



# THE SPOONBILL

VOLUME X No 11  
March 1961

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 \* "TO A NUTHATCH"? \*  
 \* "Shrewd little haunter of woods all gray, \*  
 \* Whom I meet on my walk of a winter day - \*  
 \* You're busy inspecting each cranny and hole \*  
 \* In the ragged bark of yon hickory bole; \*  
 \* You intent on your task, and I on the law \*  
 \* Of your wonderful head and gymnastic claw! \*  
 \* \*  
 \* The woodpecker well may despair of this feat - \*  
 \* Only the fly with you can compete! \*  
 \* So much is clear; but I fain would know \*  
 \* How you can so reckless and fearless go, \*  
 \* Head upward, head downward, all one to you, \*  
 \* Zenith and nadir the same in your view?" \*  
 \* ----- Edith M. Thomas \*  
 \* \*\*\*\*\*

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### FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

- March 26 (Sunday) O.G. Field Trip to Sheldon Reservoir and Lake Houston area led by Jerry Baker. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Sears! parking lot - Wayside and Harrisburg. Place orders now for Nuthatches and Wood Ducks!
- March 29 (Wednesday) Museum of Natural Science lecture series: "A Story of Finland" by Karl Robinson, Prudential Auditorium.
- March 31 T.O.S. Spring Meeting through April 2 in San Antonio. See the T.O.S. Newsletter for details.
- April 6 (Thursday) Regular O.G. Meeting at Hospitality House - 7:30 refreshments - 8:00 Business - Election of Officers & Organization of Spring Count.
- April 30 (Sunday) SPRING COUNT FOR A BIGGER & BETTER BIG DAY! Here is the list of Duly Appointed\* group leaders and their areas in the Cove Circle:

Area #1	T. B. Feltner	Area #4	Victor Emanuel
Area #2	C. B. Gilman	Area #5	Steve Williams
Area #3A	Armand Yramategui	Area #6	Jerry Strickling
Area #3B	Katrina Thompson	Area #7	Linda Snyder

All "Spoonbillers" contact the group leader for the area you wish to cover. The big feed and summation will occur in a pre-determined restaurant in the Baytown area (to be announced in the next issue)

\*J. R. Deshayes, Co-editor and Spring Census Chairman.

- April 4 (Tuesday) Audubon Screen Tour: "The Right to Live" by Chester P. Lyons

### CLEARING HOUSE - Compiled by M. & B.D.

Common Loon: (12) 2/6 IS MK; (107) 2/19 IS CS; (15) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike; (2) 3/1 AY - T.C.Dike; (25) 3/4 "C" - T.C.Dike; (7) 2/26 "A" Galveston  
 Eared Grebe: (200) 2/19 IS CS, (195) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike; (50) 3/1 AY - T.C.Dike; (160) 3/4 JS NS MD BD T.C.Dike  
 White Pelican: (25 - 200) Most Days IS LaPorte; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Brown Pelican: (2) 2/6 LS MK, (15) 2/19 IS CS, (25) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike; (1) 3/4  
(in breeding plumage) "C" T.C.Dike; (12) 2/26 LH HH - Galveston.

Gannet (adult): (1) 2/26 "F" - Gulf of Mexico

Double-crested Cormorant: (2000) 2/19 IS CS, (500) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike; (800) 3/4  
"C" - T.C.Dike.

Heron, Green: (1) 2/27 JB - Highland Bayou

Reddish Egret: (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Black-crowned Night Heron: (50) 2/13 LS MK - Cedar Bayou

American Bittern: (1) 2/14 "B" Galveston; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

White Ibis: (500) 3/5 JS NS - Offats Bayou; (15) 2/26 "A" Galveston; (6) 2/27 JB -  
Highland Bayou

Mottled Duck: (2) 2/19 IS CS - LaPorte. Gadwall Duck: (1) IS CS - LaPorte

Pintail Duck: (200-350) most days IS - LaPorte; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Green-winged Teal: (1) 2/5 IS CS, (20) 2/13 LS MK - LaPorte

