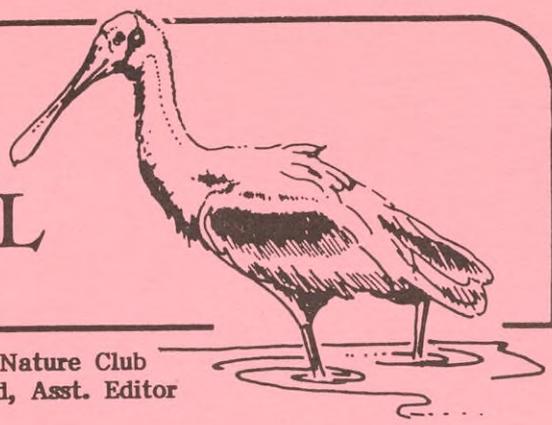


The SPOONBILL



Published by the Ornithology Group, Outdoor Nature Club
Houston, Texas, Libby Price, Editor; Ellen Red, Asst. Editor

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Coming Events

Tuesday, May 1: Ornithology Group meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Bayland Park, off Bissonnet just west of Hillcroft. Our May meeting is traditionally given by members bringing their favorite slides of birds (five per person). We have excellent photographers in our group and the results are always enjoyed by all. Contribute if you can and come see this great show if you are not a photographer. LEARNING CORNER at 7:00; Don Richardson leading; identifying nesting birds by their songs.

Thursday May 3: Deadline for Clearing House reports and for Spoonbill material.

Thursday, May 10: Outdoor Nature Club meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Houston Arboretum. Dr. Richard Baldauf of the Museum of Natural History will present "Amphibians."

Friday-Sunday, May 11-13: Joint field trip of the Outdoor Nature Club and Ornithology Group. This first of two May trips will be to Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, near Fredericksburg. This weekend trip will offer birding, botany and photography. There will be an organized birding expedition on Sunday morning led by Tony Gallucci, a skilled and well-known birder who has lived in the Hill Country for the past several years. This birding foray, which will start around 8:00 a.m. (time to be confirmed), is expected to end around noon, allowing ample time for the drive back to Houston. Note that there will be more informal birding available on Saturday, perhaps with leadership furnished by one of the group.

There will be camping over the weekend at Ladybird Johnson Municipal Park, three miles southwest of Fredericksburg. There are also motels in town. Call Irene Leslie at 780-2828 to reserve a spot on the trip and for more information.

Saturday, May 26: The second May field trip will be to Jones State Forest and nearby areas to search for Red-cockaded Woodpecker and other Piney Woods specialties. The trip will be led by Al Barr, who will be assisted by Jim Stewart. Both of these birders know this area well. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in Jones State Forest. To get there take I-45 north from Houston past the Woodlands exit to the FM 1488 exit. Go left (west) toward Hempstead about 2½ miles on FM 1488 to an unmarked dirt road on the left. After making a left turn onto the dirt road drive a short distance to the first pond, which is the meeting place. If you come to a housing development on FM 1488, you have gone too far. The trip will last until early afternoon depending on the weather and the birds, so bring a lunch, plenty to drink, insect repellent and a hat for sun protection. Call John Buckman at 359-4685 for information.

JUNE FIELD TRIP

Friday-Sunday, June 1-3: Our June field trip will be a weekend affair to Kickapoo Caverns State Park and vicinity, north of Bracketville in Kinney County, where we will look for breeding birds of western affinities. Gray and Black-capped Vireos, among many other species, are nesters in the park. Kelly Bryan, the park manager and an accomplished field ornithologist, has agreed to lead our Saturday field trip in the park. This trip will start early Saturday morning (time to be advised), so a Friday night arrival in the Bracketville area is nearly a must.

His schedule permitting, Kelly said he would also introduce us to a significantly different bird habitat at lower altitudes near Bracketville on Sunday. The OG will provide supplemental leadership if required. Although Bracketville is about seven hours drive (about 320 miles) from Houston, this trip offers a rare opportunity to visit this park, which is not open to the public, and sample a rich birding area. There is no camping or overnighting in the park so we recommend staying at a motel. Since trip logistics are a little complicated your early call to John Buckman at 359-4685 to reserve a place is requested.

(continued next page)

Saturday, June 9: ORNITHOLOGY GROUP PICNIC at Pavilion No. 1, near Elm Lake, at Brazos Bend State Park. Come and bring food to share with others. Time to be announced. More details at the May meeting or call Richard Uzar 527-0454.

Noel's Niche Looking Back

by Noel Pettingell

10 YEARS AGO/FROM APRIL 1980 SPOONBILL

"History of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

In 1962 the Outdoor Nature Club published a history of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary which 'represents an effort at collecting and recording the facts that led to the acquiring of this preserve and also acquainting members and friends of the Outdoor Nature Club with the steps in its development during the first twelve years...The Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary is so called because of its relation to the famous East Texas Big Thicket. Geographically and biologically it is the western outpost of that unique ecological area, the western boundary of which in 1936 was considered to be the highway from Houston to Huntsville...'

"The earliest record of Club action taken toward acquiring a sanctuary is in the minutes of a club meeting in October, 1926...three years after the founding of the club. A committee was appointed by President Randolph 'to investigate the possibilities of purchasing land for a sanctuary or a preserve. J.M. Heiser, Jr., Rex Frazier and G.F. Bates were appointed.'

