



*Nature never did betray, the heart that loved her.*

William Wordsworth

# The Spoonbill

November 1998

Volume 47, No. 10

## OG Activities for December

### MEETING PROGRAM

#### **"Birding Churchill, Manitoba"**

presented by  
Kevin Karlson

Tonight Kevin will discuss his many travels to Churchill and share his unparalleled slides with us. He is an outstanding bird photographer, tour guide, and speaker. Two years ago he spoke in Houston on the Dry Tortugas and the Arctic. He will be speaking Wednesday, December 9, 1998 at the HAS meeting on a different topic.

The next OG meeting is to be held **Monday, December 7**, at the Baylands Community Center, 6400 Bissonett (just west of Hillcroft) at 7 PM.

### LEARNING CORNER

*Meet and greet your fellow OG members at 6:30 for a socializing.*

### FIELD TRIPS

December 19, 1998  
Houston CBC

The OG Field Trip in December is our very own CBC. Contact P. D. Hulce at (713) 863-1142 or pdhulce@io.com for start time and gathering location.

## Westside Story

*This article is taken from "Houston Airport Systems News." It's supplied by a "Spoonbill" staff member and "mole" inside the Houston aviation community.*

*The OG voted to accept a resolution in support of the Lone Star Sierra Clubs effort nixing the Westside Airport idea. Opportunity still abounds for the OG and other groups to affect the land.*  
-Ed.

Mayor Lee P. Brown has ended 12 years of wrangling over the idea of building a west side airport on the Katy Prairie. On September 29, the Houston City Council Aviation Committee received a full briefing on the Houston Airport System's (HAS) recommendations for the future of the West Side Airport. HAS Director Rick Vacar and the Mayor's Chief Administrative Officer Al Raines detailed the reasons for the HAS's position supporting abandonment of the project.

"The very moderate growth in national and local general aviation traffic does not support the building of a new airport," said Rick Vacar. "In addition to the lack of demand for such a project, we have decided that our resources should be concentrated in the development, maintenance, and operation of our existing airports."

Houston's three largest airports - Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH), Hobby Airport (HOU), and Ellington Field (EFD) - have the capability to easily absorb any forecasted growth in general aviation traffic. IAH can easily be expanded to accommo-

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Contributions to "The Spoonbill" can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed.

The monthly deadline for timely information is *the 15th of every month*. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse submissions.

All submissions should *include contact information* for the author and/or person doing the submitting.

Please include as much information as possible about the source when submitting copyrighted material. Contact the editor for assistance.

**Great Britain In Trouble, Again!**

The British Trust for Ornithology recently delivered their report on "Breeding Birds in the Wider Countryside 1972-96" to the Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee. There are no less than 40 species giving cause for concern.

Among the most alarming declines of a specie was the House Sparrow. Its numbers may have tumbled by two thirds over the last 25 years!

*"The Spoonbill" staff is working to establish Sparrow Aid. Our hope is to extend a helping hand across the Pond in their time of need.*

*We believe many OG members would be eager to help the English overcome another disaster. Especially since we are blessed with an abundance of these wonderful creatures.*

*There is no news yet as to the acceptance of repatriated House Sparrows from the U.S.*

-Ed.

**More On House Sparrows**

A House Sparrow banded as a nestling in March was later found breeding as an adult male in August later that same year.

This occurred during a study of House Sparrow breeding biology (PhD) on the campus of Mississippi State in the 1970s.

*It is rumored this male is still at it.*

-Ed.

**You Can Make A Difference**

During the past one-and-a-half years, we have collected 471 pounds of aluminum and have contributed just over \$200 to the OG treasury.

Several OG members have sold their own aluminum and donated the money to the club.

As you can see, we can help the OG in a very easy way. Thanks to those who have contributed, and let me encourage all of you to collect aluminum and bring it to our meetings. Thanks.

*Lee Richardson,  
Aluminum Chairman*

**Autumn: The Season of Love**

There are now four records of Killdeers breeding in Fall in the Southeast. One from this October in Little Rock, AR and three from around Starkville, MS (November of 1987, November of 1988 and December 1988).

**New CBC Close to Home**

Lake Houston Area CBC will have its inaugural count on Sunday, January 3. The center of the circle is the middle of Lake Houston. In it are Sheldon Lake SP, Lake Houston State Park, Jesse Jones Country Park, numerous fields, suburban parks and shoreline.

