



The SPOONBILL

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Houston, Texas, Libby Price, Editor; Ellen Red, Asst. Editor

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Coming Events

Tuesday, Jan. 3: Deadline for Spoonbill material and for Clearing House reports.

Thursday, Jan. 5: Ornithology Group meeting at Bayou Manor, 4141 S. Braeswood, at 7:30 p.m. David Dauphin will present a program on owls.

Thursday, Jan. 12: Outdoor Nature Club meeting at the Houston Arboretum at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 14: Ornithology Group field trip. Our first January field trip will be to West Harris and Waller Counties. The leader is to be Jim Morgan. Meet at Warren Lake at 7:30 a.m. for a full day of birding. Bring a lunch, comfortable shoes, insect repellent and your enthusiasm. These areas are particularly good for sparrows and waterfowl, but lots of other birds should be seen as well. The area is largely rural so facilities are scarce; we'll do the best we can for rest stops. For more information call Don or Lee Richardson (661-1365).

Saturday-Sunday, Jan. 28-29: Ornithology Group field trip. Our second January field trip will be to Rockport and vicinity. The leaders will be Jerry and Nancy Patrick. Meet on the 28th at 7:30 p.m. in the Walmart parking lot on Hwy 35 in Rockport. We'll bird near that area in the morning. Meet again at 1:00 p.m. in front of the Sand Dollar pavilion on Fulton Beach Rd. to board the "Skimmer" for an afternoon of birding by boat. We should have close looks at the endangered Whooping Crane plus lots of other water birds. Sunday morning is optional birding with Jerry and Nancy. For information about motels and reservations for the boat trip call Don and Lee Richardson at 661-1365.

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! I hope everyone was able to participate in at least one Christmas Count. Let's look forward to a great birding year.

It is human nature to want to discuss new and exciting things, but overlook the mundane. This attitude is found in birding as well. Most warblers, eagles and Tundra Swans make their way into the Clearing House. The House Sparrows, starlings, mockingbirds and Laughing Gulls are overlooked or left off our reports.

The information in the Clearing House can be a valuable record for tracing population trends, resident species and distribution along the UTC. We can skew the data by underreporting common birds. It may take a little longer to write down our less glamorous sightings. Remember, this data may be of significant value in bird management for our children and grandchildren.

We have recorded data going back to the late 1800's that is being used today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife and our own Checklist Committee. Many OG members remember 10 to 15 years ago when shorebirds were two to four times more common than today. The most common waterfowl in Galveston Bay at the turn of the century was the Whistling Swan. These once common birds were indicators of problems in their habitat from Canada to Central America, but since they were "common" they were taken for granted.

A constant downward trend in populations of common birds should be an alarm signal that there is a problem, and that we need to be more observant and involved in the management of our environment. We are all guilty. If we all kept yard lists we could probably follow trends from the changes in our neighborhood environments. Remember the old stories of the Passenger Pigeons blackening the sky for days?

Ed Rozenburg, Chairman

Noel's Niche Looking Back

.....20 YEARS AGO/FROM DEC. 1968 SPOONBILL

Minutes of the OG Meeting on December 7, 1968

"A second item brought up by David Marrack was that for about 5 years there had been discussion of the desirability of forming a branch of the National Audubon Society in Houston. It is felt that the use of a nationally known name will be advantageous in furthering conservation and solving pollution problems. The idea was proposed to the Board of the Outdoor Nature Club with the idea that the ONC would be the nucleus of the group. The Board felt that there was room for two groups in this area and the Committee to form an Audubon Branch has made plans for an organizational meeting on February 5. Further details will be in the Spoonbill and the Outdoor Nature Club newsletter. Mr. Charles Calison, Executive Vice-President of the National Audubon Society will be the speaker. Mr. John Spinks who is the Southwest Regional Representative of the Audubon Society will also attend. Wally Mebane expressed the opinion that he felt it was a good thing that a branch was being formed. There was a discussion of the membership. Those who are already members of the Audubon Society will be asked to affiliate with the Houston Audubon Society when their membership comes due. Pat Ridge commented that John Spinks was at the TOS Meeting in Brownsville and knew that the Houston group would look forward to meeting and working with him."

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.

UTC RARE Bird Alert Tape, sponsored by Piney Woods Wildlife Society: 821-2846.

FOR LOCAL nature societies' meetings and field trips call the Audubon Society's "Voice of the Naturalist" tape: 932-1639.

