A Publication of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club Ornithology Group

Volume 46, No. 2

February 1997

The Spoonbill

March 3 Meeting Speaker & Topic

"Nesting Birds"

a presentation by

John Tveten

John has watched and wondered about nesting birds. This month's presentation is a product of his observations of nesting birds. John will focus on the habits and foibles of birds. The talk includes John's naturalist perspective and some great photography too.

The February meeting is set for Monday, March 3, 7 P.M. at *Baylands Community Center*, 6400 Bissonett.

March Learning Corner

Are Birds Voices Adapted To Their Habitat?

led by

Bob Honig

Has this question crossed your mind? If it has, or even if it hasn't, you need to come hear Bob's thoughts on the matter. Join Bob and other OG members at 6:30 p.m. to get the answer.

April 7 Meeting Speaker

Watch for the next *Spoonbill* for a program announcement.

Going Back to the Islands

by OG Members Bob & Maggie Honig

Trinidad lies about 10 miles from Venezuela's Orinoco delta and shares a rich and varied fauna with its mainland neighbor. Its species lists contain 366 regularly occurring birds (many breed year-round), 55 reptiles, 25 amphibians, and 617 butterflies. We will spend 8 nights at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, a 200-acre sanctuary in Trinidad's northern mountain rain forest.

Several days at the Centre will afford us an opportunity to get very familiar with the rain forest habitat at a relaxed pace. At Asa Wright Nature Centre expect afternoon tea and a pre-dinner rum punch or fruit juice every day.

On Tobago our beachfront lodging for 3 nights will be at the Blue Waters Inn, a secluded tropical hideaway with beautiful coral reefs. Field trips will include visits to a savannah, a mangrove swamp, and a seabird nesting island.

If this all sounds interesting than join us this summer July 19-31 July, 1997 as we return to T&T.

Focus on the aspect(s) of nature you like, and at your own pace. Free time is built in. Your

con't on last page

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Ornithology Group

Chairman
Bob Luckner
(713) 328-6236

Vice-Chairman
Dan Coleman
(713) 646-7028

Treasurer
Bob Ohmart
(281) 579-7403

Secretary
Janet Rathjean
(713) 280-8620

Learning Corner Coordinator
Sonny Fischer
(281) 346-2354

Field Trip Coordinator
David Sarkozi
(713) 520-5906

Clearing House
Phyllis & Tony Frank
(713) 480-7878

The Spoonbill

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

Editor
Damien Carey
(281) 361-3333/361-4120
Fax (281) 361-7333
email: wildbird@vonl.com

Mail, fax or e-mail submissions *by the 15th of every month* for *possible* inclusion. *Include the author's name, address and phone number.*

Meeting Minutes

(Sorry, no meeting minutes this issue.)

March Field Trips

Gull watching at Galveston (East Beach) and Bolivar Flats is set for March 8. Join OG member and gull aficionado Dwight Peake at 8:30 a.m. at the east end of the seawall.

While no promises can be made Dwight will do his best to help you learn and ferret out some of the rare gulls that have been seen in the area recently (e.g. Kelp Gull, Glaucous Gull, Greater Black-backed Gull, and California Gull). There should also be lots of shorebirds too.

The Yellow Rail trip to Anahuac NWR is set for March 15. OG Field Trip Coordinator and expert rail spotter David Sarkozi leads this trip. Join us as we try to scare up a few Yellow Rails the hard way at Anahuac NWR. An excellent and timely follow-up trip to Ms. Mizell February lecture.

Other rails we might expect are Virginia, Sora and, dare we say it too loudly as it might jinx us, Black Rail. Prepare to drag weighted ropes over the Yellow Rail Prairie to flush these gems. Strenuous walking required. If you have impaired mobility this trip might not be for you.

Bring rubber boots or waders and plenty of insect repellant. Meet at the sign in at the main entrance to the refuge at 8:00. Call David Sarkozi (713) 520-5906.

San Bernard NWR

February 8 - Our day started at 8:30 a.m. gray and cold. We climbed into the marsh buggy and headed out to the new Wolfweed Reservoir at San Bernard.

This project has just been completed. It has a lake that and three moist, solid units that will be managed for dabbling ducks and shore birds. While touring this area we saw lots of Shovelers, Coots, Common Snipe, and one Sora.

A couple of Red-tailed hawks and Northern Harriers soared over head as we headed into the salt marsh for the main attraction rails.

Things started slow as we moved out to a pond; seeing nothing but lots of Sedge Wrens. There were lots of waders. Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, and Reddish Egret were present, along with lots of Dowitchers, Dunlin, Willits, a Greater Yellowlegs, and Herring, Ringbilled, and Laughing Gulls. But, still no rails.

I was getting worried. A few minutes later we started to see a few things. Finally, our first rail: a Virginia. As the habitat changed to less wet (about 2 cm of water is what Kelly Mizell at Anahuac NWR has found is the preferred habitat) we started seeing more rails.

At last, our first Yellow Rail. Then five more Yellows including one the ran on the ground for a couple of seconds letting almost everyone get a good look. After that we

checked out a large flock of Snow Geese and were able to find 3 Ross' Geese in the flock. We then cut across some more freshwater marsh and flushed a King Rail.

Our final rail tally: 5 Yellow Rails, 5 Virginia Rails, 2 King Rails, 2 Sora, and lots of Coots on Moccasin Pond. Other "good birds" were Le Conte's Sparrow, Ross' Goose and Sandhill Crane.

by David Sarkozi, Field Trip Coordinator.

Alive & Well

Regarding questions at (recent) OG meetings: YES, your Checklist Committee is alive and well, and keeping everything up. Unfortunately, we are unable to make every OG meeting, but we try to do our best.

Keep those sightings coming in, and don't forget: Notes, Notes, Notes.

by David Dauphin
OG checklist Committee

Calendar

March 3 - OG Meeting. "Nesting Birds" a presentation by John Tveten. 7 p.m., Baylands Community Center.

