



# THE SPOONBILL

Volume XXV, No. 8  
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PUBLISHED BY THE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, OUTDOOR NATURE CLUB, HOUSTON, TEXAS

## COMING EVENTS

- Sat. Dec. 13 OG field trip to HL&P Cooling Ponds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at roadside park on IH 10 at Trinity River bridge. Leader is Ben Feltner. Bring lunch and insect repellent, and sack for aluminum.
- Sat. Dec. 20 Houston Christmas Count. Compiler: Paul Nimmons -- 682-3597. Details in November SPOONBILL. Come one, come all, we need your eyes!
- Sun. Dec. 21 Freeport Christmas Count. Compiler: Victor Emanuel - 528-3725. Contact Victor for information.
- Sat. Dec. 27 Atwater Prairie Chicken NWR Christmas Count. Anyone wishing to participate in the count, be at Refuge headquarters at 7:00 a.m. on Dec. 27. (Approximately 1 1/2 hours from Houston). Refuge headquarters can be reached by exiting off IH 10 at Sealy and taking Hwy 36 south to FM 3013, then traveling southwest for 10 miles to the refuge entrance sign. The count will begin at approximately 7:30 a.m. and will end about 3:30 p.m. Lee Herzberger, refuge manager, says "We are in the process of filing for an official Christmas Bird Count from the National Audubon Society, but regardless of whether our application is approved, we will have a Christmas Bird Count on December 27. This count will be very helpful to the refuge not only in building species but also in gathering information on avian status."
- Tues. Dec. 30 Welder Wildlife Refuge Christmas Count. Interested persons are requested to meet at gate, 6:30 a.m. Instructions and assignments will be given at that time. Lunch and hot drinks will be provided to participants.
- Mon. Jan 5 Photography Group regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Manor Auditorium. Mrs. E.W. Taylor will present a slide program on Bird Banding. For several years Mr. and Mrs. Taylor joined Dr. Frank Novy at High Island for his annual banding season. With the opportunity of observing the techniques of banding as done by an expert, they profited from close-up observation of many species of birds.
- Wed. Jan. 7 ONC Nature Film, "Our Eastern National Parks", 8:00 p.m., Pershing Jr. High Auditorium, 7000 Braes Blvd.
- Sat. Jan. 10 OG field trip to Cinco Ranch in west Harris County. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in parking lot of Addicks Bank. Exit IH 10 at Addicks exit, make U-turn under freeway, and bank will be on your right. Bring lunch and insect repellent.
- Tues. Jan. 13 ONC regular meeting, 8:00 p.m. at the Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive. The program will be "Archeology in Southeast Texas", presented by W.L. Fullen.
- Fri. Jan. 16 Houston Audubon Society Nature Film, "Vanishing American Wildlife", 8:00 p.m. Music Hall.
- Sat. Jan 24 Audubon field trip to Palmetto State Park, near Luling, Texas, led by Fred Webster of Austin. Meet at Park headquarters at 8:00 a.m.
- Jan. 2--22 Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute is presenting "Big Bend Wilderness Studies", an opportunity to learn with area specialists while backpacking in and around Big Bend National Park, concentrating on biology and geology programs. Contact Harry Brister - 681-6456, or the Institute at Alpine.
- May 10--14, 1976 Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute is announcing a field seminar, "Birds of the Big Bend" led by Roland Wauer, and assisted by Grainger Hunt.

There is a \$75 registration fee (payable on application), participants are responsible for their own food and lodging (motel or camping), though the CDRI staff will assist in making arrangements. A minimum of 12 persons and maximum of 20 is planned. If you are interested, plans should be made now, for May is a popular time in the Big Bend, and this is a great opportunity to learn from Roland Wauer, who is the author of "Birds of the Big Bend National Park and Vicinity", and Grainger Hunt, PhD, Chief Scientist of the CDRI, and principal investigator of ongoing research on birds of prey in the Chihuahuan Desert. Harry Brister has brochures and further information, or write CDRI, Box 1334, Alpine Texas 79830.

#### PAST EVENTS

Wes Cureton reports on the November OG field trip: 20 members and 5 guests were conducted around the Atwater Prairie Chicken NWR by assistant manager, John Kirk. The first stop was a field where the prairie chickens are known to gather. We were surprised to learn that the males do some booming in the fall, but not for courtship. We heard no booming, but did see three of the birds. Also at this spot were two Caracaras, Marsh Hawk, Bobwhite, Savannah and Grasshopper sparrows. Sandhill cranes and various ducks and geese passed overhead.