LONE STAR Rare Bird Tape, sponsored by Audubon Society. In 713 area call 747-8826. Out of town call 1-800-TBT-BIRD. When in town do NOT call the 800 number, please - it costs!

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.

HAS BIRDATHON 1988

by Noel Pettingell

The 4th Annual HAS Birdathon took place on April 23 and 24 with a total of 259 species being recorded by 30 participants in 9 teams. A new record high of 201 species was found by a single team along a route of over 500 car miles. Four years ago there were only 13 participants in 3 teams, while last year 21 participants in 6 teams recorded 218 species.

Weather on Day 1, 1988 was cloudy with drizzle in the morning, clearing in the afternoon, temperatures at Houston ranging from 70 to 88 degrees. On Day 2, 1988 it was clear and windy (W-SW 5-15 mph) with temperatures ranging from 56 degrees (Houston) to 87 degrees (Houston and Beaumont).

Funds raised by the 1988 Birdathon were equally donated to National Audubon Society Sanctuaries in Texas and the NAS Southwest Regional Office. There were nine participating teams, whose routes and sightings are summarized below.

Day 1, Saturday, April 23

185 species were found by Fred Collins, Bob Honig, Randy Pinkston and Peter Vennema--the "Collins Core Dump" team. 450 car miles were logged along a route including the following 8 counties: Ft. Bend, Harris, Waller, Liberty, Jefferson, Hardin, Chambers and Galveston. Exclusive species (i.e. not found by any other team) were Common Ground-Dove, Yellow-throated Warbler and Rufous-sided Towhee. A total of 22 warbler species were recorded.

172 species was the team total of Marilyn Crane, Ellen Red and John Buckman within a 4-county area which included Harris, Southwest Liberty (Dayton area), Chambers and Galveston (High Island to Bolivar Flats). Exclusive species were Song Sparrow, Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch, and 19 warbler species were found.

114 species were identified by the team of Bill Klem, Steve Carroll, Beth Collins, Karen and Robin Meredith and Carol Relihan in Chambers Co. (Lake Charlotte to Anahuac NWR) and Galveston Co. (High Island to W. Galveston I.). 12 kinds of warblers were listed, and although none of the 114 species were exclusive, no other teams found the Green-winged Teal on Day 1, while only two teams were able to find it on Day 2.

99 species were found by Jay Coble and Jean Reese between Lufkin and High Island, a route that included Angelina, Tyler, Hardin, Jefferson, Chambers and Galveston counties. The list included 19 warbler species and one near-exclusive, the Black-billed Cuckoo, seen by only two other teams.

32 species were identified by Dolores Sandling on Galveston Island, where she could both contribute to the Birdathon as well as improve her identification skills as a neophyte birder.

Day 2, Sunday, April 24

201 species by the Piney Woods Wildlife Society "Gastphalts" was a new record high for any 1985-1988 HAS Birdathon team. The 1988 participants were Mike Austin, James Beard, Carol Bookout (200 species each), and Stephen Gast (197 species). They

traveled an incredible 508.4 car miles between midnight and 8:10 p.m. in West Harris, East Waller, Hardin, Jefferson, Chambers and Galveston counties. The "Gastphalts" species total resulted in the highest total amount pledged to any single team in the two-day Birdathon as well as the longest list of exclusives and warblers (25). The following 13 species and 1 hybrid were not recorded by any of the other 8 teams: Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Virginia Rail, Bonaparte's Gull, Whip-poor-will, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Fish Crow, House Wren, (Lawrence's Warbler, hybrid), Black-throated Blue Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Bachman's Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow and Vesper Sparrow,

193 species was the total for "The Miller Theater Motmots," consisting of P. D. Hulce, Mark Scheuerman, Steve Schultz and Kent Taylor. The team's route included the counties of W. Harris, Waller, Austin, Colorado (Attwater NWR), Chambers, Galveston (High Island, Bolivar Pen. and Texas City Dike) and E. Harris. The team found 19 warbler species and the following 9 exclusives: N. Pintail, Cinnamon Teal, Lesser Scaup, Cooper's Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Greater Prairie Chicken, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Sprague's Pipit and Western Meadowlark.

191 species were found by Mark Brown (191), Tom Michael (186), and Rob Thacker (186) in Galveston Co. (Galveston I., Bolivar Pen., High Island), Chambers Co. (Anahuac NWR to Lake Charlotte), and SW. Liberty Co. (Moss Bluff), a route totaling 181 car miles. 22 kinds of warblers were identified and the following 6 exclusive species: Pacific (Arctic) Loon, Eared Grebe, GLOSSY IBIS at Shoveler Pond, Anahuac NWR (present since March 12)--the best bird of the 1988 Birdathon, Hooded Merganser (9 at Lake Charlotte), Ring-necked Pheasant (Pear Orchard Rd., E. Chambers Co.) and Blackpoll Warbler.