The count is sponsored by the Lake Houston Area Nature Club. It includes the communities of Kingwood, Atascocita, Kenswick and Humble.

There is a special need for birders with boats and canoes to patrol the lake.

We hope to have access to the Waste Management land fill in Humble where hundreds of birds congregate.

Contact Damien Carey at (281) 361-4120 or dc@kingwoodcable.com for more information.

The  
Spoonbill  
Staff

Wishes You A

Happy

Holiday

Season!

## Area Christmas Counts

Participation usually requires a fee of \$5 for each count.

Please call the contact number and let them know you're interested in their count. This helps the coordinators plan more effectively.

Also, you may be able to secure a favorable assignment. Confirm the location of count and other information and instructions.

Thanks (again) to P.D. Hulce for being the Nexus for CBC data in Texas.

### Friday, December 18

*San Bernard NWR*, Rick Speer, (409) 849-7771, CONFIRMED

### Saturday, December 19

*Armand Bayou*, Paula Kennedy, (281) 474-2551, abnc@ghgcorp.com CONFIRMED Meet at Armand Bayou Nature Center entry building at 7 a.m. To register call Paula Kennedy at 281-474-2551 during normal ABNC hours (Wed-Sat 9-5, Sunday noon-dusk. closed Mon & Tues)

*College Station*, Mike Manson, (409) 693-9548, mike@bio.tamu.edu, CONFIRMED

*Houston*, P. D. Hulce, (713) 863-1142, pdhulce@io.com, Richard Uzar, (713) 527-0454, CONFIRMED.

*Nacogdoches (Pineywoods)*, David & Mimi Wolf, (409) 569-6531, CONFIRMED Anyone interested in helping or wants more info can contact Mimi or David (after Thanksgiving) at (409) 569-6531.

*Victoria*, Bill Farnsworth, (512) 578-9745, farnswfw@viptx.net CONFIRMED. Count ends with a pot luck supper and count summary about dusk.

### Sunday, December 20

*Freeport*, CONTACT NOT KNOWN, Houston Audubon, (713) 932-1639, CONFIRMED.

### Monday, December 21

*Mad Island Marsh*, Jim Bergan, (512) 972-2559, Karen Cornelius, (713) 853-5634, CONFIRMED.

*Port Aransas*, Scott Holt, (512) 749-5656, sholt@utmsi.utexas.edu CONFIRMED.

### Tuesday, December 22

*Galveston*, Arch Dillard, (281) 996-0107, Dwight Peake, (409) 740-4621,

dpeake@mail.phoenix.net, CONFIRMED.

### Wednesday, December 23

*Attwater NWR*, Winnie Burkett, (281) 992-5640, wbburkett@aol.com, CONFIRMED.

### Saturday, December 26

*Brazos Bend State Park*. THIS COUNT NEEDS A NEW LEADER! Please contact Lynne Aldrich or Peter Gottschling, (281) 996-1109, peterg@flash.net CONFIRMED.

### Sunday, December 27

*Bolivar*, Bill Graber, (409) 866-5452, CONFIRMED.

### Monday, December 28

*Gibbons Creek* (between College Station and Huntsville), Bert Frenz, (409) 694-9850, bert@bafrenz.com, CONFIRMED Trinity River, P. D. Hulce, (713) 863-1142, pdhulce@io.com, CONFIRMED.

### Tuesday, December 29

*Aransas NWR*, Barbara Bruns, (512) 575-5505, brbrms@tisd.net or Tom Stehn, (512) 286-3559 CONFIRMED.

*Old River*, P. D. Hulce, (713) 863-1142, pdhulce@io.com, CONFIRMED.

### Friday, January 1

*Cypress Creek*, Fred Collins, (713) 667-6550, CONFIRMED

### Saturday, January 2

*Buffalo Bayou*, Bob Honig, (713) 665-6963, mandrhonig@aol.com CONFIRMED.

If you have not been assigned an area meet at 6 a.m. at the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center, 4501 Woodway in Memorial Park. FEEDER WATCHERS NEEDED!

### Sunday, January 3

*Lake Houston Area*, Damien Carey, (281) 361-4120 or dc@kingwoodcable.com CONFIRMED. NEW COUNT VERY CLOSE TO HOUSTON! Meet at 6:45 in the Starbucks on FM 1960 in Humble located just east of the FM1960 and US 59 (Eastex freeway).