"Dr. R.A. Selle, first President of the Outdoor Nature Club wrote in the Bulletin in the winter of 1931: 'Just as it is our duty to preserve the priceless works of art, literature and science accumulated through the ages we are under obligation to save for future generations, a fitting sample of every type of natural area, complete in its indigenous species of plant and animal life. Not as hunting preserves or picnic grounds but as treasuries of nature...'"

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY: APRIL 20-MAY 24 AT THE R.A. VINES SCIENCE CENTER

The R. A. Vines Science Center will present an exhibition of fifty nature photographs by area photographers Carlos Hernandez, Joe Liggio, Stephan Myers, Jeff Schultz and John Tveten. The show will be on from April 20 through May 24 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, with one open Sunday, May 6, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Weekday visitors are asked to call 465-9628 to be sure the gallery will be free of Spring Branch classes at the time of visiting.

A special slide presentation by John Tveten will occur at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, entitled "Looking at Texas Nature." Reservations are necessary because of limited space. Call 465-9628 for reservations or more information.

THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE UTC NONGAME ACTION PLAN

by Dave Peterson

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Clear Lake Field Office has developed a Nongame Wildlife Action Plan for the Upper Texas Coast. The Plan outlines coordination roles and nongame management objectives consistent with the needs of our area. Effective coordination with federal, state and local government and conservation organizations is stressed in order to maximize resources and capabilities. The role of conservation organizations is critical to the success of this plan. These organizations not only provide a network of expertise, but also play a valuable role in monitoring the daily status of nongame populations and their habitats. Several of these coordination efforts are already materializing in noteworthy accomplishments. The Service/Texas Ornithological Society joint acquisition of the Sabine Woods has led to further grants for on-site woodlot expansion and wetland creation projects and fencing of the site. This endeavor has already provided opportunities for coordination and broad-spectrum passerine bird conservation/management well beyond the expectations of the Action Plan.

Another success story within the scope of the Plan has been the Service/Houston Audubon Society effort on the Katy prairie winter roost lease site. In cooperation with the Margaret C. Wray Trust Fund and other contributors, the Society provided funding to flood a 90-acre rice field west of Houston on moments' notice. Since the tract is not slated for farming this year, it is hoped that rains will keep it flooded well into summer. A recent visit to the site revealed over 3,000 Green-winged Teal, 1,500 shorebirds and several wading birds. The site will be increasingly important to shorebirds in the coming months. While this program of flooding rice fields in winter was originally aimed at waterfowl, a much wider variety of birds have benefited greatly.

The Plan also touches on holistic issues such as habitat fragmentation and mitigation policies and design. More specific objectives are outlined, including on-the-ground nongame conservation and management actions for passerines, colonial waterbirds, shorebirds, herpetiles and mammals. Fire ant impacts on nongame wildlife are a major issue of concern. The Action Plan, as the name implies, was not designed to take up shelf space. It is currently being used at the Service regional level as a funding proposal to gain a share of the slated increased nongame funds from Washington. The success of this Plan and all nongame endeavors, however, depend on the concerted efforts of individuals. Please contact Dave Peterson (713-750-1700) in the USFWS Clear Lake Field Office for more information or if you would like to participate in any way.

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

With the coming of May birding activity is at an all-time high for the year for many of us. There are always plenty of exciting things to involve oneself in during the height of migration.

For the more competitively oriented I hope one of your activities will be to participate in the "Lone Star Spring Shoot-Out," April 28 or 29. This annual Audubon Society Big Day Event is a significant fund-raiser, and your participation is necessary. If each of us makes a pledge of support and unabashedly solicits similar contributions from our friends, co-workers and anyone else, the event will be a great success. If you are pulling for a particular team, great! If not, be advised that Noel Pettingell is pulling together a rejuvenated "OG Oglers," one of numerous OG teams this year, and all can use your support.

Your nickels and dimes can and do add up to some real cash when everybody dances. Pledge a little or a lot to the team of your choice. This year teams may choose where to donate the funds they raise. I hope these moneys will end up helping to pay for the coastal sanctuaries we all love so much. It is hard to imagine a winning team not utilizing the coastal wood mottes for the richness to be found there. Good birding to all you competitors.

When the excitement of migrating passerines begins to diminish I hope some of those interested in the resident avifauna will make time to contribute to the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas. This is the fourth breeding season of the five-year study by Texas A&M University, and ourselves. Information is really piling up, but your help is still necessary.

Generally as sciences evolve and become more specialized the opportunity for significant amateur involvement diminishes. This Texas A&M project to define the ranges of all the birds presently breeding in the state is a notable exception. Participation of both the expert and the untrained enthusiast is encouraged and is essential for success. You can and will be making a difference when deciding either to make a financial commitment or contribute time in the field collecting valuable information. Financial contributions are tax deductible, and should be mailed to Texas A&M University Development Foundation (TBBAP), P.O. Box J-7, College Station TX 77844.

I have said before and think it cannot be said often enough: a great knowledge of birds is not necessary for you to participate in activities that you hear of in the Ornithology Study Group. We are an association of amateur enthusiasts each growing in scholarship about birds. The most useful tool we have at our disposal is our interest! Our willingness to learn will create something useful to the scientists who are the "knowers"; we seekers are, fortunately, not burdened with their responsibilities. That's the reason we have more fun with birding than they do with ornithology. Come out and have some fun this summer; join me and many others around the state in the breeding bird study.