166 species were listed by the Ornithology Group's "OG Oglers" team, Stennie Meadors, Noel Pettingell, and Dottie Praus, along a route including the following counties: Chambers, SW Liberty, Galveston (High Island to Port Bolivar and return to High Island) and SE Harris. Warblers totaled 16 species and the team had 3 exclusives: Least Bittern, Mississippi Kite and Burrowing Owl (at High Island since April 16).

A total of 32 warblers were recorded by the 1988 Birdathon teams. Only one regular species--Canada--was missed, as it was in 1987 as well. Although it was found April 23 during the OG field trip, only 7 were reported for the entire month. Only 4 of the 218 species recorded by the 6 Birdathon teams in 1987 were missed in 1988: Crested Caracara, Black-legged Kittiwake, N. Flicker and Bell's Vireo.

RESOURCES CHAIRMAN NEEDED

For the last few meetings there has been no library present to borrow from. We badly need a volunteer for the job of Resources Chairman. It is perhaps the least time-consuming job in the OG. Library training is unnecessary; only common sense and the willingness to take charge of the books are required. Among those who do not have a large birding library surely there is one who will call Ed Rozenburg and volunteer, and, incidentally, have full run of the library as well!

WHOOPIING CRANE UPDATE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service reported that about 26 Whooping Crane chicks were produced at Wood Buffalo National Park in the Canadian Northwest Territories, and that 20 to 22 made it to fledging stage in August of this year. Biologists were hoping for a flight of 145 cranes to Aransas, including the young birds.

On December 14 your editor called Aransas NWR to find out how many had completed the trip. So far only 136 had arrived, 117 adults and 19 immatures. The last group arrived December 13, and it is doubtful whether any more will come this late in the year.

There are presently 41 in the captive breeding program at Patuxent, Maryland, one each at two other refuges and 15 to 16 at Bosque del Apache NWR. Unfortunately none of the last group seem to be breeding. A few males have tried to establish breeding territories in the north, but the problem is that they have not established pair bonds that would make for successful breeding. In winter they are scattered on the refuge. A few birds may be wintering singly elsewhere, but the total known on refuges seems to be about 195--a whole lot better than the 16 that survived in the wild 47 years ago, but short of the 200+ that was hoped for. Let us hope that some are just late to arrive at Aransas. Be sure to report any that you may see away from the refuge.

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WEEKEND IN THE NORTH WOODS

by Randy Pinkston

Recently I spent a month at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. While there I took the weekend of October 29 and 30 to drive eight hours north to Duluth, Minnesota, on the north shore of Lake Superior. In 18 hours of birding I identified 37 species of birds, 6 of them lifers.

"Boreal" is the dendrologists' term for the north woods. They are a beautiful and interesting assortment of both coniferous and deciduous trees. Cone-bearers include White Pine, Tamarack, Black and White Spruce, Hemlock and Balsam Fir. Broad-leaved species include aspens, birches, Sugar Maple and Red Oak.

It was in the low teens and a light snow fell as I set out early my first morning to the general area known as the Sax-Zim bog. A bog is a forest where the soil is very moist, even flooded, favoring the growth of spruce, tamaracks and aspens. It was all solid ice in October. The first birds I saw at dawn were American Tree Sparrows. Black-capped Chickadees called now and then, and that was about it until I walked a snowmobile trail, flushing a pair of Sharp-tailed Grouse.

As the day warmed up into the 30's I noticed an occasional buteo soaring over the bog. Except for one Red-tail, they were all Rough-legs--eight of them in all, including three dark-phase birds. Rough-legged Hawks hovering over a spruce bog was everything it meant to be birding in the boreal forest!

Of course, my hope in being in the bog at dawn was to see the Great Gray Owl or Northern Hawk-Owl, both of which I missed. As it turned out I was a little early this year for these and many other winter species. As I was leaving the bog I spotted a flock of Snow Buntings flying over a plowed field. These are beautiful birds, flashing bold black and white even in winter plumage. Surprising to me was their large size compared to Lark Buntings. When I saw them I thought of the one Tony Gallucci found on the Lake Livingston Dam a few years back.