We then travelled to the wooded area and recorded yellow-bellied sapsucker, fox and white-throated sparrows, cedar waxwings, and barred owl. Here manager Lee Herzberger, who had been hunting near the refuge, joined us, and we were able to examine closely his mottled duck and male and female green-winged teal.

Our identification skills were especially tested by a hawk, that, instead of being the immature bald eagle some thought it, turned out to be an extremely dark (Melanistic?) high-flying redtail hawk. Almost passed off as another redtail was a white-tail hawk. (After leaving the refuge, however, one group got a better look at two of these beautiful raptors). John Kirk says a pair may nest in the vicinity. The refuge headquarters was our lunch stop. We thank John Kirk and Lee Herzberger for their kind cooperation.

#### AROUND AND ABOUT

\*\* Nancy Moore, editor of THE CARDINAL, one of our exchange newsletters, has used ham radio operators to send out the word that a Northern Shrike is once again in the Wichita Falls area. You can call Nancy for directions at AC 817--692-2897.

\*\* The use of a tape recorder to call up birds is very tempting, but perhaps our use of it is lessening our birding expertise, and increasing possible harm to the birds. In BIRDING (reprinted in The Prairie Horned Lark), Mrs. Dickie Bogle, Portal, Arizona, cautions:

"May I respectfully request that you think twice before using a tape recording of the song of the birds you desperately want to add to your life list? My reasons follow:

1. The natural reaction of the male songster is that another male is threatening his territory---at least for territorial males. This must be disturbing to his breeding habits and perhaps even to the success of his mating. Constant recordings, often all through the day by different groups must do harm to the bird's natural patterns. One birder gave the excuse that birds like competition! Avian, yes, Homo Sapiens, no.
2. Good birders usually have good ears and good eyes. Let's use them. Listen for the voice, sit quietly and wait for it; or walk in the right habitat and listen. Once the voice is located, it is seldom a problem to locate the bird you want. Admittedly, a tape recording saves time and almost insures seeing the bird. Birders will argue that they use the tape for only a few minutes at most. Multiply this few minutes by dozens of birders and what is the result?

Several experiences have alerted me to the increasing use of tapes to locate wanted birds, thus convincing me never to use my tapes except indoors to implant the singing in my sound bank. At Mio, Michigan, a friend and I had just had the satisfactory experience of tracking down the Kirtland's Warbler, observing and listening to it for a half hour or more. When we returned to our car, some distance away, drivers of Michigan cars offered generously to 'call out the Kirtland's' for us. It has become a custom of hospitality to visiting birders. At South Fork in southeast Arizona, the Coppery-tailed Trogon is bombarded yearly with his call on tapes...all day, for several days. The other night, some excellent birders from Massachusetts announced they were going up to South Fork to 'call out' the Trogon. I shuddered and suggested that they stop and listen first.

We birders who presumably respect the lives of birds may help preserve some species by listening instead of playing tapes."

(Within the confines of the Kirtland Warbler Management Area neither camera nor recorders are allowed. --Ed.)

\*\* Wes and Glenn Cureton report that a Blue Jay was feeding young in a nest in a pine tree in their yard November 6. However, a week later, the young birds, estimated to be about 10 days old, were found dead in the yard, the nest apparently blown down by high winds. According to Kincaid's "Birds of Texas", Blue Jays breed from early February to late July. Was this a late breeding, or early? Does it happen very often? If anyone knows something about out-of-season breeding of Blue Jays, possible reasons, etc., the SPOONBILL would like to hear from you. (Editor, 4902 Fern, Bellaire, Texas 77401)

\*\* An experiment was made this past weekend, by having a double-header field trip for Audubon. The purpose was to see if a smaller group could be accommodated each day, thereby each participant perhaps seeing more birds, and the caravan being less unwieldy. Well, the weather didn't quite cooperate with Paul Jones, the leader, who conceived this idea, for the early morning rain Saturday seemed to keep the count of participants low, and the promise of clearing skies Sunday brought out some 36 eager birders (with over 20 cars!) So, the skies cleared Saturday, and were cloudy Sunday! The OG used to have an occasional Sunday field trip, but when gas stations started closing on Sunday during the shortage crisis, Saturdays were chosen and Sundays were forgotten. From the comments that were heard among the group, there is quite a bit of sentiment in favor of some Sunday field trips, even some double-headers. Send a postcard to the SPOONBILL--4902 Fern, Bellaire, Texas 77401--letting us know what your opinion is on this.