Richard Uzar 527-0454

OG DESCENDS ON VALLEY

by Lynne Aldrich

Friday, March 16 leave Houston 6:00 A.M. Meet in Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge 2:00 P.M. Sunset at Anzualduas. Bird! Dinner. Bed. Saturday, March 17 leave McAllen 6:00 A.M. Bird! (Salineno, Falcon Dam, Santa Margarita). Dinner (Johnny's famous Mexican Restaurant in McAllen). Bed. Sunday, March 18 meet Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park 5:30 A.M. Bird! Bird! Bird! Leave at noon, arrive in Houston 7:00 P.M. Ticked off Least Grebes, Red-billed Pigeons, all the Valley doves, Roadrunners, Groove-billed Ani, Pauraques (fluttering within feet of us...best views ever), Ringed and Green Kingfishers, Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet, Couch's Kingbird, singing and displaying Cassin's Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Hooded, Altamira and Audubon's Orioles. Heard Elf Owl, Eastern Screech Owl and Great Horned Owl. Nearly all the Valley species observed. In all, 103 species seen or heard, Masked Tityra and Muscovy Ducks missed, necessitating another trip next year. Just another typical OG trip into the field!

Thirty O.G. members met leaders Lynne Aldrich, John Buckman and Peter Gottschling for this O.G.-sponsored, bird-studded trip into the Valley. Everything was perfect--weather, people, birds. We walked the trails of Santa Ana and had perfect views of the Least Grebe and Cinnamon Teal gracing the ponds, with Chachalacas calling in the background. Then on to Anzualdas to try for the San Blas Jay. One foot out of the car and Peter cried, "Red-billed Pigeons!" Only he saw that one fly by, but others observed six in a tree as we left the park at sunset. Saturday morning found us at Salineno at sun-up. What a perfect place to start the day. Ringed and Green Kingfishers were flying across the river, gladly obliging our cry for the U.S. side. Green Jays perched in trees. We had a try for the Blue Bunting at the feeders nearby, then on to Falcon Dam.

During a leisurely stroll up the river to the old Girl Scout Camp we had beautiful views of Osprey fishing the river below the dam, and we heard Brown Jays calling. At Falcon Dam State Park we could study the difference between Long-billed and Curve-billed Thrashers, and then lunched while Roadrunners casually sat on lunch tables and Common Ground and Inca Doves strolled across the roads.

An afternoon walk on the river at Santa Margarita was peaceful and serene. We finished that day with our first attempt (failed) at seeing the Masked Tityra which had been at Bentsen for some time. Dinner at Johnny's Mexican Restaurant that night topped our day off.

Sunday started at the entrance to Bentsen, where we immediately were treated to the call of the Elf Owl. A drive through the park gave us some of the best observations of Pauraques we've ever seen. They seemed reluctant to leave the roadside, instead flitting out steadily to capture prey in the air, then land at our feet. Casual walks through the campground, picnic area and famous trailer loop with its myriad feeders capped off this three-day trip. A singing Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet allowed us brief glimpses; the Indigo

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A VISIT TO THE LITTLE THICKET NATURE SANCTUARY

by Ellen Red

I had consented to look after my two grandsons, Adam and David, ages nine and five, for Saturday morning, March 10th. At the ONC meeting that week, I heard that Saturday was Visitors Day at the Sanctuary, and I decided to take the boys up there. I could pick them up Friday after school and be at the LTNS in time to have a hike before supper. I flew around getting picnic supplies such as weiners and buns. I also bought batteries for flashlights and got out the large jug for water. I keep all my camping supplies such as paper plates, can openers, etc. in one box, so I was ready in no time. I piled in bed rolls, quilts and my rubber foam mattress and was on my way.

I forgot about the Hardy Toll Road, and hence we were stuck in the Friday afternoon traffic, but even so we arrived about 5:30. Eight or ten long-time ONC regulars were already there, and they greeted us warmly and helped us set up our tent. Kay Lewis took the boys to the council ring to help her build a fire. By the time I had gotten out all our supplies, the fire was going great. We had lots of kibitzing as we roasted the weiners, and then we all sat around the fire and watched the full moon come up.

Since we had missed our hike by being late, Aaron Stoley volunteered to lead a moonlight hike - no flashlights allowed. The woods looked dark and scary to my two city-bred grandsons. "What about spiders...and snakes?" they asked. Aaron assured them everything would be all right, and off we went into the dark. Surprisingly it was bright enough to see the path clearly. All around us we could hear the noises of night creatures. I wished for an owl to call, and Charlie Smith gave a wonderful imitation of a screech owl, but we came back to the campfire without hearing one. Eventually one did call, but by that time my two young campers were sound asleep in their sleeping bags.

The next morning we had the excitement of seeing a very large snake which was discovered near the Cove. I was glad for the the boys to hear Kay say calmly, "That is a rat snake, not poisonous."

"Shall we squash it?" asked my five-year-old.

"Oh no, David," said Chuck Bauer. "All creatures have their place in the woods. Each is important to the balance of nature."

We hiked the long walk to Enchanted Isle. The dogwood was showing in the woods, and Pileated Woodpeckers were calling. We identified trees and flowers and a batch of poison ivy. We found beetles and cutter ants and a wood bee coming out of a hole. As we walked along, Kay produced a compass and showed Adam how to use it. At the creek we found some wild azaleas just coming into bloom, but the boys were more interested in scrambling across a log to the other side. They discovered an island with a sandy beach, and farther down they found a small waterfall. Magnolia leaves became boats and were sent plunging over the falls. After a while we went on to the Chasm and finally back to the Cove for lunch.