Am. Widgeon Duck: (20) 2/18 IS CS - LaPorte; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Shoveler Duck: (50) 2/2 IS - LaPorte. Redhead Duck: (1) 3/5 JS NS - Galveston

Canvasback Duck: (50-200) daily IS - LaPorte; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Greater Scaup: (3) 2/4 IS (flying over bay) LaPorte: (1) 2/22 HP Galveston

Lesser Scaup: (25-100) daily IS - LaPorte; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Common Goldeneye: (1) 2/19 IS CS - T.C.Dike; (1) 3/5 JS NS - T.C.Dike

\*Oldsquaw: (1) 2/6 LS MK - T.C.Dike: (1) 3/5 JS NS - Offats Bayou

Ruddy Duck: (1) 2/15 IS, (8) 2/18) IS CS - LaPorte; (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Red-breasted Merganser: (4) 2/6 LS MK, (200) 2/19) IS CS, (200) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike;  
(200) "C" T.C.Dike

Black Vulture: (2) 2/10 IS, (6) 3/1 IS HN - LaPorte

Cooper's Hawk: (1) 2/3 IS MK - LaPorte Red-tailed Hawk: (2-6) most days IS LaPorte

Red-shouldered Hawk: (3) 2/3 IS, (2) 2/18 IS LaPorte

White-tailed Hawk: (3) 2/14 "B" Clear Creek

Caracara: (2) 3/1 IS HN - LaPorte Peregrine Falcon: (1) 3/5 JS NS - Galveston

Bobwhite: Daily - LH - Memorial Sandhill Crane: (35) 2/22 HP - Galveston

King Rail: (2) 2/26 "A" Galveston Clapper Rail: (1) 2/26 "A" - Galveston

Virginia Rail: (1) 3/5 JS NS So. Jetty, Galv. Sora Rail: (2) 2/14 "B" - Galveston

Semipalmated Plover: (4) 2/6 IS MK - TC Dike Snowy Plover: (1) 2/26 "A" Galveston

Black-bellied Plover: (1-2) most days IS - LaPorte: (1) 2/26 LH HH - Galveston

Ruddy Turnstone: (8) 2/26 "A" Galveston Long-billed Curlew: (1) 2/26 "A" Galv.

Spotted Sandpiper: (1-2) most days IS LaPorte. Willet: (2-5) most days IS - LaPorte

Greater Yellowlegs: (3) 2/3 IS - LaPorte.

Lesser Yellowlegs: (30) 2/3, (10) 2/18, (3) 3/1 IS - LaPorte

Dunlin: (NC) 2/4, (200) 2/6, (100) 2/13, (1) 3/1 IS - LaPorte

Dowitcher: (Sp?) (50) 2/3, 4, (25) 2/6, (5) 2/18, (NC) 3/1 IS - LaPorte

Stilt Sandpiper: (12) 2/3 IS - Seabrook

Sanderling: (10) 2/2, (4) 2/6, (1) 2/8, (12) 2/15, (30) 2/17, (5) 2/17, 19, IS -La-  
porte; (NC) 2/26 "A" - Galveston

American Avocet: (50) 2/2, 13, 3/1 IS - LaPorte

Pomarine Jaeger: (1) 2/26 (Article will appear in Next Issue) - Gulf of Mexico.

Glaucous Gull: (1) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike; (1) 3/1 AY - T.C.Dike; (1) 3/4 "C" T.C.Dike;  
(1) 3/5 JS NS - T.C.Dike

Bonaparte's Gull: (2) 2/6 IS, (1) 2/19 IS CS, (1) 3/1 IS HN - T.C.Dike; (1) 3/1 AY - T.C.  
Dike; (1) 2/18 LH HH - Freeport; (2) 3/4 "C" T.C.Dike

Gull-billed Tern: (1) 2/4 IS - LaPorte

Inca Dove: (4) Daily through Jan. and Feb. JH - Spring Valley

Owl, Barn: (1) 2/18 IS - LaPorte Screech Owl: (1) 3/1 PS - Bellaire

Barred Owl: (1) 3/5 LH HH - Memorial Short-eared Owl: (1) 2/14 "B" Highland Bayou

Rufous Hummingbird: (1) 2/21 DM Houston Yel.-shafted Flicker: (1-2) most days IS LaP.