March 8 - OG Field Trip. Gulls, gulls, gulls. Meet Dwight Peakes at the east end of the seawall 8:30 a.m. Call David Sarkozi (713) 520-5906.

March 15 - OG Field Trip. Anahuac and Yellow Rail Prairie. Rubber boots and stamina required. Meet at the sign-in station at 8 a.m. Call David Sarkozi (713) 520-5906.

March 23 - Katy Prairie Conservancy "Prairie Fair." Moose Cafe. Call (281) 391-7116 for details.

Buffalo Bayou

(1/78-1/97)
Species: 122 *(CBC record)*
Individuals: 41,695
Participants: 90
(64 in the field;
26 watching feeders)
Best Bird: Baltimore Oriole

January 4, 1997 - Despite what observers in the field as well as feeder/yard watchers reported as very low activity, the 20th annual Buffalo Bayou CBC *set a count record high number of species.* However, the final species count will probably be dropped to 121 (still a new high) as the authorities always refuse to count Ringed Turtle-dove

Why accept Monk Parakeet and not the Turtle-dove? They seem to be in equivalent circumstances—local populations of both species originated from escaped cage-birds. But for some reason, they still feel that the Houston population of Turtle-dove is not fully established and self-sustaining, although it has been around for years and seems to be increasing.

Our *90 participants also is a count high*; as usual in recent years, this undoubtedly will be the second highest number of participants on the UTC. The male Baltimore Oriole (new to the count) was on a power easement on the north side of Buffalo Bayou at Wycliff. Alas, the female Bullock's Oriole, which had been at the same feeder for nine consecutive years, was eaten by a Cooper's Hawk just after last year's CBC.

A female Summer Tanager on Shell property north of I-10 finished a close second for best bird only because it has been seen previously on this count. A Black-throated Green Warbler was on Deerwood across from the Dow property near Beltway 8. The Harris' Hawk was back at almost the exact location as last year, on a transmission tower just north of Renn Road between Eldridge and Dairy-Ashford.

The gravel pit on Tanner Road just east of Beltway 8 this year held water and a variety of ducks including Canvasback and Ruddy (plus Redhead the day following the count). Feeder/yard watchers added Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wilson's Warbler, and House Finch, plus the bulk of the Rufous Hummingbirds. Other observations of note: Harris Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk in Barker Reservoir; 2 Osprey, 1 at Braes Bayou and Gessner (could this be the same bird reported at Hermann Park?) and 1 in Addicks Reservoir; 3 Merlins at 2 locations; 4 Pine Siskin in the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center; and Red-Headed Woodpecker in Memorial Oaks Cemetery at Memorial Drive just west of Dairy-Ashford.

Yes, there are wonderful birds to be seen right here in town!

Bob Honig & Doug Williams, compilers

Mad Island Marsh

(12/93-12/97)
Species: 223 *(CBC record)*
Individuals: 3 million
Participants: 63
Best Bird: Baltimore Oriole

December 29, 1996 - We started this CBC in 1993 to showcase the properties in which we manage and the southern Matagorda County area, and to produce a quality count of regional and possibly of national significance. We initially set very high goals for a new count to obtain 190 - 200 species in a few years. In the first three years we have greatly exceeded these earlier expectations by posting 197, 204 and 209 species each year, respectively. With this years results we know that this area can produce the top two counts annually.

The unofficial report I have heard was that Corpus Christi placed first with 234 species and that we will be second with our *outstanding 223 species.* Freeport again had results below expectations and reported 195 species.

Our rapid progress as a count of national significance is mostly due to the large number of birders and landowners that were willing to help us. During the first year we had 36 counters; this year we had 62! David Sitz has been very instrumental in gaining us access to property near Matagorda and at Selkirk Island, Sam Burns has helped us gain access to the Texas Gulf properties and Wilma West with Selkirk Realty has helped us access the main woodlands at Selkirk Island.

We are especially appreciative of cooperation we receive from landowners. Houston Lighting & Power provides us access to their South Texas Project and use of a tour guide and two professional biologists. Lyondell Petroleum provides us access to their property and two staff to assist in counting birds. Mrs. Pabst allows us to bird her property in Selkirk Island. The Francin Farms, the Collin Estate, Eugene Welhfel, Carl Carmichael, the Smith Estate, and the Braman Estate all permit us to bird their properties within the count area.

Thanks to Bob Gardner and Jim Gahn for providing us free boat guiding service in the bay and river. We are especially appreciative to financial assistance for The Count Down Meal and CBC T-shirts provided by Houston Lighting & Power Company, Lyondell and Hoechst Celanese Corp. Nancy Webb assists in rounding up boats, birders and publicity.

We reported 223 species and some 3 million birds with 63 field observers utilizing 232 party-hours. This was an increase of 14 species from last year. We added 20 species that were not reported before on this count and missed 37 species that were observed during previous years for a total of *260 species during the 4 years of the survey.*

Species with extraordinary high tallies for this CBC were Horned Grebe, Great Egret, Canvasback, N. Harrier, Broad-winged Hawk, Am. Kestrel, Virginia Rail, Sora, Marbled Godwit, Great Black-backed Gull, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, E. Pheobe, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Cave Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Sedge Wren, E. Bluebird, Wood Thrush, N. Mockingbird, Sprague's Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Red-eyed Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Painted Bunting, Clay-colored Sparrow, E. Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Com. Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Potential National Highs? One judgement on the quality of an area is how many species occur in greater abundance than anywhere else in the nation. This year we posted results on 20 species that have a realistic chance of being the highest CBC count in the nation this year. The species were Great Egret, N. Harrier, White-tailed Hawk, Am. Kestrel, Yellow Rail, King Rail, Caspian Tern, E. Phoebe, Sedge Wren, Wood Thrush, Sprague's Pipit, Red-eyed Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Year-to-year fluctuations in species abundance are very common in nature and with the

Long-billed Curlews of the day! Many thanks, Sandi!