#### PLACES TO GO

And speaking of that double-header Audubon field trip, the real thrill both days were the Bald Eagles at Warren Lake, one adult and one immature on Saturday, and two adults and three immatures on Sunday. On Sunday, one immature put on quite a show, harassing the ducks and geese, making flocks of them swirl up and mill about, and once making repeated passes at a dead duck in the water. Also four common Goldeneyes, and some Ring-necked Ducks were among the thousands of birds on the water. So, if you want to see some Bald Eagles, now is the time to hie yourself to the lake. Be sure and look for Ross' geese among the thousands of Snows, several have been sighted recently (both days of the field trip). Just remember, the Ross' is definitely and noticeably smaller than the Snow, with a very small bill. Don't be fooled by the immature Snows, while a bit smaller than the adults sometimes, they are quite grey usually.

If you go out Clay Road when heading for the lake, stop at South Mayde Creek (about 6 miles west of Hwy 6), and check for sparrows, towhees, etc. in hedgerows on north side of road. At the locked gate about 1/4 mile east of bridge (opposite farm house and outbuildings across the road), Harris and White-crowned Sparrows are being seen now. This is a traditional spot to see Harris Sparrows. Also Groove-bill Anis have been seen at the bridge; remember they can sit very still, and are easy to overlook.

And while on these W. Harris County roads, check the roadside sparrows, and watch for Sandhill Cranes, they are moving in now.

#### MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, DECEMBER 4, 1975

The Chairman, Harry Brister, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

There being no corrections or additions the Minutes of the October 1975 Meeting were accepted as published in THE SPOONBILL.

In the absence of the Treasurer, our Chairman relayed the following information: Operating Fund as of October 31 - \$407.21, Savings \$247.72, for a total of \$654.93. One hundred dollars has been transferred from the savings account into a 3-month Certificate of Deposit at 5.75%. It can be renewed at the end of three months. An acknowledgment from the Welder Wildlife Refuge was also read. The Director, W.C. Glazener, thanked the members of the group who visited the Refuge in October for their contribution of \$33.00. Mr. Glazener said they may be able to apply the money on some item in their library or museum, and which might be properly designated as a memorial to the Ornithology Group.

Avis Brister called attention to three books on display and available to be taken home to glance through over the holidays, being mostly pictures.

Plans for the Christmas Count were reviewed by Paul Nimmons who asked all who had not already done so and who wanted to sign up to get in touch with him or one of the area leaders as listed in THE SPOONBILL.

It was announced that Outdoor Nature Club is applying for a bulk mailing permit. If

their attempt is successful, we will use the permit to mail THE SPOONBILL at a considerable savings over the first class rate.

Gladys Galbreath, who is in charge of ONC's January Field Trip to Matagorda Island, asked that anyone who had not already advised her of plans to be present to do so now, since transportation across the Colorado River was limited. She also gave other details about places to stay overnight.

In anticipation of the Christmas Bird Count, Marilyn Crane showed a number of slides of the sparrows we may see at that time and emphasized the aids to identification. She included several slides of non-sparrows who resemble them and may be easily confused with them. Marilyn also described the habitat where each species of sparrow might be found.

Jim Beaty read a newspaper clipping saying that 48 adults and 8 juvenile Whooping Cranes have been recorded at Aransas this year - the highest number yet.

According to Margaret Anderson, a male Anna's Hummingbird may still be seen in southeast Houston. It is still singing, she says.

Pat Sullivan reported 75 people were present at the meeting, including 15 very welcome guests, who were invited by the Chairman to meet with us again.

Speaking on behalf of the Nominating Committee composed of herself, Sarah Gordon and Melba Drake, Marilyn Crane submitted the following slate for consideration for the 1976-77 year: Chairman - Jack Gillette; Vice Chairman - Pat Sullivan; Treasurer - Mary Gillette; Secretary - Suzi Campbell. There being no nominations from the floor, motion was made, seconded and carried that the foregoing slate be accepted as submitted by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

Interested birders were reminded to contact Paul Nimmons about the trip to California and the Northwest Coast August 13 through 26. Twenty have already signed up and there is room for 19 more.