Duluth is the home of Hawk Ridge, where local expert Kim Eckert claims one can see more hawks than at famous Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania--some 50,000 raptors each fall. Here and along the bluffs of Lake Superior's northern shore I counted a half-dozen Bald Eagles, one Golden Eagle and a few dozen Red-tails.

My second day I found a jewel of a spot on Lake Superior called Stoney Point, ten miles north of Duluth. Large flocks of Snow Buntings were common along the highway shoulder on my way there. At the point my first birds were White-winged Crossbills, a spruce-top full. They entertained me in the same tree for an hour, probing cones upside down. I also saw hundreds of Bohemian Waxwings come and go at Stoney Point. Bohemian is the most likely waxwing in Northern Minnesota at this time and you have to search hard for the smaller Cedars. I found only two.

Boreal Chickadee was another of my targets there. I was tired of looking and listening to flock after flock of Black-caps. Finally my luck improved. First I heard the distinct buzzy call notes, and moments later spotted the Boreal. Overall it is

dingier than the clean-cut Black-capped. Close study reveals the brown cap and bright strip of rufous down the sides. Before leaving Stoney Point I saw the large Northern Shrike.

During my brief stay I was not able to visit all of Duluth's birding treasures. The local landfill is a gold mine for gulls. Recent records have included Iceland and Ivory. Lake Superior itself hosts gulls also, and many waterfowl, including American Black Ducks, all three scoters, Oldsquaws, and occasional eiders and Harlequin Ducks. Anyone anticipating some birding time around Duluth should purchase Kim Eckert's A Birding Guide to Minnesota. It is very strong on where to go to find what.

LANDOWNER HELP FOR DUCKS AND GEESE News Release from U.S. Fish & Wildlife

An innovative project on the rice prairie country near Houston, Texas is generating important private landowner support for waterfowl. Local landowners and hunting outfitters have joined with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Clear Lake Office of Ecological Services, to improve waterfowl habitat in the rice prairie. Outfitters and landowners Joe Broussard of Broussard Farm, Inc., Burton Moore, and Bob Salyer of the Devers area, and Harold Freeman and Larry Gore in the Katy area have entered into cooperative agreements with the USFWS to flood rice stubble to improve and protect waterfowl roosts during this fall and winter.

These privately owned lands are presently in rice cultivation that attract large numbers of wintering waterfowl each fall. Pintails, Blue-winged Teal, Mallards and Snow Geese, as well as thousands of shorebirds and other migratory birds extensively use the area. After the crops are harvested, the lands are leased to hunting outfitters for the waterfowl hunting seasons.

Through the cooperative lease agreements, easements are established whereby the landowner will flood rice stubble for waterfowl roost sites. Flooded areas will be approximately 50 acres in size with 100 yard buffer zones to minimize disturbance. These roost sites will be closed to hunting. Traditionally, some rice stubble fields are flooded for hunting, but are drained at the end of the hunting season. The easement areas, however, will remain flooded into March, providing continued feeding and roosting areas for waterfowl. This will help reduce stress on the birds prior to their return to nesting grounds in the...prairies of the U.S. and Canada.

The landowners and outfitters will provide over 75% of the costs which includes construction of dikes and posting. The USFWS will help defray the cost of pumping water for flooding. The agency will also provide signs closing the roosts to hunting. Additional agreements are expected to be finalized in the near future. For less than \$3000, 300 acres of previously unavailable wetlands will be provided for wildlife use from October 1 to March 1, 1989. At the end of the period, the project will be evaluated and future leasing will be considered. If

successful, the USFWS would like to see some 20 leases in the area to help wildlife.

[Even before the recent drought the loss of nesting areas] and degradation of migration and wintering habitat have contributed to long-term downward trends in some duck populations. [At the October meeting we learned a lot about the conditions on northern prairies.]

Recognizing this, the Canadian Minister of Environment and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior developed the North American Waterfowl Plan. This plan provides a framework for waterfowl conservation and management efforts in most of North America, with Mexico recently joining the effort. It is a broad approach extending over 15 years to the year 2000, with review and updating at 5-year intervals. The first review will be in 1990.

The Gulf Coast of Texas is included in the one of six critical waterfowl areas identified through the North America Waterfowl Plan, the Gulf Coast Joint Venture. Over 1 million ducks and some 500,000 geese utilize the coastal marshes and prairie rice-lands of Texas and Louisiana. Although these easement areas are relatively small, the overall benefits could be important in terms of reducing stress on wintering waterfowl so they can return north to their nesting grounds in the spring. The hunting outfitters recognize the importance of protected roost sites to conserve waterfowl. The support for such projects by private landowners demonstrates a willingness to enhance wetlands for wildlife in conjunction with traditional farming methods.