Our thanks go to the many public utilities, private businesses, and individuals that allow access to their private property and make the Houston Christmas Bird Count a continuing success. Thanks to Houston Lighting and Power, Chevron, the Port of Houston Authority, Houston Industries, and all of the others. Our special thanks to all of the great area leaders that contribute so much to making the Houston CBC one of the top counts in the nation, year after year.

In 1995, the HCBC was tied for 25th in the nation for species recorded, out of over 1600 counts. I feel this is due in large part to the efforts and knowledge of our area leaders. My only real disappointment with this year's count was the low participation by OG members. Only 24 OG members participated in this, the official count of the Ornithology Group and the Houston Outdoor Nature Club. Thanks to those OG members and the other 30 people that attended, but I would like to see a lot more participation from the over 400 ONC members next year.

P. D. Hulce compiler

Trinity River

December 30, 1996
Species: 87
Individuals: 22,263
Participants: 31
Best Bird: Henslow's Sparrow

December 30, 1996: When I arrived at the morning meeting spot, there were already over 20 people there, ready and willing to bird some new territory. The day was dawning cool and clearing and was to turn into another wonderful day for birding. Thirty one observers divided up into 7 groups and set forth to find some birds on a brand new Christmas count.

My group explored several varied habitats and had great views of an Osprey over the Trinity at Hwy. 105. By 12:30, everyone had met back at our original meeting spot to conduct a preliminary countdown and see what we needed to do for the afternoon. We were just starting, when someone yelled "hawk", and the whole group got to see the count's only Sharp-shinned Hawk, a nice adult, take a House Sparrow on the edge of the parking lot.

It soon became evident people had been working, as the sightings included Woodcock, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Purple and House Finch, and Henslow's Sparrow. The groups of participants shifted around a bit and headed out to census the remaining areas in the count circle. I saw my first Red-headed Woodpeckers of the day, and the total of redheads seen for the day, for the count, was 45. We explored some beautiful spots and about 4:00 pm, we were treated to a near adult Bald Eagle doing a close fly by, brilliant in the evening light.

By 5 pm, nearly all of the participants had gathered by the field where the Henslow's Sparrows had been seen in the morning. We formed a line and were walking the area with no success, when someone spotted Sandy Dillard some distance away, standing by a small, wet patch of blue-stem, and pointing down. The group surrounded the small patch and with little effort, the bird flushed 15 feet up onto a bare branch in a pine tree, and froze for over 10 minutes. The light wasn't perfect, but everyone still got excellent looks at this big billed, flat headed prairie sparrow, always a treat!

At the countdown dinner at Barry's Diner in Cleveland, the final tally was made and the total was 87 species. Three different groups saw Purple Finch and four groups saw Dark-eyed Junco, but like most counts this year, we also missed Golden-crowned Kinglet. Special thanks go to Stuart Marcus for working so hard to make the count a success, allowing groups onto the Trinity River NWR, contacting property owners, and numerous other contributions.

My personal thanks go to all of the great participants that came out to be charter members of a new Christmas Bird Count in an exciting area with lots of potential for the future. I hope to see you all again next year.

P. D. Hulce compiler

35 percent increase in effort, it was expected that most species tallies would be up. This tended to be the case. We reported highest ever counts for 111 species at Mad Island Marsh, and unusually low counts for 6 species.

Increases were registered in all species groups, but with higher percentages in forest dwelling species. This is the area in which we invested most of our increased help and it paid off with higher counts and discoveries of several unanticipated lingering species. The biggest declines were with diving ducks which are highly mobile groups of species that move in and out of areas depending on food supply and other environmental conditions. Aerial surveys in Matagorda Bay during early January confirmed a still very low population of diving ducks.

Brent Ortego compiler

Houston

(1913&14, 1924, 1930, 1932, 1939-96)
Species: 154
Individuals: 86,416
Participants: 54
Best Bird: Lesser Black-backed Gull

December 21, 1996: The sky was blue with scattered clouds, the water was calm, and in contrast to last year, there was not a trace of fog over the ship channel. The 58th consecutive Houston Christmas Bird Count, and the 63rd HCBC in all, enjoyed beautiful weather, with temperatures in the mid 50's to low 70's.

Fifty-four participants proceeded to search the remaining pockets of habitat in the Baytown area Brown Pelicans made their 9th consecutive appearance on the HCBC, and in excellent numbers. The second highest number ever, 251 individuals, was recorded. The record is 320 individuals in 1950.

A. K. Stoley took his Area 1 birders and found a count exclusive Golden-crowned Kinglet and Field Sparrow. David Bradford's Area 2 group produced several exclusives, including Sprague's Pipit, White-winged Dove, White-crowned and Harris' Sparrow. Rob Thacker's crew in Area 3 found the count's only Green Heron, as well as over 3000 Snow Geese. Birding in area 5, Judy Behrens and companions had over 200 Cedar Waxwings and Northern Bobwhite, an increasingly elusive bird on this count.

David Marracks teams in Area 6 found many exclusives, including White-winged Scoter, Brown Creeper, and an amazing 8 Red-headed Woodpeckers. Richard Uzar, birding in Area 7 found one of two Black and White Warblers and 5 American Oystercatchers. Area 8 leader Ed Rozenburg turned up count exclusives Reddish Egret and 5 Black Scoters. Birding in Area9, San Jacinto State Park, Don Francis and others found a Peregrine Falcon, often regular on top of the monument, 200 Hooded Mergansers, and a single group of 65 Stilt Sandpipers.

John LaGroue, leading in Area 10, located the counts only Snipe, one of two Greater Scaup, and 120 Black Skimmers. Area 11 fielded two parties into the ship channel once again this year. Thanks to Eddie Seidensticker with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for ferrying P. D. Hulce and several others to Atkinson and Hogg Islands. This area produced many count only birds, including 16 Clapper Rails, 2 Horned Larks, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull. The hero of the count award goes to Sandi Hoover, who answered the call at the 11th hour to lead the MV Bay Ranger to explore Burnet and Scott Bay, and Alexander Island.