Those interested in Bill Mealy's birding trip to Northeast Mexico in February were advised to get in touch with him.

Harry Brister has the details of a 22-day trip to the Big Bend, cost - \$375, January 2 through January 23, and sponsored by Dr. A.J. Link and the other members of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute. Dr. Link was the speaker at the September Outdoor Nature Club meeting.

John Tveten gave the program, a travelogue of his late summer and early fall trip through the scenic areas of much of Arizona, Utah and Colorado. He showed color slides of the well-known Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, and Mesa Verde National Parks, together with not so well known places such as Cedar Breaks, Dinosaur National Monument, Coral Pink Sand Dunes, Meteor Crater, the Painted Desert, and Walnut Canyon. John recommends all of these areas as "superb places to see birds and animals," particularly in early fall.

Following John's presentation, Harry Brister sounded out the group about their possible interest in expanding the yearly number of meetings. He suggested the possibility of five business meetings, three educational meetings, and the June picnic (traditionally held in May). The idea was well received. Marilyn Crane has agreed to coordinate the educational meetings, which may possibly be held at the Houston Lighting & Power facilities on the West Loop.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Louise Rogers.

#### CHRISTMAS COUNT FEES

There will be a participation fee of \$1 for every count participant, including feeder watchers. This fee is not optional. All observers taking part in a count must be accounted for, their fees paid, and their names listed on participant sheets. The fees are essential to the continuation of the Count, with its costly organizing, mailings, editing, and giant (488pg.) publication. This year there will be no extra fee for non-subscribers to American Birds, and no copies of the Christmas Bird Count issue of American Birds will be sent automatically to non-subscribers/participants, as previously. However, present non-subscribers may order a copy of this issue, at the reduced rate of \$3.50 (regular price \$4.50), per copy, by making payment to the compiler or count treasurer with the CBC participation fee (total of \$4.50).

UPPER TEXAS COAST 1974/75 CHRISTMAS COUNT SPECIES HAVING HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL TOTALS IN  
US/CANADA

Compiled by Noel Pattingell/Source: American Birds, April 1975

Key: (BP) Bolivar Peninsula; (F) Freeport; (H) Houston; (S) Sea-Rim Park  
\* - Total equals or exceeds previous all-time high

Species (UTC Locality)	Localities Sharing Record	Individual Totals
White-faced Ibis (F)	----	720
Marsh Hawk (F)	----	141
Yellow Rail (F)	----	3
Common Tern (H)	----	59
Sooty Tern (H)	----	1
Least Tern (S)	Aransas Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Texas	1
Buff-bellied Hummingbird (F) (H)	Anzalduas-Bentsen & Santa Ana NWR, Texas; New Orleans, La.	1
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (F)	----	164
Brown Thrasher (F)	----	280
Wood Thrush (F)	----	3
Veery (BP)	Corpus Christi-Flour Bluff & Santa Ana NWR, Tex.	1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (F)	----	701
Solitary Vireo (F)	----	102*
Philadelphia Vireo (H)	----	1
Nashville Warbler (F)	Santa Barbara, Calif.	4
Wilson's Warbler (F)	----	10
N.(Bullock's) Oriole (F)	----	5
Black-headed Grosbeak (H)	----	2

CLEARING HOUSE, November, 1975

(How to read the C-H: Name of Bird: (how many) date, location, observers)