It was time to go home much too soon. As we drove out of the sanctuary both boys wanted to know, "When can we come again?" You can be sure

it won't be long. To be in the woods with people who love nature and know so much about it is wonderful for children and grownups alike. You are invited to come too. All ONC members are welcome at the sanctuary on a Visitors Weekend. Come and bring the whole family.

[Ed. note: The October Visitors Weekend is particularly great for kids. Carving Halloween pumpkins and then watching them light up in the dark is really fun.]

THE TWO-DAY PASSERINE THEORY

by Jerry Patrick

During the exciting passage of the passerines in April and early May, not everyone has the time and opportunity to take advantage of cold fronts and rainstorms to visit favorite migrant traps unless these coincide with weekends. All is not lost, however. Due to daylight saving time most everyone has one or two hours in the evening after work, and has access to fine wooded areas within the city of Houston that can provide some fine passing "looking." I have observed over several years a correlation of "good" and "great" days of passerines at High Island with "fine" days in Houston at areas such as Pittman Park and Edith Moore Sanctuary. Two days after a major influx or fallout at High Island, look for a minor influx of many of these same species in Houston.

For example, on April 10 of this year there was a nice fallout at High Island after an afternoon rainstorm and front passage. Although there were a small number of tanagers and warblers already there, the number increased dramatically after the storm. On April 12 I observed in my yard, located near the Edith Moore Sanctuary area, my first Summer Tanager, first Blue-winged Warbler and first Great-crested Flycatcher of this spring. The two-day theory worked!

On the 10th and 11th I saw only two male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at High Island. I am eagerly awaiting reports of major numbers of this species at High Island so as to test the two-day theory in Houston.

As with all theories, there will be exceptions, and it doesn't always work. Try out the two-day concept, however. What have you got to lose? With little effort you might get in some good warbling even if you didn't get to participate in the real thing at High Island.

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Bunting pair fed casually at the feeder; and Bronzed Cowbirds ruffled their neck feathers against the sky.

It appears the O.G. had another incredibly successful field trip composed of the ingredients necessary to make it so: O.G. members who are fun, dedicated and diligent in looking for birds, birds which are exceedingly obliging (some), plumage a marvel to observe, bird behavior and antics in full swing, and just enough missed birds to make you want, and need to go back. We'll see you next year!

Clearing House - MARCH

March Editor: Wally Gardner

After nearly two years this will be my last month as co-editor of the Clearing House. It's been mostly pleasurable thanks primarily to Lynn Aldrich, Peter Gottschling, Rene and Andrew Franks, Libby Price and the other nice people I've had a chance to get to know. But frankly, my dear, now I'm tired of it.

Noteworthy birds for March 1990 include Black-capped Vireo, Purple Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Broad-winged Hawk, Glossy Ibis, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Cave Swallow, Mourning Warbler, Brown Booby and Glossy Ibis.

The Clearing house is a monthly record of bird sightings made on the Upper Texas Coast. How to read the CH: Location-(how many) date, observers. Common, widely distributed species on the UTC during the reported month are listed as follows: number of reports/total number of individuals seen. Noteworthy sightings are underlined. Birds with very rare, vagrant, accidental or no status on the checklist at the date of sighting require details. All observations affecting the species status on the current UTC checklist must be accepted by the Checklist Committee. Documentation is a must for consideration by the committee.

Loon, Common G-(5)4,UD; G-(30)16,RU; G-(22)24,RU
 Grebe, Pied-bill 11/83
 Grebe, Eared 4/22
Booby, Brown O-(1)31,TPF
 Gannet, Northern O-(12)31,TPF; J-(5)31,AAG
 Pelican, Amer Wht 11/1431
 Pelican, Brown B-(2)4,DR; G-(3)31,HPR; G-(6)16,RU;
 G-(3)24,RU; G-(1)31,AAG
 Corm, Dbl-crested 12/636
 Corm, Olivaceous 7/37
 Anhinga F-(2)17,HS
 Bittern, American C-(1)24,TPF
 Bittern, Least C-(1)31,DR
 Heron, Great Blue 10/78
 Egret, Great 14/215
 Egret, Snowy 11/302
 Heron, Little Blu 12/73
 Heron, Tricolored 8/19
 Egret, Reddish 5/13
 Egret, Cattle 9/372
 Heron, Grn-backed C-(5)31,DR; G-(4)31,HPR
 Nt-Heron, Blk-crn B-(6)4,DR; G-(2)16,RU
 Nt-Heron, Yel-crn B-(2)24,RU; F-(1)17,HS; H-(4)24,TPF
 Ibis, White 9/171
Ibis, Glossy C/AW-(1)18,MA; C/AW-(1)31,AAG
 Ibis, White-faced 7/306
 Spoonbill, Roseat 13/126
 Whsl-Duck, Fulvs G-HI(14)23,JMC
 Goose, Gr Wht-frn H-(40)10,PWH
 Goose, Snow 5/2422
 Duck, Wood B-(30)24,RU; C-(3)11,DR; H-BCP(3)10,PWH
 Teal, Green-wing 10/1378
 Duck, Mottled 10/64
 Pintail, Northern 5/16
 Teal, Blue-winged 11/888
 Shoveler, Northrn 12/1470
 Gadwall 10/170
 Wigeon, American 9/162
 Canvasback B-(1)4,DR; C-(5)24,TPF; C-(3)25,RU
 Duck, Ring-necked B-(7)4,DR; C-(4)11,DR
 Scaup, Lesser 8/135
 Scoter, Surf G-(3)31,HPR
 Goldeneye, Common B-(1)24,RU
 Bufflehead B-(2)24,RU
 Merganser, Red-br 5/34
 Duck, Ruddy C-(28)25,RU; G-(3)16,RU
 Vulture, Black 6/56
 Vulture, Turkey 10/269
 Osprey O-(1)31,TPF; B-(2)4,DR; B-(1)24,RU
 Kite, Blk-shouldr H-CP(1)10,NP; H-CP(1)24,NP
 Harrier, Northern 11/85
 Hawk, Sharp-shin C-(2)31,DR
 Hawk, Cooper's C-(1)31,DR
 Hawk, Red-shouldr 5/9
Hawk, Broad-wingd H-W(2)8,NP