Clearing House - NOVEMBER, 1988

November Editor - Wally Gardner

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made on the upper Texas Coast. How to read the clearing house: County/Optional Location Code> (# birds seen)date, observer. Common, widely distributed species on the UTC during the reported month are listed as follows: number of reports, (lowest # - highest #; total # of individuals seen). Noteworthy sightings will be underlined (very rare on date), capitalized (vagrant or no previous sighting on date), or underlined and capitalized (no previous sighting on UTC). Birds with very rare, vagrant, accidental or no status on the checklist at the date of sighting require notes. However, only those notes on sightings that will affect the checklist will be published (ie notes on very rare at date of sighting will not be published).

Loon, Common: G-(1)19,AG
Grebe, Pied-billed: 5 reports (7-40;90)
Pelican, American White: 7 reports (1-250;700)
Pelican, Brown: C-(11)5,RU; (5)30,DS; G-(3)13,RU;
(150)13,AC
Cormorant, Double-crested: 8 reports (6-45;203)
Cormorant, Olivaceous: G-(1)13,RU; (3)13,AC; (5)19,AG
Anhinga: F-(3)5,DR
Bittern, American: C-(1)13,AC
Heron, Great Blue: 11 reports (3-30;147)
Egret Great: 10 reports (2-40;130)
Egret, Snowy: 10 reports (1-20;65)
Heron, Little Blue: 4 reports (2-8;28)
Heron, Tricolored: 5 reports (1-5;16)
Egret, Reddish: G-(1)13,RU; (1)29,JJH
Egret, Cattle: 6 reports (10-400;710)
Heron, Green-backed: F-(1)5,DR
Night-Heron, Black-crowned: C/LC-(26)27,RU; H-(10)6;JM;
(30)21,JM
Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned: H-(2)11,PM
Ibis, White: 9 reports (1-60;131)
Ibis, White-faced: 7 reports (2-150;210)
Spoonbill, Roseate: G-(10)13,RU; (30)19,AG; (21)29,JJH;
W-(2)11,JM
Whistling-Duck, Black Bellied: H-(300)6,JM
Goose, Greater White-fronted: 8 reports (12-
10,000;19,415)
Goose, Snow: 11 reports (10-15,000;39,913)
Goose, Ross': H-(3)5,AG; (2)26,RU; W-(2)21,JM
Teal, Green-winged: 4 reports (16-3000;3846)
Duck, Mottled: 6 reports (6-65;655)
Mallard: 5 reports (15-300;655)
Pintail, Northern: 4 reports (8-800;1068)
Teal, Blue-winged: 4 reports (3-40;77)
Shoveler, Northern: 8 reports (4-200;329)
Gadwall: 7 reports (1-200;270)
Wigeon, American: 7 reports (1-200;293)
Canvasback: F-(1)5,DR; G-(1)29,JJH; W-(4)6,JM
Duck, Ring-necked: B-(30)12,AG; G-(2)29,JJH; H-
(21)21,JM; W-(1)6,JM
Scaup, Lesser: F-(2)5,DR; G-(8)19,AG; H-(25)21,JM; J-
(1)5,RU
Bufflehead: F-(3)5,DR; G-(6)19,AG; W-(1)21,JM
Merganser, Hooded: H-(1)21,JM
Merganser, Red-breasted: G-(2)19,AG
Duck, Ruddy: F-(65)5,DR; G-(80)19,AG; W-(60)6,JM; U-
(20)21,JM
Vulture, Black: 4 reports (10-75;114)
Vulture, Turkey: 6 reports (1-300;704)
Osprey: C/LC-(1)27,RU
Kite, Black-shouldered: B-(6)12,AG; C-(3)5,RU;
(3)13,AC; G-(3)13,RU
Kite, Mississippi: H-(2)4,PM
Eagle, Bald: H-(1)26,RU; W-(2)21,JM
Harrier, Northern: 10 reports (2-150;393)
Hawk, Sharp-shinned: 5 reports (1-2;6)
Hawk, Cooper's: 5 reports (1-2;6)
Hawk, Red-shouldered: 6-reports (1-10;28)
Hawk, Broad-winged: H-(1)3,PM; (1)24,PM
Hawk, Swainson's: C-(1)5,RU; F-(1)5,DR; J-(1)11,RU
Hawk, White-tailed: W-(1)6,JM; (1)21,JM
Hawk, Red-tailed: 9 reports (2-250;386)
HAWK, FERRUGINOUS: W-(1)11,JM
Caracara, Crested: G-(3)11,PG; W-(5)6,JM; U-(5)5,JM;
(11)21,JM
Kestrel, American: 13 reports (2-60;213)
Merlin: G-(1)20,PG
Falcon, Peregrine: C-(1)27,RU
Bobwhite, Northern: F-(8)5,DR; U-(30)5,AG