- Loon,, Common: (30)21, Texas City Dike, BH; (12+)26, Texas City Dike, P&MJ  
 " , Red-throated: (1)21, Texas City Dike, BH - see notes  
 Grebe, Horned: (4)26, Texas City Dike, P&MJ  
 " , Eared: (26)2, (14)6, (21)16, (14)22, (12)23, (10)29, 30, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD; (2)28, Maner Lake, A; (20)21, Texas City Dike, BH.  
 Pelican, White: (3)9, (10)16, (4)23, San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, D&JD.  
 Cormorant, Double-crested: (200+)2, 22, (500+)6, Baytown Tunnel, (4)23, San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, D&JD  
 Heron, Green: (1)1, Anahuac Refuge, D&JD; (2)28, Maner Lake, A.  
 Ibis, White-faced: (50+)1, Anahuac Refuge, D&JD, et.al.  
 " , White: (50+)1, Anahuac R., et.al.  
 Spoonbill, Roseate: (37)2, (17)6, (12)9, (11)16, (16)22, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD.  
 Goose, Canada: (50+)15, Warren Lake, C; (70)12, West Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 " , White-fronted: (10+)1, Anahuac Refuge, (100+)15, Warren Lake, C; (350)12, West Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 " , Snow (White form): (5000+)15, W. Harris Co., C; (400)12, West Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 " , Snow (Blue form): (170)12, West Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 " , Ross: (1)12, Warren Lake, TBF, ER - see notes.  
 Treeduck, Black-bellied: (20)October 12, northeast arm of Worthington Lake, south of Rabb Prairie Road, Smither's Lake area, Ft. Bend Co., Chuck & Suzi Campbell --see notes  
 Mallard: (4)6, (50+)16, 22, (7)23, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD; (70)12, West Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 Teal, Blue-winged: (20+)29, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD  
 " , Cinnamon: (6)15, Warren Lake, C; (1)28, Maner Lake, A; (3)8, Warren Lake, GC; (4)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER; (2)16, Anahuac R., (2)23, Warren Lake, RK, Fred Collins, Winnie & David Burkett.  
 Redhead: (3)6, (17)22, (3)23, (10+)29, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD.  
 Duck, Ring-necked: (3)6, Baytown Tunnel, (4)15, Warren Lake, C; (20)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER  
 Canvasback: (4)6, (6)22, (4)23, (10)29, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD; (1)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 Goldeneye, Common: (2)22, Warren Lake, W&GC.  
 Bufflehead: (4)26, Texas City Dike, P&MJ; (30)28, Maner Lake, A.  
 Duck, Ruddy: (300+)8 days, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD  
 Merganser, Red-breasted: (4)26, Texas City Dike, P&MJ; (2)28, Warren Lake, A.  
 Kite, White-tailed: (1)16, Anahuac R., (1)22, Gulf Freeway near Friendswood exit, RK.  
 " , MISSISSIPPI: (1)11, yard, MA - see notes  
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: (1)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 " , Swainson's: (1)1, Anahuac R., D&JD, et.al.  
 " , Ferruginous: (1)22, Warren Lake, W&GC - see notes  
 Eagle, Bald: (1 imm.)22, Cypress Creek, W&GC; (1 imm.)28, Cypress Creek, A; (1)23, Warren Lake, RK, Fred Collins, Winnie & David Burkett.