Hawk, White-tailed H-CP(1)27,NP
 Hawk, Red-tailed 8/91
 Hawk, Ferruginous H-(1)10,PWH
 Kestrel, American 12/152
 Merlin J-(2)31,AAG
 Falcon, Peregrine G-EB(1)1,PG; G-(1)31,AAG
 Bobwhite, Northrn G-(1)31,DR
 Rail, Clapper C-(1)11,DR
 Rail, King C-(1)31,AAG
 Rail, Virginia C-(2)24,TPF
 Gallinule, Purple C-(1)31,DR
 Moorhen, Common 8/140
 Coot, American 9/848
 Crane, Sandhill B-(6)4,DR
 Plover, Blk-belli 7/136
 Golden-Plover, Ls 8/243
 Plover, Snowy G-BF(60)3,AG; G-BF(8)4,UD
 Plover, Wilson's G-BF(1)4,UD; G-(5)16,RU; G-SLP(16)24,RU
 Plover, Semipalm G-BF(5)3,AG; G-BF(12)4,UD; G-(2)16,RU;
 G-SLP(50)24,RU
 Plover, Piping G-BF(1)3,AG; G-BF(62)4,UD; G-(15)31,HPR;
 G-(3)16,RU; G-SLP(24)24,RU
 Killdeer 12/165
 Oystercatcher, Am G-(4)4,UD; G-(1)31,HPR; G-(11)16,RU
 Stilt, Black-neck 7/126
 Avocet, American 7/25295
 Yellowlegs, Great 8/68
 Yellowlegs, Less 9/261
 Sandprr, Solitary C-(1)31,DR; G-(1)31,HPR; G-(1)24,RU
 Willet 10/958
 Sandprr, Spotted G-(2)31,DR
 Sandprr, Upland G-(1)31,HPR; G-(1)31,AAG
 Whimbrel B-(1)24,RU
 Curlew, Long-bill 5/143
 Godwit, Marbled 5/377
 Turnstone, Ruddy 6/234
 Knot, Red G-(4)16,RU; G-SLP(2)24,RU
 Sanderling 7/2805
 Sandprr, Western 10/6970
 Sandprr, Least 5/67
Sandprr, Wht-rump G-OO(1)3,AG
 Sandprr, Pectoral 4/38
Sandprr, Purple B-(1)4,DR
 Dunlin 7/8580
 Dowitcher, S-bill 7/3161
 Dowitcher, L-bill C-(50)25,RU
 Snipe, Common C-(12)24,TPF; G-(40)4,UD; G-(10)24,RU
 Phalarope, Wilson G-HI(1)25,RU
 Jaeger, Pomarine J-(1)31,AAG
 Jaeger, Parasitic J-(1)31,AAG
 Gull, Laughing 12/5640
 Gull, Bonaparte's 11/813
 Gull, Ring-billed 11/5045
 Gull, Herring 12/1239
Gull, L.Blk-back. J-(1)31,AAG
 Tern, Gull-billed B-(4)24,RU; C-(1)31,AAG
 Tern, Caspian 10/75
 Tern, Royal 10/884
 Tern, Sandwich 4/40
 Tern, Common 7/50
 Tern, Forster's 13/4366
 Tern, Least G-(50)31,HPR; G-SLP(2)24,RU; G-(5)31,AAG
 Skimmer, Black 7/2755
 Dove, Rock 9/265
 Dove, White-wingd G-KP(1)1,AG; G-(6)4,UD
 Dove, Mourning 12/248
 Dove, Inca G-SW(3)3,AG; G-(7)24,TPF; G-(1)31,DR
 Cuckoo, Yel-billd J-SW(2)31,AAG
 Barn-Owl, Common J-SW(1)31,AAG
 Owl, Great Horned G-HI(1)25,RU
 Swift, Chimney H-NB(9)29,NP
 Hummer, Ruby-thrt G-(6)31,HPR; G-(2)24,TPF; G-(12)31,DR
 Kingfisher, Beltd 10/43
 Wdpecker, Red-head C-(3)4,UD; C-(1)31,DR
 Wdpecker, Red-bell 9/32
 Sapsuck, Yel-bell G-(1)31,HPR; G-(1)24,TPF; G-(1)31,DR
 Wdpecker, Downy 7/14
 Flicker, Northern 4/14
 Wdpecker, Pileated 6/8
 Phoebe, Eastern 4/11
 Kingbird, Eastern C-(1)24,TPF; C-(5)31,DR; G-(1)31,HPR
 Flycatch, Ss-tail C-(3)31,AAG; G-(1)31,HPR; H-W(1)31,NP
 Lark, Horned 4/18
 Martin, Purple 10/132
 Swallow, Tree 8/129
 Swallow, N R-wing C-(12)31,DR; C-(2)31,AAG; G-(3)31,HPR
 Swallow, Barn 7/206
Swallow, Cave J/SR-(2)31,AAG
 Jay, Blue 9/66
 Crow, American 9/261
 Chickadee, Carol 8/73