For the second time in three years, the Ranger had problems and would not start. Although delayed for several hours, Sandi managed to get another boat out and found the only two

Old River

(1966-96)
Species: 138
Individuals: 78,218
Participants: 34
Best Bird: Black-necked Stilt

January 3, 1997: The morning of the Old River CBC dawned cool and extremely foggy over much of the count area, especially the waterways. By mid-morning, however, the fog was burning off and the day turned out to be one of the most beautiful of the entire count period.

Thirty four eager birdwatchers headed out into the wonderful woodlands and waterways of the Old, Lost, and Trinity River areas.

By 5:30, people were starting to gather at the Pizza Inn for the countdown dinner, and excitement was high. There was a new stakeout for the Bald Eagle's nest, and sure enough, Lu and Grady Skillern found both birds there in the afternoon.

Marilyn Crane and her group also saw an eagle in their area. The best birds of the count, however, were the three Black-necked Stilts, seen for the first time ever on the count, also by the Skillerns.

Other good birds seen included the count's second sighting of Yellow-throated Vireo and White-winged Doves, and only the 4th sighting of White-tailed Kite. Twenty species of birds seen on last year's count, including Golden-crowned Kinglet and Purple Finch, were missed this year, as they have been on most of the CBC's this year.

The final tally for this year was 138 species and 78,218 individuals. Thirty four participants was the second highest ever for the count. Thanks to all of the area leaders and participants for coming out and I hope to see you all again next year.

P. D. Hulce compiler

Spring Creek

(1981-96)
Species: 87
Individuals: 10,708
Participants: 32
Best Bird: Redhead

December 28, 1996 - Thirty-two participants in 5 teams birded the Spring Creek count circle and tallied 86 total species—four more than last year and just above our average. The 10,708 Total Individuals counted was also above our average and the highest number reported since 1990.

We escaped the rain this year but had to deal with fog instead. The morning was half over before we could see the trees, must less the birds. People kept wiping their glasses and binoculars but it didn't help to reduce the fog one bit. However, when the fog did bum off it was a great day for birding.

The (Best Bird) for our '96 count was a Redhead that was seen swimming with a group of Lesser Scaup. This is the first sighting of this bird since our count was started. It was a good year for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers with 9 reported. Also, 12 Brown-headed Nuthatches were counted this year compared to zip last year. It was also a bumper year for American Robins arid Cedar Waxwings—a new record for the number of waxwings. On the plus side of minus, we did not count a single Brown-headed Cowbird this year.

After the count, the group met at the El Planque Mexican Restaurant and Cantina for the Count Down dinner to tally up the species seen during the count.

In 1981, the Piney Woods Wildlife Society initiated the Spring Creek count to monitor the effect of spreading urbanization in The Woodlands area. The count circle is approximately centered at 1-45 and Rayford-Sawdust Road.

John Jones compiler

NEXT MEETING: Monday, March 3, 7 P.M. at Baylands Community Center, 6400 Bissonett.

December 1996 Report

Editors: Phyllis & TonyFrank

Mail CH submission to:
Clearing House (OG)
P.O. Box 271374
Houston TX 77277-1374

A total of 194 species were recorded for the month. The Kelp Gull returned to East Beach among many interesting reports for the month. The local Christmas Counts will be compiled separately. We have currently in hand 4 of the local counts.

All reports are due March 3rd. Readers are reminded that all decisions regarding checklist status are made by the checklist committee. Publication of a rarity does not imply acceptance of the record by the editors or the committee. The CH format remains the same this month. The listing uses the following format: bird name, early late dates, reports/total and summary by county or detailed listing. The format of the county summary is as follows: county designation - number of reports/number of birds. The detailed listing format is as follows: county-(number of birds) day, observer code. Very rare birds are underlined. Birds with no previous record on date or vagrant status appear in bold. Birds new to the checklist are capitalized and underlined. Please remember to submit notes on birds very rare or vagrant status. And with all the reminders completed - *on to the birds.*