*Sea Rim State Park*, John Whittle, (409) 880-8276 (work); (409) 722-4193 (home), whittleja@hal.lamar.edu, Rubert Hurt, (409) 724-2202 CONFIRMED. Meeting place: Intersection of Highway 87 and FM3322 in Sabine Pass at 7:15 a.m.

## Little Birds on the Prairie

Project Prairie Birds (PPB), a citizen science project focusing on grassland birds, will be holding its Second Workshop for Volunteers interested in helping out with the project. The Workshop will focus upon how to survey grassland birds.

Roughly 25 dedicated birders are needed to survey sites in the Upper Texas Coast. Teams comprised of three or four members, will be responsible for surveying all transects at their assigned about once a month during the winter. It is possible to survey 10 transects in a morning, and we do not expect any sites to exceed 30 transects.

Volunteers need to be available for up to three mornings per month to survey the birds. The surveying can be accomplished on a weekend day, as long as consistency is maintained.

Volunteers should want to: 1. Make a DIRECT contribution towards conserving native Prairie birds; 2. Bird hotspots you probably did not have prior access to; 3. Learn to survey and seek out "skulking species", (i.e., Henslow's sparrow).

The workshop and fieldwork are jointly sponsored by Texas Partners in Flight, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and Raven Ecological Services. Armand Bayou Nature Center is the gracious host for our season kickoff event.

The workshop will take place on Saturday, December 12 from 10 AM to 3:00 PM at Armand Bayou Nature Center (8500 Bay Area Blvd.). Call (281) 474-2551 or logon to <http://www.ghgcorp.com/abnc/> for directions and more information.

The morning will be devoted to lectures, lunch at noon (please bring your own) and field lab in the afternoon.

The Workshop speakers are comprised of the PPB Steering Committee: Cecilia Riley (GCBO) - Background and overview (Introduction lecture); Clifford Shackelford (TPWD, PIF), D. Carrie (USFS) and OG member David Sarkozi will lecture on identification and habitat association (slide lecture). Finally, R. Carrie (Raven Ecological Service.) and K. Moore (Ft. Polk) will discuss sampling methods (lecture and lab).

For more information contact Dan Brooks at (713) 526-1461 or [Ecotropix@aol.com](mailto:Ecotropix@aol.com) and Cecilia Riley at [criley@nol.net](mailto:criley@nol.net) or (713) 789-GCBO.

## Clearinghouse - October '98

Mail CH submission to: David Sarkozi, 111 Welch, Apt. B, Houston, TX 77006. E-mail : dsarkozi@flash.net.

For birds listed as common or abundant for the entire month I've only listed the total numbers of birds reported and the number of reports. Let me know what you think of this format.

Please keep those reports coming either on the old forms mailed to my address 111 Welch, apt B, Houston, TX 77006 or e-mailed to dsarkozi@flash.net. Put your reports in the body of the message in this format: species,date,county,location,count,observer

You may turn in electronic data for more than one person. Remember to send notes on those birds on the checklist for the week or listed as very rare.

Format: species month/day county (location) count observer.

Observer Codes: DV=Don Verser, BBJM=Bob Berhstock and Jim Morgan, JWH=Jean and William Harwell

Location Codes: ANNWR=Anahuac NWR, BF=Bolivar Flats NBS, QNBS=Quintana Neptropical Bird Sanctuary, SW=Sabine Woods, SBNWR=San Bernard NWR, HI=High Island, SP=Smith Point, WHC=West Harris County

County Codes: BRA=Brazoria, CHA=Chambers, HAR=Harris, JEF=Jefferson

Pied-billed Grebe birds=2 reports=1  
 American White Pelican birds=4 reports=1  
 Double-crested Cormorant 10/7 JEF() 4 BBJM  
 Neotropical Cormorant 10/7 GAL() 10 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 10 BBJM  
 American Bittern birds=1 reports=1  
 Great Blue Heron birds=2 reports=1  
 Great Egret birds=105 reports=2  
 Snowy Egret birds=40 reports=2  
 Tricolored Heron birds=2 reports=1  
 Cattle Egret birds=280 reports=2  
 Green Heron 10/7 JEF() 2 BBJM  
 Black-crowned Night-Heron birds=12 reports=1  
 White Ibis 10/7 CHA() 300 BBJM, 10/7 GAL() 60 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 15 BBJM, 10/24 HAR(WHC) 200 JWH  
 White-faced Ibis 10/24 HAR(WHC) 1,000 JWH  
 Black Vulture birds=3 reports=2  
 Turkey Vulture birds=23 reports=2  
 Greater White-fronted Goose 10/7 JEF() 30 BBJM  
 Mottled Duck birds=6 reports=1  
 Blue-winged Teal 10/7 JEF() 12 BBJM  
 White-tailed Kite birds=1 reports=1  
 Northern Harrier 10/7 JEF() 10 BBJM, 10/24 HAR(WHC) 3 JWH