Titmouse, Tufted 8/62
 Nuthatch, Red-brs G-(3)31,DR
 Creeper, Brown H-BCP(1)10,PWH
 Wren, Carolina 9/35
 Wren, House C-(2)4,UD; G-(2)31,HPR
 Wren, Marsh C-(14)11,DR; C-(12)31,DR; G-(1)31,HPR
 Kinglet, Gold-crn F-(1)17,HS
 Kinglet, Ruby-crn 8/29
 Gnatcatch, Blu-gra 5/36
 Bluebird, Eastern 4/26
 Thrush, Hermit 4/8
 Thrush, Wood G-HI(1)25,RU; J-SW(1)31,AAG
 Robin, American H-(75)10,PWH
 Catbird, Gray C-(2)4,UD; G-KP(1)1,AG; G-(1)31,HPR;
 G-(1)31,DR
 Mockingbird, N 12/171
 Thrasher, Brown 6/18
 Pipit, Water F-D(20)17,HS; H-(1)10,PWH
 Waxwing, Cedar H-CP(55)10,NP; H-BCP(41)10,PWH
 Shrike, Loggerhead 11/99
 Starling, Euro 12/1087
 Vireo, White-eyed 7/54
 Vireo, Solitary B-(1)4,DR; G-(2)24,TPF; G-(1)31,DR
 Vireo, Yell-thrtd G-(1)31,DR
 Vireo, Blk-capped G/HI-(1),GC
 Warb, Blue-winged G-(1)31,DR
 Warb, Orange-crn 8/9
 Parula, Northern G-KP(1)1,AG; G-(1)31,HPR; G-(20)31,DR;
 H-BCP(2)10,PWH; J-SW(7)31,AAG
 Warb, Yellow-rump 13/247
 Warb, Blk-thr Grn G-(1)31,DR
 Warb, Yel-throat G-(1)31,HPR; G-(1)31,DR
 Warb, Pine C-(6)11,DR; C-(6)31,DR
 Warb, Palm C-(4)24,TPF; C-(80)31,DR
 Warb, Bay-breastd C-AW(1)31,AAG
 Warb, Blk-and-wht C-(1)24,TPF; C-(2)31,DR; G-(1)31,DR;
 C-AW(1)31,AAG; G-(2)31,HPR
 Warb, Prothonotry C-(1)31,DR; G-(2)31,HPR; G-HI(1)25,RU;
 G-(12)31,DR; J-SW(10)31,AAG
 Warb, Worm-eating G-(1)31,HPR; J-SW(1)31,AAG
 Waterthrush, Lou C-(1)31,DR; G-(1)31,HPR; G-HI(1)25,RU;
 G-(1)31,DR; G-HI(1)31,AAG; J-SW(1)31,AAG
 Warb, Mourning B-(1)4,DR
 Yellowthroat, Com 4/9
 Warb, Hooded G-(2)31,HPR; J-SW(3)31,AAG
 Cardinal, Northern 11/157
 Bunting, Indigo G-(2)31,AAG
 Sparrow, Chipping H-BCP(20)10,PWH
 Sparrow, Field G-HI(1)25,RU
 Sparrow, Vesper 4/26
 Sparrow, Savannah 12/646
 Sparrow, Seaside J-SR(1)31,AAG
 Sparrow, Song 4/32
 Sparrow, Lincolns C-(1)4,UD; G-(2)31,HPR; H-(3)10,PWH
 Sparrow, Swamp 5/18
 Sparrow, Wht-thrt 5/138
 Sparrow, Wht-crn C-(1)4,UD; H-(30)10,PWH
 Blackbird, Red-wg 13/5146
 Meadowlark, East 11/344
 Blackbird, Rusty H-BCP(4)10,BH
 Grackle, Gr-tail 12/421
 Grackle, Bt-tail 7/1355
 Grackle, Common 5/341
 Cowbird, Brn-head 9/356
 Oriole, Orchard C-(1)31,DR; J-SW(5)31,AAG
 Siskin, Pine H-BCP(2)10,PWH
 Goldfinch, Amer B-(6)4,DR; C-(2)11,DR
 Sparrow, House 14/204

Observers for March 1990

AG=Lynn Aldrich & Peter Gottschling; AAG= OG field trip led by MA & AG; DR=Don & Lee Richardson; GC=Gene Calvert; HS=Bob Honig & Julie Starr; HPR=Bob Honig, Julie Pearce, Julia Ricketts, Trevor Ricketts & Gerrit Dablaing; JMC=Jim McGeough; MA=Mike Austin; NP=Noel Pettingell; PWH=Piney Woods field trip lead by Bob Honig; RU=Richard Uzar; TPF=Tony & Phyllis Frank; UD = RU & Jim Day.

UTC County Codes

B=Brazoria; C=Chambers; F=Fort Bend; G=Galveston; H=Harris; J=Jefferson; W=Waller; O=Offshore; U=UTC.

Optional location codes for March, 1990

AW=Anahuac NWR; BCP=Bear Creek Park; BF=Bolivar Flats; CP=Challenger 7 Park; D=Davis Estates Rd; EB=East Beach; HI=High Island; KP=Kemper Park; OO=Oryx(Sun) Oil Fields; SLP=San Luis Pass; SR=Sea Rim SP; SW=Sabine Woods; W=Webster.