- Crane, Sandhill: (20)28, Brazoria Co., A.  
 Rail, King: (1)1, Anahuac R., D&JD et.al.  
 " , Clapper: (1)1, Anahuac R., D&JD et.al.  
 " , Virginia: (12)1, Anahuac R. D&JD et.al.  
 " , Yellow: (10+)1, Anahuac R., D&JD et.al.  
 Gallinule, Common: (4)6, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD  
 Jacana: (5a, 3i)28, Maner Lake, A.  
 Oystercatcher, American: (22)2, Bolivar, B.  
 Curlew, Long-billed: (20)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER; (36)2, Texas City Dike, RK.  
 Gull, Franklin's: (10+)15, Warren Lake, C.  
 " , Bonaparte's: (3)16, Bolivar Ferry, RK.  
 Tern, Sandwich: (10)2, Bolivar, B.  
 " , Black: (1)2, W. Galveston Bay, B.  
 Dove, Inca: (6)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 Ani, Groove-billed: (1)3, W. Galveston, B.  
 Owl, Barn: (1)2, Bolivar, B.  
 " , Screech: (1)5, White Oak Bayou, WC.  
 " , Short-eared: (1)1, Anahuac R., D&JD; (4)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 Swift, Chimney: (2)3, Main Post Office downtown, (4)4, (10)5, (8)6, (7)7, (8)8, (7)10, (4)11,  
 (7)12, 13, M&M Bldg. downtown, Houston, NP - see notes.  
 HUMMINGBIRD, ANNA'S: (1)12-30, SE Houston, MA - see notes.  
 Kingfisher, Belted: (1)9, San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, D&JD.  
 Flicker, Common: (3)2, (5)9, Baytown Civic Center Park, (1)16, San Jacinto Battlegrounds,  
 D&JD.  
 Woodpecker, Pileated: (1)2, 9, Baytown Civic Center Park, D&JD.  
 " , Red-bellied: (2)9, Baytown Civic Center Park, D&JD.  
 " , Red-headed: (1) all month, Exxon Research Center-Baytown, D&JD.  
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: (5)2, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD; (1)8, Warren Lake, GC.  
 " , Vermilion: (4)3, Brazoria Co., B.  
 Swallow, Tree: (20)28, Eagle Nest and Maner Lake, A.  
 " , Rough-winged: (24)12, W. Harris Co., TBF, ER.  
 " , Barn: (1)8, Cypress Creek, GC.  
 Creeper, Brown: (1)18, Memorial Park, WC.  
 Wren, Short-billed Marsh: (20+)1, Anahuac R., D&JD et.al.  
 Robin, American: (2)26, Clayton Library, (5)27, White Oak Bayou, WC; (1)29, yard, GC.  
 Thrush, Hermit: (1)18, Memorial Park; (3)21, Galveston Co., Park, BH.  
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: (1)12, Baytown Civic Center Park, D&JD; (50+)21, Galv. Co. Park, BH.  
 Pipit, Sprague's: (2)3, Texas City, B.  
 Vireo, Solitary: (1)27, White Oak Bayou, WC; (2)21, Galv. Co. Park, BH.  
 Blackbird, Red-wing: (5000+)29, W. Chambers Co., D&JD.  
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: (14)2, (20+)16, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD.  
 Grosbeak, Blue: (2)3, Lake Barbara, Brazoria Co., B.  
 Bunting, Indigo: (2)8, White Oak Bayou, WC.  
 Siskin, Pine: (4)27, yard, J&BH.  
 Goldfinch, American: (10)27, White Oak Bayou; (12)27, yard, JH, BH.  
 Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: (20)3, S. Jetty area, B.  
 " , Seaside: (50+)1, Anahuac Refuge, D&JD  
 " , Lark: (1)28, Clay Rd., A.  
 " , Chipping: (10)27, White Oak Bayou, WC.  
 " , Harris: (2)23, Clay Rd., RK.  
 " , White-crowned: (1 imm.)1, Anahuac R., W&GC; (1)8, Cypress Creek, GC.  
 " , White-throated: (2)6, yard, W&GC.

#### CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS

MA - Margaret Anderson; GC - Glenn Cureton; WC - Wesley Cureton; D&JD - David and Jan Dauphin; TBF - T. Ben Feltner; J&BH - Jean & Bill Harwell; RK - Randy Korotev; NP - Noel Pettingell; P&MJ - Paul & Margaret Jones; ER - Elaine Robinson; A - Wesley and Glenn Cureton, Mark Kulstad; B - Victor L. Emanuel, John Gerhart, Peggy MacBride, Jill Jakes; C - Wesley & Glenn Cureton, David & Jan Dauphin.

#### CLEARING HOUSE NOTES

The following species were seen in normal number and were not included in the Clearing House: (Pied-billed Grebe; Great Blue, Little Blue, Louisiana, Black-crowned Night Herons; Cattle, Great, Snowy Egrets; Mottled Duck; Pintail; Green-winged Teal; Shoveler; Lesser Scaup; Red-tailed, Marsh Hawks; American Kestrel; Black-bellied Plover; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Water Pipit; and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Red-throated Loon: Seen at Texas City Dike between 11:00 a.m. and noon. Bright sunlight, 30X Binoscope, 100-150 yards. It was fairly cold and the wind was quite strong from the north. All the birds were on the leeward side of the dike. I don't recall

seeing as many loons at once before. This bird was along with a small flotilla of 8-10 Common Loons. It was definitely a smaller, more delicate and graceful bird than the Commons. Neck slimmer. Head smoothly rounded, rather than the high-forehead-flat-top of the Commons. Upper mandible appeared flat, with lower curved, giving an "upturned" look, in distinction to the symmetrical "dagger" of the Commons.