Loon, Common 21-21 1/3 HA-(3)21,PDH
Grebe, Least 15-17 2/4 JE-TP(3)15,JW; JE-TP(1)17,WH
Grebe, Pied-bill 1-31 11/88 BR-1/16 CO-1/12 FB-1/6 GA-3/45 JE-5/9
Grebe, Eared 1-30 6/36 CO-1/6 GA-1/11 JE-4/19
Pelican, Amer Wht 1-31 9/1305 FB-1/12 GA-3/243 JE-5/1050
Pelican, Brown 1-30 6/189 BR-1/2 GA-3/116 HA-1/70 JE-1/1
Corm, Dbl-crested 1-30 10/95 CH-1/1 FB-1/1 GA-3/64 JE-4/27 OR-1/2
Corm, Neotropic 1-30 8/319 BR-1/11 GA-3/27 HA-1/250 JE-3/31
cormorant, sp. 25-25 1/1 JE-(1)25,JW
Anhinga 7-28 3/26 BR-(3)7,WP; FB-BB(1)28,PTF; FB-(22)28,PDH
Bittern, American 7-7 1/1 BR-(1)7,WP
Heron, Great Blue 1-30 11/58 BR-1/5 CO-1/10 FB-1/1 GA-3/19 JE-5/23
Egret, Great 1-30 13/150 BR-1/7 CO-1/25 FB-1/3 GA-3/77 JE-7/38
Egret, Snowy 1-30 12/85 BR-2/27 FB-1/1 GA-3/28 JE-6/29
Heron, Little Blu 1-28 5/9 BR-1/1 FB-1/1 GA-2/6 JE-1/1
Heron, Tricolored 1-30 6/10 CO-1/2 GA-1/2 JE-4/6
Egret, Reddish 1-22 3/12 BR-1/1 GA-2/11
Egret, Cattle 1-31 9/86 BR-1/42 CO-1/2 GA-2/28 JE-5/14
Nt-Heron, Blk-crn 21-30 2/86 BR-(85)21,JJW; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Ibis, White 1-31 9/2424 BR-2/27 FB-1/6 GA-2/126 JE-4/2265
Ibis, White-faced 1-30 6/33 BR-1/19 CO-1/4 JE-4/10
plegadis, sp. 1-31 6/1947 GA-1/10 JE-5/1937
Spoonbill, Roseat 1-23 5/16 BR-1/2 GA-2/11 JE-2/3
Whsl-Duck, Fulvs 29-29 1/9 FB-(9)29,PDH
Whsl-Duck, Blk-bd 7-28 3/610 BR-(496)7,WP; FB-BB(14)28,PTF; FB-(100)28,PDH
Goose, Gr Wht-frn 1-28 3/96 CH-1/6 CO-1/60 FB-1/30
Goose, Snow 1-30 7/3938 BR-1/118 CH-1/10 CO-1/1300 FB-1/960 JE-3/1550
Goose, Ross' 21-30 4/31 CO-1/10 HA-1/3 JE-1/2 MA-1/16
Duck, Wood 28-28 1/2 FB-BB(2)28,PTF
Teal, Green-wing 1-31 8/4312 BR-1/2 CO-1/300 GA-1/10 JE-5/4000
Duck, Mottled 1-21 7/60 BR-2/27 CO-1/2 GA-1/15 JE-3/16
Mallard 7-22 2/33 BR-(8)7,WP; BR-(25)22,PDH
Pintail, Northern 1-30 3/19 CO-1/16 JE-2/3
Teal, Blue-winged 1-31 8/483 BR-1/74 CO-1/2 JE-6/407
Teal, Cinnamon 1-30 4/27 BR-(5)7,WP; CO-(9)1,DLR; FB-(12)28,PDH; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Shoveler, Northrn 1-30 9/2910 BR-2/66 CO-1/100 GA-1/25 JE-5/2719
Gadwall 1-30 8/495 BR-1/6 CO-1/4 FB-1/5 GA-1/4 JE-4/476
Wigeon, American 7-30 6/126 BR-1/4 GA-1/4 JE-3/39 MA-1/79
Canvasback 23-23 1/67 MA-(67)23,PDH
Redhead 1-30 3/1608 BR-1/1600 CO-1/3 JE-1/5
Duck, Ring-necked 7-31 6/226 BR-1/6 FB-1/40 GA-1/10 JE-2/125 MA-1/45
Scaup, Greater 13-28 5/6 BR-(1)22,PDH; FB-(1)28,PDH; GA-EB(1)13,PDH; GA-YBR(1)21,JJW; GA-(2)26,PDH
Scaup, Lesser 1-31 13/4364 BR-2/34 CH-1/3 CO-1/20 GA-2/57 HA-1/2000 JE-6/2250
Oldsquaw 14-31 3/2 JE-TP(1)14,JW; JE-TP(1)15,JW; JE-TP(2)31,JW
Goldeneye, Common 15-30 4/9 HA-(6)21,PDH; JE-TP(1)15,JW; JE-TP(1)17,WH; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Bufflehead 1-21 6/43 CO-1/4 GA-1/1 HA-1/30 JE-3/8
Merganser, Hooded 1-21 4/109 GA-2/8 HA-1/100 JE-1/1
Merganser, Red-br 1-21 3/62 GA-3/62
Duck, Ruddy 1-31 7/3125 CO-1/70 GA-1/5 JE-5/3050
Duck, Masked 22-28 3/1 FB-BB(1)22,JWR; FB-BB(1)27,JWR; FB-BB(1)28,PDH
Vulture, Black 7-30 3/157 BR-1/5 FB-1/150 JE-1/2
Vulture, Turkey 1-30 12/66 BR-1/14 CH-1/3 CO-1/24 FB-1/11 JE-7/13 OR-1/1
Kite, White-taild 1-25 4/15 BR-1/2 GA-2/12 JE-1/1
Harrier, Northern 1-30 10/40 BR-1/2 CO-1/24 GA-2/6 JE-6/8
Hawk, Sharp-shin 22-28 3/3 BR-(1)22,PDH; FB-BB(1)28,PTF; JE-(1)25,JW
Hawk, Red-shouldr 7-28 2/13 BR-(6)7,WP; FB-BB(7)28,PTF

