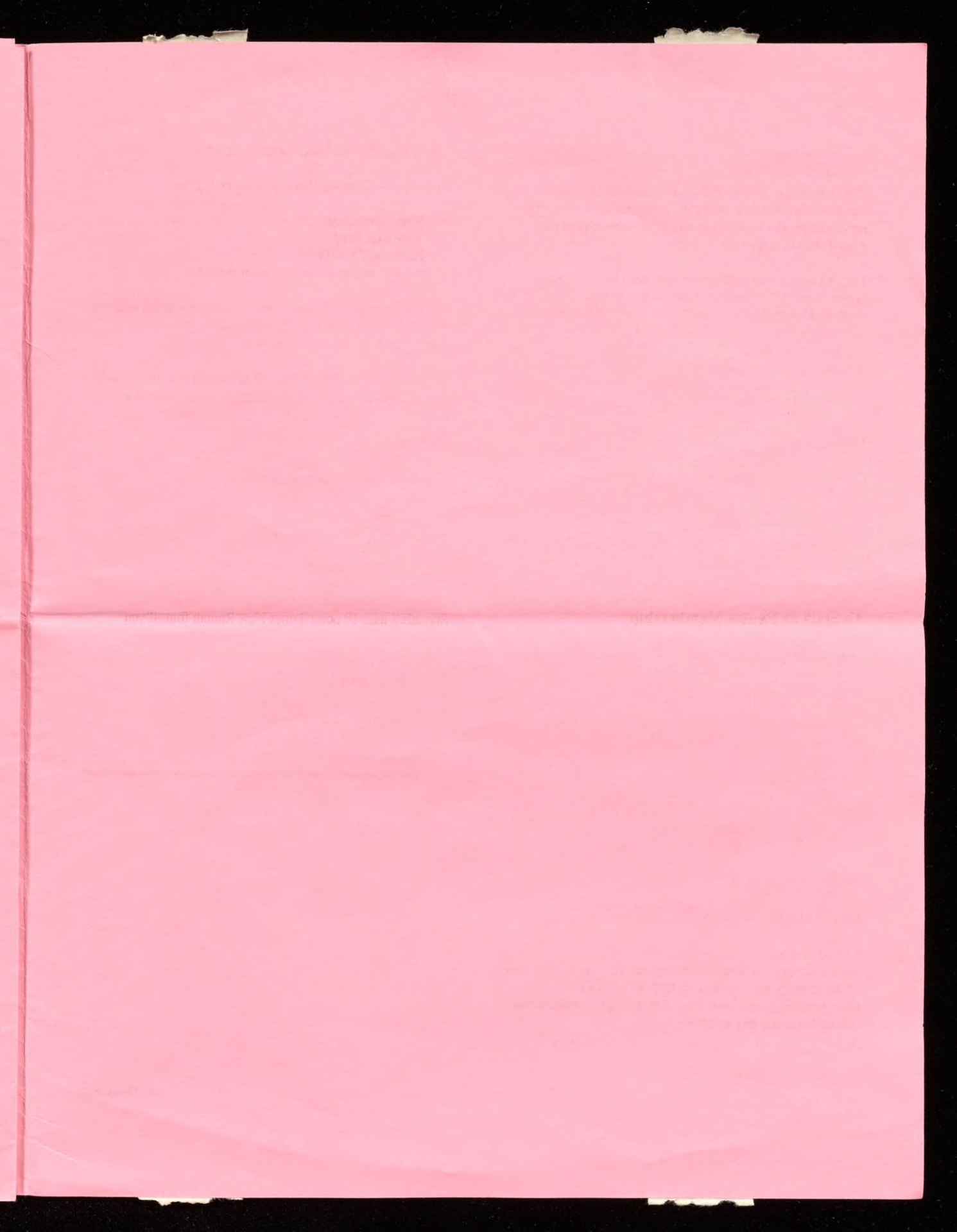
Newsletter submissions can be sent to:

DK Smith
1657 Bonnie Brae #3
Houston, TX 77006
e-mail: smithdk@us.ibm.com

Via e-mail, please send the file in "RTF" format. The Spoonbill uses 10 point Times New Roman font, if you happen to think about it.

Rare Bird Hot Line:

Texas Society Rare Bird Alert: 713-369-9673



**Outdoor Nature Club
Ornithology Group
P.O. Box 270894
Houston, TX 77277-0894**

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