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES - MAR., 1990

White-rumped Sandpiper 3-3-90 Peter Gottschling

(UTC checklist status - No previous March records)
 Seen on a beach of intercoastal canal at end of the road. A slim long bodied, long winged sandpiper with a gray head contrasting with brownish wings. The bird showed a white rump several times before flying. It was 1/3 smaller than the Lesser Yellow-legs next to it. We never saw the front of this bird but the flanks and belly had no buff or spots or streaking. Other observer was Lynn Aldrich.

Purple Sandpiper 3-4-90 Don Richardson

(UTC checklist status - Very Rare in March)
 This was the Purple Sandpiper which has been present at the Quintana Jetty all winter.

Mourning Warbler 3-4-90 Don Richardson

(UTC checklist status - New early spring date)
 The bird was sighted at 1:30 PM for 15 seconds in full sun at Big Slough in Brazoria County. The bird was seen through Zeiss 10x40 binocs at a distance of 7 meters. It was on the North side of the road in some brush located 15 meters west of the cattle guard on the road to the cemetery. The bird was a male in breeding plumage. His head was totally hooded in a very dark gray and the throat was blacker than the rest of the hood. His bill and eye were both dark and there was no white anywhere near the eye. His back, wings, and entire tail were dark olive and there were no wingbars at all. The underside was yellow from where the black stopped at mid breast back to and including the undertail coverts. He did not vocalize and the legs and feet were not seen. The bird was reacting to the sound of a whistled Eastern Screech-Owl. He was working his way upward from near the ground and had reached about 1 to 1.5 meters when he was spotted. He was clearly searching for the Screech-Owl but was not overly excited. He was visible for about 15 to 20 seconds then dove to the ground and was not seen again.

Broad-winged Hawk 3-8-90 Noel Pettingell

(UTC checklist status - Very Rare, first week of March)
 Two migrants seen in flight along Bay Area Blvd east of Gulf Freeway (Baybrook Mall Area in SE Harris Co) at about 11:50 AM. Following field marks noted without binoculars but in good light and at close range (80-100 ft altitude): Chunky buteos with black and white tail bands and white underwings with black tips and trailing edges. Wings and tail not as long in comparison with Red-shouldered and lacked reddish wing linings and underparts of Red-shouldered.

Glossy Ibis 3-18-90 Mike Austin

(UTC checklist status - Vagrant on UTC)
 Seen at Anahuac NWR at 8:20 AM in excellent light (1 hr 45 min after sunrise with full sun behind observer) with 50x Questar at 50 yds for 10 minutes. The habitat was a shallow, marshy freshwater pond on west side of Anahuac entrance road, about 1/4 mile south of junction with Shovelers Pond spur road feeding side-by-side with 2 breeding-plumaged White-faced Ibis. Head was chestnut. Bill was sickle-shaped, decurved gray. Dark bluish gray skin in loreal area. Thin whitish border above passing above base of culmen and thin whitish inferior border of facial skin in malar area. White border did not pass behind dark brown eye. Adjacent White-faced Ibis had distinctly red eye (a field mark consistently noted on hundreds of White-faced Ibis which I have observed in the Questar, often at a greater distance & under poorer lighting conditions). Red facial skin and a white border around the facial skin which passed behind eye. The legs were bluish-gray with distinctly red skin around tarsal joints. Underparts and back were rich chestnut, concolor with head. Folded wings scapulars had rich chestnut concolor with back. Greater coverts were glossed with green, lesser with purple. I have looked for this species for 1 1/2 years in Jefferson, Chambers & Galveston Counties since the numerous reports in 1988-89. Some may have been missed because of the lack of well-defined ID criteria, but I still feel its a rare bird in E. Texas.

Glossy Ibis 3-31-90 Peter Gottschling

(UTC checklist status - Vagrant on UTC)
 Seen at Anahuac NWR at 9:30 AM in ponds along "Cross Road". Dark ibis in breeding plumage. Blue loreal skin bordered above and below in white to the eye but not behind the eye. Greenish legs with pink knees. All these marks are diagnostic. Glossy Ibis has pink skin between eye & bill and white goes around the eye with no breaks. Other observers were Mike Austin, Lynn Aldrich and OG field trip group.

Lesser Black-backed Gull 3-31-90 Peter Gottschling
(UTC checklist status - Vagrant on UTC)
Large gull almost size of Herring. Dark charcoal mantle and wing tips. White head and tail. Seen at Jefferson County line. Other observers were Mike Austin, Lynn Aldrich and OG field trip group.

Cave Swallows 3-31-90 Peter Gottschling
(UTC checklist status - Listed as accidental)
Sea Rim Marsh unit boat house like last year. Square tailed swallows with buffy underparts and rump. Red throat and upper breast. Red forehead and tan nape forming collar. Brown wings, back, head and tail. Other observers were Mike Austin, Lynn Aldrich and OG field trip group.

Black-capped Vireo 3-31-90 Gene Calvert
(UTC checklist status -Not listed on May 1989 checklist)
Seen in Boy Scout Woods, High Island, Tx at 2:35 PM. In the tree just north of the old tin barn, feeding with several solitary and Yellow-throated Vireos. The rains had stopped, the sun came out, the wind died down and the birds began to feed again. The Black-capped vireo flew into the tree and landed within five feet of me. Fed back and forth from about 5 feet to about 25 feet for about five minutes. I had time to check Birds of North America book three times while the bird was in easy view. The bird was in breeding plumage with a red eye, white eye rings (spectacles) and a black head. The head was much, much darker (it was black) than that of the Solitary Vireos.