Hawk, White-taild 1-27 3/8 CO-2/5 FB-1/3
Hawk, Zone-tailed 27-27 1/1 CO-(1)27,PDH
Hawk, Red-tailed 1-30 15/73 BR-1/4 CH-2/6 CO-1/18 FB-1/2 GA-2/19 JE-8/24
Hawk, Ferruginous 27-27 1/1 CO-(1)27,PDH
Caracara, Crested 1-28 4/18 CO-2/10 FB-1/1 MA-1/7
Kestrel, American 1-30 14/62 BR-1/4 CH-1/1 CO-1/20 FB-1/1 GA-3/17 JE-7/19
Merlin 14-22 3/3 BR-1/1 GA-1/1 JE-1/1
Falcon, Peregrine 1-1 1/3 GA-(3)1,JW
Bobwhite, Northrn 22-22 1/16 BR-(16)22,PDH
Rail, Yellow 22-22 1/3 BR-(3)22,PDH
Rail, Clapper 21-22 2/17 BR-(1)22,PDH; HA-(16)21,PDH
Rail, Virginia 22-22 1/8 BR-(8)22,PDH
Sora 21-22 2/2 BR-(1)22,PDH; HA-(1)21,PDH
Moorhen, Common 7-30 6/66 BR-1/12 FB-1/17 JE-4/37
Coot, American 1-30 9/3328 BR-1/180 FB-1/7 GA-2/89 JE-5/3052
Crane, Sandhill 21-28 2/88 FB-BB(1)28,PTF; GA-(87)21,JJW
Plover, Blk-belli 1-21 3/536 GA-3/536
Plover, Snowy 1-21 2/27 GA-(26)1,JW; GA-(1)21,JJW
Plover, Wilson's 1-1 1/4 GA-BF(4)1,JW
Plover, Semipalm 1-21 3/29 GA-2/26 HA-1/3
Plover, Piping 1-21 2/114 GA-(75)1,JW; GA-(39)21,JJW
Killdeer 1-30 11/243 BR-1/17 CO-1/80 FB-1/15 GA-3/46 JE-5/85
Oystercatcher, Am 13-21 2/18 GA-EB(2)13,PDH; GA-(16)21,JJW
Stilt, Black-neck 1-31 10/700 BR-1/200 GA-3/65 JE-6/435
Avocet, American 1-30 6/321 GA-3/315 JE-3/6
Yellowlegs, Great 1-25 6/15 BR-1/3 GA-2/5 JE-3/7
Yellowlegs, Less 1-30 6/26 GA-2/4 JE-4/22
Sandppr, Solitary 15-15 1/1 JE-TP(1)15,JW
Willet 1-21 3/157 GA-3/157
Sandppr, Spotted 14-21 3/8 HA-(6)21,PDH; JE-TP(1)14,JW; JE-TP(1)17,WH
Curlew, Long-bill 1-21 3/33 GA-3/33
Godwit, Marbled 1-21 3/87 GA-3/87
Turnstone, Ruddy 21-21 1/2 GA-(2)21,JJW
Knot, Red 1-1 1/1 GA-(1)1,JW
Sanderling 1-13 2/920 GA-(900)1,JW; GA-EB(20)13,PDH
Sandppr, Western 1-25 3/605 GA-1/603 JE-2/2
Sandppr, Least 14-25 4/175 GA-1/5 JE-3/170
Dunlin 1-21 4/911 GA-3/906 JE-1/5
Sandppr, Stilt 21-26 2/67 GA-(2)26,PDH; HA-(65)21,PDH
Dowitcher, S-bill 1-30 4/261 GA-3/211 JE-1/50
Dowitcher, L-bill 14-15 2/380 JE-TP(100)14,JW; JE-(280)15,JW
Snipe, Common 14-25 2/30 JE-TP(2)14,JW; JE-(28)25,JW
Gull, Laughing 1-31 9/6158 BR-1/7 GA-3/5800 JE-5/351
Gull, Bonaparte's 21-30 2/55 GA-(5)21,JJW; JE-TP(50)30,JW
Gull, Ring-billed 1-31 7/2488 GA-3/2313 JE-4/175
Gull, Herring 1-30 5/92 GA-3/69 JE-2/23
Gull, Lsr Blk-bck 21-30 2/2 HA-(1)21,PDH; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Gull, Glaucous 1-21 3/3 GA-(1)1,JW; GA-EB(1)13,PDH; GA-(1)21,JJW
Gull, Kelp 1-21 3/3 GA-(1)1,JW; GA-EB(1)13,PDH; GA-(1)21,JJW
Tern, Caspian 1-30 4/43 BR-1/1 GA-2/36 JE-1/6
Tern, Royal 1-21 3/261 GA-3/261
Tern, Sandwich 13-13 1/1 GA-EB(1)13,PDH
Tern, Common 1-21 3/13 GA-3/13
Tern, Forster's 1-30 6/236 GA-3/225 JE-3/11
Skimmer, Black 1-21 3/1178 GA-3/1178
Dove, Rock 1-21 6/166 CO-1/30 GA-2/51 JE-3/85
Dove, White-wingd 21-26 2/16 GA-(1)21,JJW; GA-(15)26,PDH
Dove, Mourning 1-30 8/128 BR-1/16 CO-1/70 FB-1/21 GA-2/12 JE-3/9
Dove, Inca 28-28 1/8 FB-BB(8)28,PTF
Owl, Barn 22-22 1/1 BR-(1)22,PDH
Owl, Barred 28-31 2/2 FB-BB(1)28,PTF; JE-TP(1)31,JW
Owl, Short-eared 22-22 1/1 BR-(1)22,PDH
Hummer, Buf-belly 1-31 1/1 HA-(1)1-31,JWR
Hummer, Blk-chind 24-31 1/1 HA-(1)24-31,JWR
Hummer, Rufous 1-31 2/3 HA-(1)1-31,PTF; HA-(2)1-31,JWR
Kingfisher, Beltd 1-25 6/21 BR-1/1 GA-3/13 JE-2/7
Wdpeckr, Red-head 7-7 1/2 BR-(2)7,WP
Wdpeckr, Red-bell 7-30 4/49 BR-1/7 FB-1/38 JE-2/4
Sapsuck, Yel-bell 7-28 2/5 BR-(3)7,WP; FB-BB(2)28,PTF
Wdpeckr, Lddr-bck 23-23 1/5 MA-(5)23,PDH
Wdpeckr, Downy 7-28 2/11 BR-(1)7,WP; FB-BB(10)28,PTF
Flicker, Northern 28-28 1/3 FB-BB(3)28,PTF
Wdpeckr, Pileated 7-28 2/4 BR-(1)7,WP; FB-BB(3)28,PTF
Phoebe, Eastern 7-30 4/21 BR-1/9 FB-1/10 JE-2/2
Flycatch, Vermiln 7-27 3/5 BR-(2)7,WP; CO-(1)27,PDH; MA-(2)23,PDH
Flycatch, Ash-thr 23-23 1/3 MA-(3)23,PDH
Kingbird, Couch's 27-27 1/1 CO-(1)27,PDH
Lark, Horned 1-21 2/19 GA-BF(17)1,JW; HA-(2)21,PDH
Swallow, Tree 15-31 5/205 FB-1/4 JE-4/201
Swallow, Cave 23-23 1/6 MA-(6)23,PDH
Jay, Blue 14-28 4/10 FB-1/3 GA-1/3 JE-2/4
Crow, American 1-28 4/165 BR-1/28 CO-1/13 FB-1/123 GA-1/1
Crow, Fish 14-31 5/250 JE-5/250
Chickadee, Carol 7-31 3/42 BR-1/14 FB-1/26 JE-1/2
Titmouse, Tufted 7-30 3/64 BR-1/27 FB-1/36 JE-1/1
Wren, Carolina 7-31 4/30 BR-1/15 FB-1/12 JE-2/3
Wren, House 1-28 3/8 BR-1/1 CO-1/4 FB-1/3
Wren, Winter 27-27 1/1 CO-(1)27,PDH
Wren, Sedge 1-1 2/3 CO-(1)1,DLR; GA-BF(2)1,JW
Wren, Marsh 1-21 3/15 CO-1/1 HA-1/12 JE-1/2
Kinglet, Gold-crn 28-28 1/2 FB-(2)28,PDH
Kinglet, Ruby-crn 7-30 4/46 BR-1/6 FB-1/33 JE-2/7
Gnatcach, Blu-gra 7-30 6/26 BR-1/2 FB-1/4 JE-4/20
Bluebird, Eastern 7-30 4/78 BR-1/19 FB-1/43 JE-2/16
Thrush, Hermit 23-30 2/2 JE-SW(1)23,JW; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Robin, American 1-31 8/2696 BR-1/2120 FB-1/511 GA-1/1 JE-5/64
Catbird, Gray 21-21 1/1 HA-(1)21,PDH
Mockingbird, N 1-30 12/50 BR-1/11 CO-1/6 FB-1/9 GA-2/10 JE-7/14
Thrasher, Brown 23-23 1/1 JE-SW(1)23,JW