Rail, Clapper: C-(1)5,RU
 Moorhen, Common: 3 reports (2-280;92)
 Coot, American: 4 reports (30-100;240)
 Crane, Sandhill: F-(8)5,DR; H-(1)5,AG; U-(105)6,JM
 Plover, Black-bellied: 5 reports (2-15;28)
 Plover, Wilson's: G-(5)11,AC
 Plover, Semipalmated: C-(5)11,RU; G-(1)29,JJH
 Plover, Piping: C-(5)5,RU; F-(2)5,DR; G-(20)13,AC
 Killdeer: 10 reports (2-1500;2520)
 Oystercatcher, American: C-(2)5,RU
 Stilt, Black-necked: F-(6)5,DR; G-(2)13,AC
 Avocet, American: 5 reports (2-1800;1961)
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 8 reports (1-300;349)
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: 5 reports (1-20;34)
 Willet: 5 reports (1-15;32)
 Sandpiper, Spotted: C-(1)27,RU; G-(1)29,JJH
 Curlew, Long-billed: G-(15)13,AC; J-(1)5,RU; W-(14)21,JM
 Godwit, Hudsonian: C-(5)5,RU
 Godwit, Marbled: G-(3)13,RU; (1)134,AC
 Sanderling: 2 reports (8-60;68)
 Sandpiper, Western: 8 reports (8-125;243)
 Sandpiper, Least: 4 Reports (6-75;116)
 Dunlin: 6 reports (6-600;868)
 Sandpiper, Stilt: G-(1)13,AC
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: 3 reports (2-50;72)
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: 6 reports (11-300;496)
 Snipe, Common: 5 reports (10-80;202)
 Gull, Laughing: 6 reports (6-1000;2116)
 Gull, Franklin's: F-(1)5,DR
 Gull, Ring-billed: 3 reports (2-30;102)
 Gull, Herring: 3 reports (1-15;18)
 Tern, Gull-billed: G-(1)13,RU
 Tern, Caspian: 4 reports (1-100;108)
 Tern, Royal: 4 reports (2-400;424)
 Tern, Sandwich: G-(2)13,AC
 Tern, Forster's: 6 reports (1-30;59)
 Skimmer, Black: C-(400)5,RU
 Dove, Rock: 9 reports (12-65;307)
 Dove, White-winged: G-(60)29,JJH
 Dove, Mourning: 13 reports (1-600;882)
 Dove, Inca: 8 reports (1-40;56)
 Parakeet, Monk: H-(13)12,PM; (6)17,PM
 Barn-Owl, Common: H-(1)6,JM
 Screech-Owl, Eastern: W-(1)6,JM
 Owl, Great-horned: H-(1)21,JM
 Owl, Barred: F-(1)5,DR
 Nighthawk, Common: H-(1)9,AG
 Kingfisher, Belted: 9 reports (1-5;27)
 Woodpecker, Red-headed: G-(1)29,JJH; W-(1)21,JM
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 6 reports (1-10;24)
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: 4 reports (1-3;8)
 Woodpecker, downy: 6 reports (1-12;126)
 Flicker, Northern: 8 reports (1-20;42)
 Woodpecker, Pileated: C-(1)13,AC; F-(1)5,DR
 Wood-Peeeee, Eastern: G-(1)29,JJH
 Phoebe, Eastern: 7 reports (1-80;186)
 Flycatcher, Vermillion: F-(2)5,DR
KINGBIRD, CASSIN'S: H-(1)5,AG
 Kingbird, Western: G-(1)13,RU
 Kingbird, Eastern: H-(1)5,AG
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: 6 reports (1-3;11)
 Lark, Horned: G-(5)13,AC
 Swallow, Tree: 4 reports (2-150;212)
 Swallow, Barn: B-(10)12,AG; W-(1)6,JM
 Jay, Blue: 8 reports (1-25;133)
 Crow, American: 6 reports (8-300;848)
 Chickadee, Carolina: 6 reports (3-30;123)
 Titmouse, tufted: 5 reports (8-20;81)
 Creeper, Brown: C-(2)27,RU; W-(1)6,JM; (2)21,JM
 Wren, Carolina: C-(1)5,RU; F-(1)5,DR; W-(6)6,JM
 Wren, Bewick's: W-(6)6,JM; (4)21,JM
 Wren, House: 4 reports (1-3;8)
 Wren, Sedge: 4 reports (1-10;14)
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: 5 reports (30-10;32)
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 8 reports (1-60;153)
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 4 reports (1-3;7)
 Bluebird, Eastern: H-(25)5,AG; W-(6)6,JM; (16)21,JM
 Thrush, Gray-cheeked: G-(4)13,AC
 Thrush, Hermit: C-(3)27,RU; F-(1)5,RU; W-(3)6,JM
 Robin, American: 6 reports (1-30;37)
 Catbird, Gray: G-(1)13,AC; (1)29,JJH
 Mockingbird, Northern: 12 reports (1-80;222)
 Thrasher, Brown: 5 reports (1-40;87)
 Pipit, Water: H-(1)5,AG; W-(15)21,JM; U-(4)6,JM
 Waxwing, Cedar: H-(2)5,AG
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 11 reports (1-50;165)
 Starling, European: 11 reports (8-200;986)
 Vireo, Solitary: 4 reports (1-4;11)
 Vireo, Yellow-throated: C-(1)5,RU
 Vireo, Red-eyed: G-(1)13,AG