Brown Booby 3-31-90 Tony & Phyllis Frank
(UTC checklist status - Vagrant on UTC)
Six adults seen about one mile off coast from Freeport Jetties at 5:50 PM. Seen for 2-3 minutes at 75 yards (first sighting) to when birds were lost on horizon (700 yds) with 10x40 binocs. Light was partly cloudy to sunny. The six large seabirds were flying low over the water. Underneath side was brown from bill area to below neck area (top part of breast) where color abruptly became white through rest of breast. Top of bird was same brown color as underneath side of head, uniform throughout, from head (entire) through tail. Topside color of wing was brown, underside had brown leading edge and trailing edge, white in middle of wing. Birds were definitely Sula shaped. Birds were smaller (but not much) than Northern Gannets that had been observed earlier in day (both at close and far ranges), but definitely larger than Herring Gulls. Birds seemed to have different flight pattern than Gannets. Two first year N. Gannets and one 2nd year Gannet had been observed earlier in day under same type of lightings. On 1st year Gannets, the back coloration was different than these brown boobies; the Gannets were brown with faint white splotches mixed in and the Boobies were uniform brown over entire back. Also tail of 1st year Gannet had noticeable white in it, whereas these Boobies did not. On 2nd year Gannet, the head and neck were white (except for yellow cap) and back was mostly white, while wings and tail were still brown and white. The Boobies were flying 4 abreast with other two above. Non-adult Gannets were eliminated due to above observations. Non-adult Masked Boobies were eliminated due to no white collar on bird part of neck. 98% sure of ID. Did not get bill color which would have definitely eliminated N. Gannets.

CORRECTION

A typing error was made in the article by Noel Pettingell, "1989 H.A.S. Birdathon," in the March, 1990 Spoonbill. In the second paragraph the "Bird Alerts" team totaled 204 species, a new Texas Big Day record. The previous record was 202, not, of course, 204 as printed, or the team would only have equaled the record. The editor, Libby Price, has severely chastised the typist, Libby Price. We apologize to Noel and the "Bird Alerts."

THE SPOONBILL STAFF

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WHOOPING CRANE COMMITMENT RENEWED

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service renewed their commitment this year to continue joint efforts on conservation and recovery of the Whooping Crane. The experimental flock in Grays Lake, Idaho, using Sandhill Cranes as foster parents will be suspended, since the young whoopers failed to mate and reproduce. A second flock of captive whoopers was established in November at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and a third is contemplated, to be located in Canada. The Patuxent, Maryland captive flock will be continued. This joint effort over the years has brought the number of whoopers from 16 in the 1940's to over 200 today, a remarkable example of successful cooperation between the wildlife services of two nations.

FOR OG information, checklists, maps, contact Maxine Davis, 10602 Cedarhurst, Houston 77096, 723-8559.

SEND bird sightings for Clearing House to: Clearing House (OG), P.O. Box 271374, Houston TX 77277.

TEXAS RARE Bird Alert Tape, sponsored by Piney Woods Wildlife Society and Houston Audubon Society: (713) 821-2846.

FOR LOCAL nature societies' meetings and field trips call the Audubon Society's "Voice of the Naturalist" tape: 932-1392.

SEND material for Spoonbill to Editor, Libby Price, 3715 Sunset, Houston 77005, 665-1159.

SEND dues, subscriptions and address changes to Jerry Patrick, 814 St. Francis, Houston 77079. Members' annual dues: \$15 (ONC \$5, OG \$10). Spoonbill subscriptions for non-members: \$13.

MINUTES OF OG MEETING APRIL 3, 1990

The Learning Corner began at 7:00 with David Bradford instructing. His theme was "Easy to Identify Spring Migrants." David divided up some of the easier birds into early migrants (first two weeks of April) and late migrants.

Richard Uzar called the meeting to order at 7:30. John Buckman reported on upcoming OG and ONC field trips. Jerry Patrick made the Treasurer's report available in writing on the back table. He also provided a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in a mid-week birding trip in April. This informal trip will be held on a day when a fallout at High Island is possible.

Margaret Anderson donated some birding books to any OG members who want them. New Clearing House Editors Tony and Phyllis Frank were introduced. Jim Day has donated a "Field Guide to Birds of Southern Africa" to the library.

Don Richardson announced that pamphlets on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker were available on the back table; a survey is being conducted to determine if it has become extinct. Similarly, an Eskimo Curlew advisory team has been formed to document any current sightings of this bird, which might be delisted.

Ed Rozenburg announced plans for Earth Day. The manager of San Jacinto State Park asked for volunteers to conduct bird walks for their Earth Day celebration. Brazos Bend SP Earth Day events on April 22 were announced.

Richard Uzar asked for volunteers to work on the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas Project; he needs people to gather information in uncensused areas. He also wants to find OG members who would like to note hawk movements in the spring.

Richard thanked Ellen Red and Laura Singleton for planting a live oak tree at Audubon Woods in High Island in memory of Marion Taylor. An OG picnic on June 9 was announced. (See Coming Events)

Dr. Warren Pulich, professor of Ornithology at the University of Dallas, was the evening's speaker. He spoke of his years of study of the birds of North Central Texas. Dr. Pulich stressed the importance of leaving documentation of bird populations to posterity, and noted the value of egg collections from the turn of the century. Some of the species found in North Central Texas at that time are not there now. He said that bird banding, collecting skins of dead birds and photography are other good ways to document current populations. Dr. Pulich's book, "Birds of North Central Texas," is available through the OG for \$16.95; contact Don Richardson for a copy to add to your library.

Kathy DeFord, Secretary

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