Pileated Woodpecker: (1) 2/11 LH HH - Memorial

Yel.-bellied Sapsucker: (1-2) most days IS - LaPorte

Downy Woodpecker: (1) 2/2, 3, 13, (2) 2/6 IS - LaPorte

Eastern Phoebe: Last sighted prior to ice storm 1/26 IS; (1) 2/19 PS Duesen Park

Horned Lark: (1) 2/26 "A" - Galveston

Tree Swallow: (5) 2/4 IS, (150) 2/6 IS MK, (500) 2/19 IS CS - LaPorte; (3) 3/4 "C" T.C.Dike

Purple Martin: Early date (2) 2/10 IS - LaPorte; (1) 2/18 TBF - Jacinto City; (1) 2/23,  
(3) 2/25, (2) 2/26 PS - Bellaire; (1) 2/26 LH HH - Houston; (1) 2/26 Joe H. -  
Little Thicket; (3) 3/4 "C" T.C.Dike.

Brown-headed Nuthatch: (2) 2/19 PS Duesen Park; Daily LH - Memorial

Brown Creeper: (2) 2/19 PS Duesen Park; (1) 2/20 LH HH - Memorial

House Wren: (1-3) daily IS - LaPorte; (1) 2/11, 18, 3/5, LH HH - Memorial

Brown Thrasher: (1-3) daily IS - LaPorte

Robin: (1) 2/15 IS LaPorte

Hermit Thrush: (1) 2/11, (2) 2/14 LS \* LaPorte  
 Eastern Bluebird: (2) 2/22 MD - Memorial, (1) 2/26 MD BD - Tomball; (5) 2/19 PS - Duesen Park; (1) 2/20 LH HH - Memorial  
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: (1-3) Daily - More scarce since ice storm LS - LaPorte  
 Golden-crowned Kinglet: (3-4) 2/2, (6) 2/3, (3-4) 2/6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18 LS - LaPorte; (1) 3/2 LH HH - Memorial  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet: (3-8) daily LS - LaPorte; (2) 2/19 PS Duesen Park; daily LH HH - Memorial  
 Cedar Waxwing: (11) 1/12, (6) 1/14 MD - Houston  
 Solitary Vireo: (1) 2/2, 18, LS - LaPorte  
 White-eyed Vireo: (1) 2/22 Joe H. Cold Spring, (1) 2/26 Joe H. Little Thicket  
 Orange-crowned Warbler: (3-8) daily LS - LaPorte; (1) 2/9 LH HH - Memorial  
 Myrtle Warbler: (2-15) daily LS, (30) 2/18 LS CS - LaPorte; (1) 2/19 PS - Duesen Park; daily since 2/9 LH HH - Memorial  
 Audubon's Warbler: (1) 2/6 LS - Seabrook  
 Pine Warbler: (2-4) 2/2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18 LS - LaPorte; (1) 2/19 PS - Duesen Park; daily LH HH - Memorial  
 Yellowthroat: (1) 2/3 LS - Seabrook  
 Summer Tanager: (1) 2/14 "B" - Kempner Park  
 American Goldfinch: (2-15) most days LS - LaPorte; (2) 2/19 PS - Duesen Park  
 Savannah Sparrow: (2) 2/13 LS MK - Cedar Bayou  
 Seaside Sparrow: (1) 2/26 "A" - Galveston; (12) 2/27 JB Highland Bayou  
 Lark Sparrow: (5) 2/13 LS MK - Cedar Bayou  
 Sharp-tailed Sparrow: (1) 2/14 JS NS DF HH - Galveston  
 Chipping Sparrow: (1) 2/20 LH HH - Memorial  
 Field Sparrow: (2) 2/13 LS MK - Cedar Bayou  
 White-throated Sparrow: (5-10) daily LS - LaPorte  
 Lincoln's Sparrow: (1) most days LS - LaPorte  
 Song Sparrow: (1) most days LS - LaPorte