Sharp-shinned Hawk birds=4 reports=1  
 White-tailed Hawk 10/24 HAR(WHC) 1 JWH  
 Red-tailed Hawk birds=4 reports=2  
 Crested Caracara 10/24 HAR(WHC) 4 JWH  
 American Kestrel birds=5 reports=3  
 Merlin 10/7 JEF() 2 BBJM  
 Northern Bobwhite birds=2 reports=1  
 Common Moorhen birds=1 reports=1  
 Common Snipe 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM  
 Laughing Gull birds=30 reports=1  
 Caspian Tern birds=2 reports=1  
 Royal Tern birds=2 reports=1  
 Rock Dove birds=1 reports=1  
 Mourning Dove birds=50 reports=2  
 Inca Dove birds=3 reports=1  
 Common Ground-Dove 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM, 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 5 DV, 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 1 DV  
 Yellow-billed Cuckoo 10/7 JEF() 2 BBJM, 10/25 GAL(HI) 1 DV, 10/25 JEF(SW) 1 DV  
 Chuck-will's-widow 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM, 10/10 CHA(SP) 1 DV, 10/10 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Whip-poor-will 10/10 CHA(SP) 2 DV  
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird 10/7 GAL() 10 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 15 BBJM  
 Belted Kingfisher birds=18 reports=2  
 Red-bellied Woodpecker birds=1 reports=1  
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 10/10 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Downy woodpecker birds=4 reports=2  
 Northern Flicker 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 2 BBJM, 10/10 CHA(ANNWR) 1 DV  
 Olive-sided Flycatcher 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM  
 Eastern Wood-Pewee birds=6 reports=2  
 Acadian Flycatcher 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM  
 Least Flycatcher 10/3 BRA(QNBS) 3 DV, 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM  
 Eastern Phoebe 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 2 BBJM, 10/10 CHA(ANNWR) 2 DV, 10/10 HA(SP) 3 DV, 10/24 HAR(WHC) 4 JWH  
 Vermilion Flycatcher 10/31 CHA(ANNWR) 1 DV  
 Eastern Kingbird 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM  
 Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 10/7 GAL() 15 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 50 BBJM, 10/24 HAR(WHC) 2 JWH  
 Loggerhead Shrike birds=12 reports=2  
 White-eyed Vireo birds=15 reports=2  
 Yellow-throated Vireo 10/20 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Philadelphia Vireo 10/7 GAL() 6 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 8 BBJM, 10/10 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Red-eyed Vireo 10/7 GAL() 2 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 6 BBJM, 10/20 GAL(HI) 2 DV  
 Blue Jay birds=20 reports=2  
 American Crow birds=10 reports=1  
 Tree Swallow birds=2 reports=1  
 Brown Creeper 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV  
 Carolina Wren birds=4 reports=2  
 House Wren birds=7 reports=3  
 Winter Wren 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV, 10/25 GAL(HI) 5 DV  
 Sedge Wren 10/10 GAL(BF) 3 DV  
 Golden-crowned Kinglet 10/20 GAL(HI) 1 DV, 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 4 DV, 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 2 DV