December Clearing House

Pipit, American 1-31 7/42 GA-2/5 JE-5/37
Pipit, Sprague's 1-29 3/11 CO-(2)1,DLR; CO-(5)27,PDH; FB-(4)29,PDH
Waxwing, Cedar 7-30 5/1030 BR-1/125 FB-2/815 JE-2/90
Shrike, Loggerhed 1-30 13/66 BR-2/9 CO-1/4 FB-1/5 GA-2/22 JE-7/26
Starling, Euro 1-30 10/720 BR-1/7 CO-1/90 GA-3/551 JE-5/72
Vireo, White-eyed 27-30 3/5 CO-(2)27,PDH; FB-(2)29,PDH; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Vireo, Solitary 7-30 5/15 BR-(1)7,WP; CO-(10)27,PDH; FB-BB(2)28,PTF; JE-SW(1)23,JW; JE-TP(1)30,JW
Warb, Orange-crn 1-30 5/16 BR-1/3 CO-1/1 FB-1/6 JE-2/6
Warb, Yellow-rump 1-28 5/130 BR-1/12 CO-1/1 FB-1/102 JE-2/15
Warb, Pine 28-30 2/22 FB-BB(2)28,PTF; JE-TP(20)30,JW
Warb, Palm 23-29 2/21 FB-(1)29,PDH; MA-(20)23,PDH
Warb, Blk-and-wht 28-28 1/2 FB-BB(2)28,PTF
Yellowthroat, Com 17-17 1/1 JE-TP(1)17,WH
Warb, Wilson's 28-28 2/2 FB-BB(1)28,PTF; FB-(1)28,PDH
Tanager, Summer 23-23 1/1 MA-(1)23,PDH
Tanager, Scarlet 5-5 1/1 HA-(1)5,BB
Cardinal, Northrn 7-30 4/71 BR-1/16 FB-1/50 JE-2/5
Sparrow, Chipping 27-28 2/202 CO-(200)27,PDH; FB-BB(2)28,PTF
Sparrow, Field 1-27 3/76 CO-(1)1,DLR; CO-(60)27,PDH; MA-(15)23,PDH
Sparrow, Vesper 1-27 3/407 CO-(6)1,DLR; CO-(400)27,PDH; GA-(1)21,JJW
Sparrow, Lark 27-27 1/8 CO-(8)27,PDH
Sparrow, Savannah 1-30 9/457 BR-1/6 CH-1/10 CO-2/395 GA-3/28 JE-2/18
Sparrow, Grasshop 22-29 4/26 BR-(6)22,PDH; CO-(6)27,PDH; FB-(2)29,PDH; MA-(12)23,PDH
Sparrow, Le Conte 1-29 4/83 BR-(60)22,PDH; CO-(2)1,DLR; CO-(1)27,PDH; FB-(20)29,PDH
Sparrow, Nl Sh-tl 21-21 1/150 HA-(150)21,PDH
Sparrow, Seaside 21-21 1/4 HA-(4)21,PDH
Sparrow, Song 27-27 1/20 CO-(20)27,PDH
Sparrow, Lincolns 1-27 2/64 CO-(4)1,DLR; CO-(60)27,PDH
Sparrow, Swamp 27-28 2/9 CO-(8)27,PDH; FB-BB(1)28,PTF
Sparrow, Wht-thrt 7-28 3/117 BR-(21)7,WP; CO-(90)27,PDH; FB-BB(6)28,PTF
Sparrow, Wht-crn 27-28 2/84 CO-(80)27,PDH; FB-BB(4)28,PTF
Sparrow, Harris' 27-27 1/35 CO-(35)27,PDH
Blackbird, Red-wg 1-30 10/20246 BR-1/35 CH-1/200 CO-1/500 FB-1/12000 GA-1/450 JE-5/7061
Meadowlark, East 1-21 8/152 BR-1/11 CH-1/8 CO-1/110 GA-3/21 JE-2/2
Meadowlark, West 27-27 1/1 CO-(1)27,PDH
Blackbird, Brewer 1-27 2/520 CO-(20)1,DLR; CO-(500)27,PDH
Grackle, Gr-tail 1-30 7/225 BR-1/17 GA-3/131 JE-3/77
Grackle, Common 7-30 7/11130 BR-1/309 FB-1/10000 JE-5/821
Cowbird, Brn-head 1-1 1/120 CO-(120)1,DLR
Goldfinch, Amer 7-30 3/180 BR-(15)7,WP; FB-BB(145)28,PTF; JE-TP(20)30,JW
Sparrow, House 14-25 3/25 GA-1/10 JE-2/15

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 90,628

LIST OF OBSERVER CODES: Bob Behrstock (BB); Don & Lee Richardson (DLR); John & Jana Whittle (JJW); John Whittle (JW); Jan & Will Risser (JWR); P. D. Hulce (PDH); Phyllis & Tony Frank (PTF); John Whittle, Keith Hansen (WH); Warren Pruess (WP)

LIST OF LOCATION CODES: Brazos Bend St. Park (BB); Bolivar Flats (BF); East Beach (EB); High Island (HI); Sabine Woods (SW); Tyrrell Park (TP); Yacht Basin Road (YBR)

LIST OF COUNTY CODES: Brazoria (BR); Chambers (CH); Colorado (CO); Fort Bend (FB); Galveston (GA); Harris (HA); Jefferson (JE); Matagorda (MA); Orange (OR); Upper tExas Coast (U)

Masked Duck - J.&W. Risser December 22 and 27, 1997

Cinnamon duck with black markings on sides and back. Stiff, spiky black tail cocked over back. Black invading face, which had pale superciliary stripe and stripe on central cheek. Bill blue-gray.