## CREDITS:-

"A"	LH HH JSm PS JT	HN	Hazel Nichols (Dallas)	JT	Joyce Taylor (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
"B"	JS NS DF LH HH	MK	Mrs. Kokesh		
"C"	JS NS MD BD	JS	Jerry Strickling	JH	Jean Harwell
"F"	O.G. Field Trip	NS	Nancy Strickling	DM	Darris Massingill
		LH	Louise Hoffman	TBF	Ben Feltner
		HH	Henry Hoffman	HP	Harvey Patten
		DF	Doctor Foster	MD	Mabel Deshayes
AY	Armand Yramategui		Univ. of Wisconsin	BD	Bob Deshayes
LS	Linda Snyder	JSm	Jack Smith	JB	Jerry Baker
CS	Clinton Snyder	PS	Peggy Smith		Joe H. Joe Heiser

\*OLDSQUAW

The Oldsquaw sighted this month must be considered a lingerer from the group comprising our 7th record as reported in last month's SPOONBILL. The comment stating that an 8th record had been established was erroneous, as the sighting of three just four days subsequent to the sighting of six Oldsquaw in the same vicinity does not indicate a new record. So, to straighten out the record, we have this year set our 6th and 7th sight records for the Oldsquaw in our area.

WHITE GULL - by Jerry Strickling

On February 14 at "Norma Oates Pond" (some uninitiated call it the Airport pond) Nancy, Doctor Foster, Louise and Henry Hoffman and I saw a pure white gull circling at about 100 ft. Our hearts jumped in our throats, and we all had visions of a Glaucous or Iceland Gull (immature) as these were the only known all-white gulls that had been reported in the United States.

The bird disappeared toward Offats Bayou, and we pursued it. Sharp-eyed Nancy spied it atop a piling at the north end of the 61st Street bridge. We drove along side the bird, at some 50 ft. and studied it at our leisure. It was Ring-billed size (not large enough for a Glaucous or Iceland) and had no red eye ring (Iceland). It fanned its tail, and we saw an ever so faint shadow of a tail bar (as in the

immature ring-billed). The bird had a pink bill with a definite dark ring. The legs were flesh colored.

We concluded we had an Albino Ring-billed Gull.

(P.S. - John Easter reported this Albino Ring-billed again on March 5th at Offats Bayou at 61st Street. It was also observed at the same location at close range on March 11th by N.Oates and L.Stillwell. - ed.)

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GLAUCOUS GULL - by Linda Snyder

Despite a very poor November and December, I finished last year with a count of 274 species for our area. January and February of this year did prove very interesting with the visiting hawks (Broad-winged, etc.), the hummingbird, the Oldsquaws and early migrants (Barn and Tree Swallows, Stilt Sandpiper). The real highlight came on March 1st as follows:

Birding with Hazel Nichols (Dallas) down at the Texas City Dike, March 1st, brought an unexpected dividend. We had been scanning the water for Goldeneye or Oldsquaw when, after a few moments rest, we happened to look elsewhere. There, sitting up, like a king on a rock was a very large pure white gull -- a very beautiful and impressive creature! The only pure white gull I could think of was the Glaucous, so we started checking field marks and field books (fortunately we had Pough's). The bird was very large, especially heavy in the body (almost like a small goose), his feathers were very white with only a few faint pinkish-beige streaks underneath the body. He had a heavy pinkish bill with blackish tip and he had pink legs and feet. Also he was bow-legged, waddling somewhat like a duck when he walked. While we were studying the gull, he picked up and flew like a great white hawk out the dike. It was easy to follow him the mile or so out to the end of the dike where he came down amid a large flock of gulls. Then came the clincher that he was a second year Glaucous Gull for as he stood next to the Herring Gulls, he dwarfed them! Ring-bills and Laughing Gulls appeared to be walking under his bill.