Warbler, Orange-crowned: 7 reports (1-12;34)
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped: 10 reports (1-120;357)
 Warbler, Black-throated-green: H-(1)20,FG
 Warbler, Pine: 5 reports (1-30;41)
 Warbler, Palm: C-(1)5,RU
 Warbler, Black & White: G-(1)13,AC
Redstart, American: G-(3)13,AC
 Yellowthroat, Common: C-(4)13,AC; (1)27,RU
 Tanager, Summer: H-(1)5,AG
 Cardinal, Northern: 8 reports (3-300;497)
 Bunting, Indigo: C-(1)13,AC
 Sparrow, Chipping: H-(1)5,AG; U-(3)21,AG
 Sparrow, Field: H-(4)5,AG; U-(14)21,JM
 Sparrow, Vesper: 4 reports (4-75;159)
 Sparrow, Lark: G-(2)29,JJH
 Sparrow, Savannah: 6 reports (10-250;790)
 Sparrow, Le Conte's: B-(6)12,AG; C-(3)13,AC
 Sparrow, Seaside: C-(1)13,AC; G-(4)13,RU
 Sparrow, Fox: U-(9)21,JM
 Sparrow, Song: H-(1)5,AG; U-(12)6,JM; (8)21,JM
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: W-(1)6,JM; U-(3)21,JM
 Sparrow, Swamp: C-(1)27,RU; U-(6)21,JM; U-(8)6,JM
 Sparrow, White-throated: 6 reports (3-300;647)
 Sparrow, White-crowned: H-(2)5,AG; W-(12)5,JM; U-(12)21,JM
 Sparrow, Harris': H-(1)21,JM
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 9 reports (4-4000;8280)
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 7 reports (6-250;293)
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 6 reports (18-200;488)
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: C-(12)5,RU
 Grackle, Common: 5 reports (3-500;603)
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 10 reports (25-10000;22810)
 Finch, Purple: H-(1)5,AG
 Goldfinch, American: C/LC-(30)27,RU; U-(35)21,JM
 Sparrow, House: 4 reports (10-30;80)

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES - NOVEMBER, 1988

Cassin's Kingbird 11/6/88 Lynn Aldrich
 One bird observed sitting on telephone wire in Harris County Sharp Road, just before bridge crossing Cypress Creek, on Sunday, November 6, 1988 just before noon. Observed in full sunlight with 7x42 Zeiss binoculars for 3-4 minutes at a distance of approximately 10-15 yards with one other observer (Peter Gottschling).

Bird was sitting in front of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and first caught our attention because of yellow underbelly and somewhat smaller size. Bird had a slight smudgy black band through the eye, square tail which was darker than rest of bird and edged in buffy tan feathering at tip. There was no white observed in the outer tail feathers. Belly was light yellow (not bright), throat was white contrasting with gray chest and head. The bill was somewhat thick but did not appear stout or long. The back was not well observed. The bird foraged from its perch snapping at insects. In flight the tail was clearly visible, outlining the furry tan tip and lack of white in outer tail feathers. Bird did not call.