--Bill Harwell

Ross'Goose: 60 yards with 30x Balscope. Bright sunlight; watched 10 minutes and compared with surrounding Snow Geese; very small, one-half size, with much shorter neck; small, thimble-like bill; cuddly head. Both observers have seen this bird at this location on numerous prior occasions. --T. Ben Feltner

Black-bellied Treeduck: Long-necked erect duck--first noted five on branch of dead tree--8 of the 20 were adults and the others were immatures approaching adult plumage --or moulting adults. ADULTS: Orange bill and pink feet--black belly--rusty brown breast (and part way up neck) and back--broad white wing stripe (standing bird)--gray head and throat in side view but narrow dark line from crown down back of neck in "going-away" view--dark eye with white eyering-- road white wing stripe on top of wings in flight--adults were standing erect along shore of slough. IMMATURES, OR MOULTING ADULTS: like adults except belly not yet conspicuously black, just darker rusty brown--wing stripe was streaked and narrow--bill of some were only partly orange (all gray in 2 birds)--perched in dead tree or stood at water's edge on back of slough --Conditions for observation: midday in full sunlight--sun behind our backs--distance approximately 100 yards--used 8x40 and 7x50 binoculars and 15-60x Balscope--observed over 45 minute period--ASSOCIATES: Roseate Spoonbills (9), anhingas, great blue heron, great egret, snowy egret, Louisiana heron, coots, common gallinules. --Chuck Campbell

MISSISSIPPI KITE: A rather late date; adult bird with white head, pointed wings, black tail. Seen in bright sunlight with 10 power binoculars. --Margaret Anderson

Ferruginous Hawk: Red-tailed-sized hawk; white throat, darker streaked crown, yellow cere, dark eyes; light, almost white, unbanded tail faintly edged with rust. Quail-like pattern on shoulders with hint of rufous. Very white underneath, rusty leg feathers; very tame. Watched at length from 120 feet; 30x scope. --Glenn & Wesley Cureton

Chimney Swift: From Nov. 4 through 12, birds were seen entering a chimney on the south side of the M&M bldg. between 5:30 and 5:45 p.m. (CST). Chimney at east end of Main P.O., where swifts had roosted as late as Nov. 1, 1974, was also checked, but no birds were seen entering it during the above period. Maximum temperatures at Houston from Nov. 1 through 11 were in the upper 70's to mid-80's (lowest maximum 77 on 2nd and 10th, highest 86 on 8th). On Nov. 11 a cold front moved into Houston resulting in a maximum temperature of 68 on Nov. 12, which was the last day that swifts were observed entering the M&M Bldg., chimney (2. at 5:34 p.m. 2 at 5:37 p.m. and 3 at 5:40 p.m.). Maximum temperature in Houston on Nov. 13 was 62 and the last 7 swifts roosting in the M&M bldg. presumably migrated south on this date as none were seen in this vicinity on subsequent days during the above time period. During the previous month Glenn Cureton observed 100+ Chimney Swifts over the M&M Bldg. from Oct. 1 to 17 (C-H, SPOON-BILL, Nov. 1975, p.6) -- Noel Pettingell

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD: Nov. 12 through 30 one sub-adult Anna's Hummingbird in SE Houston. Seen by many observers. Color seen both on top of head and in throat. He is now singing. Comes to feeder regularly. --Margaret Anderson

No details were given on the following:

Wood Stork: (3)2, (2)6, #3 Exxon Lagoon-Baytown Tunnel, D&JH.

Inadvertently omitted from last month's notes were the following details: Merlin (seen at High Island, Oct.4) 1 female seen, in flight, in clearing of woods at High Island. Breast and belly heavily streaked with ruddy brown longitudinally; wings and back dark brown; tail barred brown and white with white tip. Suggestion of single black "whisker" mark on face. Seen at distance of 20-30 meters by several members of Audubon field trip. --Jim Hargrove.

FLASH!!!!

Many months ago, the OG first sought a bulk-mailing permit, only to find it would, of necessity, have to be applied for by the parent club, the Outdoor Nature Club. Copies of tax-exempt status by the IRS, copies of the Constitution and By-Laws, various proofs of the educational nature of the Outdoor Nature Club, and its study groups, etc., had to be assembled. Louise Rogers did a yeoman job getting it all together, assisted by Mary Gillette and Gladys Galbreath. Gladys and Margaret Jones took all the assembled information down to the postoffice last Friday, and came home with a permit! Hurrah! Because there is more work attached to getting the mail ready for the postoffice, we will need some help for Maxine Davis, our mailer: someone who is available during the day, who can give several hours one day a month. Volunteers, anyone?

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