In the three hours or so that we watched the Glaucous Gull, we saw him go back to the edge of the road where again he showed his very erect and majestic stance. Also, he chased away the Herring Gulls nearby and from the bread we threw out of the car. As the afternoon wore on, he (being an Arctic bird) got hot and held open his bill as though panting. Several times he flew out into the water to cool down, but each time he came back to his perch. Just as we were leaving, he flew out over the water to join a large flock of birds. Though some 3/4 of a mile out, we could still pick him out of the crowd.

On March 2nd, Mrs. Kokesh and I found him again. I wanted to try photographing him. We watched the gull eating fish and a very large jelly-fish besides the bread thrown from the car.

The second year phase of the Glaucous Gull is fortunately its most distinctive one. This bird will rank along with the Eskimo Curlew and Clark's Nutcracker as most important on my own list for the area which now includes some 16 accidentals.

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"HOFFMAN" The American Bittern is convalescing on a forced diet of shrimp and smelt under the close scrutiny of your medically oriented editors. This fine bird was reported to be in an injured condition in the Meyerland area by Mrs. John O'Neal (Not our John's mother). Its broken leg has been set and immobilized in a cast but Hoffman has not yet recognized its handlers as friends.

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The Travis Audubon Society and the O.G. have begun a reciprocal trade agreement regarding newsletters. In return for copies of the SPOONBILL, the Travis Society will send us monthly copies of their newsletter the SIGNAL SMOKE. There is a wealth of conservationist information available in this publication which the SPOONBILL traditionally does not carry. This newsletter will be catalogued and filed at the home of Dudley A. Deaver for the information of all SPOONBILL subscribers.

The Fun of Lists by Roger Barton (Newark-Sun.News 11-27-60)

Some of the fun in bird watching consists of keeping lists. There are many kinds. One is the life list, which records all the birds seen in a person's lifetime. Others are lists of all birds seen in a year, or on a trip, or all the birds ever seen from one's yard. And, of course, there are the Christmas counts that have been made across the land each year since 1900.

Some bird watchers scorn lists, but most keep lists of various kinds. The late Ludlow Griscom once told me that his life list included 2,500 birds that he had seen in many lands. Roger Tory Peterson includes 423 species in the life list that he publishes in his "Field Guide to the Birds." However, this list counts only species east of the Rockies and excludes accidentals and strays. Two of the correspondents of Outdoors have seen 123 different kinds of birds in their own yards. The Urner Ornithological Club has for the last quarter-century kept Big Day lists. These are counts of birds seen by members of the club on a full May day of 20 to 24 hours afield. Par for the course is 160, although as many as 175 have been tallied.

List keeping can be competitive. A bird watcher competes against his own record as a golfer competes against his best score. Bird watchers, including bird clubs, compete against one another.

I keep a life list; it now numbers 485, and I should like to bring it up to 500 within a year. But where shall I find the additional 15 birds? On offshore trips, in the Florida Keys, in the Southwest? This is a problem; list keeping can present problems if it gets out of hand!

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One for the Books - by A. Noel Pettingell

George Seeley of Long Branch, N.J. told me that he once read about a Big Day enthusiast who built himself a platform in the top of a tree and spent the day (from dark to dark) recording anything he saw or heard (with the aid of binoculars, I presume) while aloft. According to Seeley, this "Flagpole-Sitting Birdwatcher" listed over 80 species on at least one day's watching.



I didn't know the meaning of pleasure,  
 until I started "birding".

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OFFICERS OF THE O.G.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Chairman -          | - Jerry B. Strickling |
| Secretary           | - Katrina Thompson    |
| Treasurer           | - Ella Wolfer         |
| Field Trip Chairman | - Mrs. Jack N. Smith  |
| Editor of Spoonbill | - M. & B. Deshayes,   |
|                     | 215 Marshall, (6)     |



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