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 10/7 GAL() 4 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 6 BBJM  
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher birds=25 reports=2  
 Swainson's Thrush 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM, 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV, 10/31 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Hermit Thrush 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 4 DV, 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 1 DV  
 Wood Thrush 10/20 GAL(HI) 1 DV, 10/25 JEF(SW) 1 DV  
 Gray Catbird birds=28 reports=2  
 Northern Mockingbird birds=16 reports=2  
 Brown Thrasher birds=80 reports=2  
 Blue-winged Warbler 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM  
 Tennessee Warbler birds=5 reports=3  
 Orange-crowned Warbler 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM, 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 1 DV  
 Nashville Warbler birds=5 reports=2  
 Northern Parula 10/7 GAL() 4 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 12 BBJM, 10/31 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Yellow Warbler 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM  
 Chestnut-sided Warbler birds=3 reports=2  
 Magnolia Warbler birds=61 reports=3  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 2 DV  
 Black-throated Green Warbler birds=1 reports=1  
 Blackburnian Warbler 10/18 BRA(SBNWR) 1 DV  
 Palm Warbler 10/7 JEF() 8 BBJM, 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV  
 Bay-breasted Warbler 10/20 GAL(HI) 1 DV  
 Black-and-white Warbler birds=11 reports=3  
 American Redstart 10/7 GAL() 3 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 10 BBJM  
 Ovenbird 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM, 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM, 10/20 GAL(HI) 2 DV  
 Northern Waterthrush 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV, 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 1 DV  
 Common Yellowthroat birds=48 reports=2  
 Hooded Warbler 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM, 10/25 GAL(HI) 2 DV, 10/25 JEF(SW) 1 DV  
 Wilson's Warbler birds=10 reports=2  
 Yellow-breasted Chat birds=3 reports=2  
 Scarlet Tanager 10/10 GAL(HI) 1 DV, 10/18 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV, 10/20 GAL(HI) 3 DV, 10/25 JEF(SW) 1 DV  
 Savannah Sparrow 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 2 DV, 10/24 BRA(SBNWR) 8 DV  
 Lincoln's Sparrow birds=3 reports=2  
 Swamp Sparrow birds=1 reports=1  
 White-throated Sparrow birds=2 reports=1  
 White-crowned Sparrow birds=2 reports=1  
 Northern Cardinal birds=40 reports=2  
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak 10/7 GAL() 1 BBJM, 10/10 GAL(HI) 1 DV, 10/18 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV  
 Blue Grosbeak 10/7 JEF() 2 BBJM  
 Indigo Bunting birds=35 reports=2  
 Painted Bunting 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM, 10/20 GAL(HI) 1 DV, 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV  
 Bobolink 10/24 BRA(QNBS) 1 DV  
 Boat-tailed Grackle birds=120 reports=2  
 Brown-headed Cowbird birds=20 reports=1  
 Baltimore Oriole 10/7 JEF() 1 BBJM



It's time to  
**RENEW & UPDATE**  
your  
**ONC - OG Membership!**

Your Houston Outdoor Nature Club and OG memberships expires  
at the end of December!  
Renewing members need only send a check with the correct dues to:

ONC Membership  
Mary Dodson  
9618 Longmont,  
Houston TX 77063

*If your membership information has changed  
fill in the current information address.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If family membership list names of spouse or children:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBER? or \_\_\_\_\_ Rejoining member?

**ONC Annual Dues (Circle one)**

Regular -- \$ 8  
Junior (under 18) -- \$ 2  
Family -- \$ 15  
Supporting -- \$40  
Life -- \$100

**Add OG Study Group Dues**

Ornithology Group -- \$ 12

TOTAL\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* - Please make checks payable to Outdoor Nature Club.

Questions? Contact Mary Dodson at (713) 974-3089.

date 900,000 aircraft operations which more than double the traffic volume experienced in 1997. EFD's capacity is 275,000 annual operations and in 1997 it actually handled 99,741. HOU also offers room for higher general aviation aircraft craft operation numbers.

"The abandonment of the West Side Airport project is the right business decision to make," said Mayor Brown. "Not only is there a lack of demand, the capabilities of other airports ports in the area and regional roadway way improvements that make our airports easier to reach must also be taken into account."

The HAS and the Brown Administration ministration recommended that the West Side Airport site, acquired by the City in 1986, be used for wetlands lands mitigation purposes in support of future major development projects at Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH). Any land not used for this purpose should be sold at market prices to reimburse the HAS.

One immediate benefit of the abandonment of the project will be the recovery of \$2.7 million tied-up in an escrow agreement with Exxon, which had drilling rights on the property This escrow fund was established to compensate Exxon for any additional drilling costs due to the directional drilling that would have been necessary if the West Side Airport port had been developed. The \$2.7 million will be returned to the Houston ton Airport System's improvement fund.



The Houston City Council Aviation Committee plans to hold pubic hearings in the future to receive input from citizens and organizations interested in the future of the West Side Airport site. No date has been set for the hearings.

As of August 30th, the HAS's 1998 passenger traffic is up 7.8 percent cent and cargo volume has grown at a rate of 11.5 percent. General aviation operations have decreased by 3.9 percent at IAH, by 2.3 percent at HOU and by 9.3 percent at EFD.

*Houston Area  
CBC  
Information  
Inside!*

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