The three other Kingbirds with whom this bird could be confused were eliminated - the Western kingbird because of the buffy tan tail tip and lack of white outer tail edgings (although the Western Kingbird can show worn tail edgings which can make it appear to lack that edging). The square tail eliminates the Tropical and Couch's, and the distinct white contrasting throat separate it from all three.

I am familiar with this bird from my experiences in California where I birded extensively. I am certain of the identification of this bird. Pictures were taken (by Peter Gottschling) which will be submitted. This description is written from notes taken after sighting.

Ferruginous Hawk 11-6-88 Jim Morgan
 Location: Penick Rd - Waller County
 Observers: Jim Morgan
 Time of day: 1000
 Length of sighting: 2-3 minutes
 Weather Cool, Clear
 Light Condition: Excellent
 Distance: 200 ft perched; 150-300 ft in flight
 Optical Equip: 10x40 zeiss and 22x Bushnell
 Habitat: Open prairie / farm land
 Voice: none
 Size: Large Buteo
 Behavior: Initially perched, took flight and eventually assumed a soaring pattern.
 Description: While perched, had head-on and side quarter views showing white underparts, rufous leggings and whitish head, lightly streaked with dusky. In

flight, very long wings with typical angularity at trailing edge from wrist to primary tips. Wings two-toned, bluish-grey with rufous shoulders. Underwings white with some rufous mottling in the coverts, but no dark patagial marks. Tail basally white becoming faint rufous at terminal end. This is a classical adult plumaged bird at same location for third winter. Similar Species: Combination of white underparts, rufous leggings, clear patagial areas and color pattern of upperwings, plus wing length and shape eliminates the possibility of any other raptor.

CLEARING HOUSE CODES

County	Location
B = Brazoria	LC = Lake Charlotte
C = Chambers	
F = Ft. Bend	
G = Galveston	
H = Harris	
J = Jefferson	
W = Waller	
U = Upper Texas Coast	

Observer

JM = Jim Morgan
RU = Richard Uzar
DR = Don Richardson
PM = Peggy Milstead
DS = Don Sawyer
PG = Peter Gottschling
AG = Lynn Aldrich & Peter Gottschling
AC = Aldrich, Gottschling, Righter, Colwell

REPORT COLLARED GEESE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with A&M University are conducting a study to determine how individual geese utilize coastal marshes and agricultural fields throughout the winter. 12 geese trapped at San Bernard refuge will be wearing light-weight radio transmitters so that biologists can follow them. 500 other geese will be wearing individually numbered neck collars, green with a white three-digit number. The first digit is read vertically, the other two horizontally, as in the following example: F₂³. Please report the date, time and location of any collared geese you see to U.S. F&W, Brazoria NWR Complex, P.O. Drawer 1088, Angleton TX 77516, or (409) 849-6062.

MINUTES OF OG MEETING, DEC. 1, 1988

The meeting opened at 7:30 p.m. and our guest speaker, Mr. George Regmund, was introduced. A slide presentation accompanied Regmund's description of the wintering birds found at the Armand Bayou Nature Center. This was an enjoyable lecture, encompassing a description of the the Nature Center's habitat preservation and maintenance program. There were plenty of questions and answers indicating our membership's familiarity with the Nature Center and continuing interest in its activities.

Regmund brought us up to date on the current status of a proposed highway extension through the northern end of the Nature Center which would violated property allocated as a sanctuary. Residents of Pasadena were encouraged to write and express their feelings about this route to their mayor.

In our business segment, Ted Eubanks suggested that we provide a living memorial to the memory of Paul Jones. A Live Oak, planted in Audubon Woods at High Island, with a plaque in his honor was agreed upon unanimously. Ed Rozenberg also mentioned that two avian art prints belonging to Paul were donated to the OG by Margaret Jones. These are to be auctioned, perhaps at the March OG meeting.

Christmas Count plugs were made by Arch Dillard for Galveston, Jim Morgan for Freeport, Bob Honig for Brazos Bend and Buffalo Bayou, and Ed Rozenberg and Richard Uzar for the famous Houston CBC (held in Baytown, of course).

Jerry Patrick gave the treasurer's report and handed out copies of the OG's projected 1989 budget. The ONC tee shirts were delivered by Gwen Kunz, and are available for all those who ordered them last month. Thank you, Gwen, for your effort to keep us birders stylish. Field trip announcements included advance notice of the Jan. 28 Rockport trip.

Richard Uzar, Secretary

NC



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