Oldsquaw - J. Whittle December 14 and 15, 1996

Cattail Marsh, Tyrrell Park. Duck noticeably larger than nearby Ruddy Ducks. Sat very low in the water. Head white, with dark brown black crown ending in black line down the back of the neck. Large fairly well delineated dark brown black face patch, behind and below eye extending onto upper neck. Wings and back dark brown. In flight and while diving, the dark tail had a narrow white edge. Medium dark gray bill with a hint of bluish tint, and prominent "nail" halfway along bill. Photos taken.

Kelp Gull - J. Whittle December 1, 1996

East Beach. Large gull, about the size or a little larger than Herring Gull. Head and bill shape similar the Herring Gull. Wings projected somewhat beyond tip of tail. Back and wings black. The head was white with moderate

sprinkling of light brown flecks, especially on the lower neck. Broad white trailing edge to secondaries very obvious on perched bird and equally obvious in flight. Large, yellowish (not bright yellow) bill with small darker spot near tip of lower mandible. Very washed out yellow legs, almost white. Photos taken.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - J. Whittle December 30, 1996

Cattail Marsh, Tyrrell Park. Large gull, substantially larger than Ring-billed. Perhaps slightly smaller that Herring Gulls. The mantle and wings were a dark slate gray, darker than nearby Laughing Gulls. The legs appeared to be quite yellow. The bill was medium yellow with a red spot near the tip of the lower mandible. Eye color did not appear dark at distance.

Solitary Sandpiper - J. Whittle December 15, 1996

Cattail Marsh, Tyrrell Park. Two not call was heard three times. Significantly larger than Least Sandpipers. Had short, somewhat sharp bill. White underneath. Dark brown speckled with white on top, lighter towards the upper back, darker and blacker on outer wings. Prominent white eye-ring and almost forming a line in front of eye. Legs were mud covered. When the bird flew, it had a black line lengthwise down the rump and central tail, with very distinct dark barring across the tail and the base of the rump. No wing stripe.

Buff-Bellied Hummingbird - J.&W. Risser December 1-31, 1996

Green gorget, head and back. Cinnamon tail with fork. Central tail feathers green with small cinnamon centers. Small amount of green at tips of other tail feathers. Lower breast and abdomen warm buff. Belly near legs white. Undertail coverts slightly darker than abdomen. Bill red with black tip. An adult bird.

Scarlet Tanager (female) - R. Behrstock Dec. 5, 1996.

Drake St., Houston. 9:00 — 9:10 a.m. Sunny bright. Distance to bird 15 — 30 feet. Height of bird 10 — 15 feet above ground. 10X binocs. Description: Bill thick and colored bright yellow-horn. All of underparts fairly bright yellow. Upperparts bright greenish-yellow. Folded wing showed dark primaries and many of the wing coverts had blackish centers. There were no wing bars. Bird was ca. eight inches long. Observed for about five minutes in all, as it changed trees in two yards. Behavior was sluggish, most of the time it just sat and peered into the foliage. No vocalizations heard.

P.D. Hulce submitted notes for Glaucous Gull, Stilt Sandpiper and Lesser Black-backed Gull.

Going Back to the Islands

trip can be very relaxed, or you can go on additional, optional field trips (at extra cost) that we can arrange for you. This is not a trip focused strictly on birds, nor plants, nor butterflies, etc. — it's all of the above.

In a talk to the OG a few years ago, Jim Peterson of the Dallas Museum said Asa Wright Nature Centre has "the best porch in the New World." Sit and watch wildlife come to you. How about 20+ life birds before breakfast? Plus Tegu and Amaiva lizards, butterflies, and Agouti.

Our previous trips have seen Bearded Bellbird, Oilbird, Blue-crowned Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, hummingbirds, antbirds, manakins, trogons, tanagers, Chestnut and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Blackbird, Cocoa Thrush, army ants, Morpho and Caligo buttterflies, helicopter damselflies, Scarlet Ibis, Common Potoo, Silky Anteater, four-eyed fish, Red Howler Monkey, Red-bellied Macaw, Sooty Tern, Brown Noddy, nesting Brown and Red-footed Boobies and Red-billed Tropicbird, plus much more. Night hikes reveal a different world with moths, arachnids, bats, leafcutter ants, marsupial frogs, land crabs, and owls.

There will be daily opportunities for snorkeling in Tobago – the reefs are fabulous! This year's trip will visit Tobago during their island-wide Heritage Festival. There should be interesting cultural events too.

The food is wonderful; at Asa Wright Nature Centre they grow most, if not all, of the fruits and vegetables right on the property. The people are extremely friendly.

The trip package of $2,355 *includes almost everything* (airfare, lodging, all meals, airport transfers, guides, tips and five off-site field trips to different habitats). The trip package price does not include an $18 departure tax on our way back to the U.S., optional field trips and, of course, souvenirs.

Quoted price is based on current airfare and is subject to change. Package is based on double occupancy; for single room add $340.

Please reserve your places right away— we cannot hold space indefinitely. Group size is limited to 22 (plus the Honigs). So be in touch with us soon: phone Maggie or Bob Honig, (713) 665-6963; email: MandRHonig@aol.com.

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

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