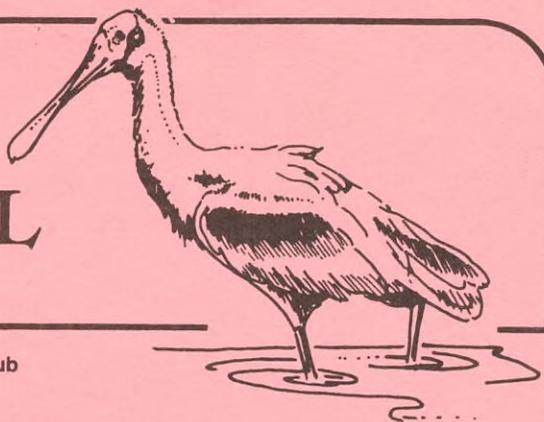


The SPOONBILL



Published by the Ornithology Group, Outdoor Nature Club
Houston, Texas B. C. Robison, editor

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November, 1984

Coming Events

- December 3
Monday Deadline for Spoonbill
articles and announcements.
Deadline for November
Clearing House & Outer Circle.
- December 6
Thursday OG meeting at Bayou Manor at
7:30 p.m. The program will
be given by Fred Collins -
topic to be announced later.
- December 12
Wednesday Piney Woods Wildlife Society
meeting. "Spring Creek
Christmas Count Preview" by
Gary Clark. 7:30 p.m. at
North Harris County College
Academic Bldg. Rm. A-126.
- Dec. 15 -
Jan. 2 Christmas Counts. See this
issue or October Spoonbill
for details on all upcoming
area counts.

SOUTH AMERICAN BIRDING by Wesley Cureton

It was with considerable expectation that I went in August 1983 to participate in an evangelical crusade in the most ornithologically endowed country in the world, Colombia. Visions of Toucans and King Vultures danced in my head. After spending a night in Bogota I was sent on an hour's flight to Paz de Ariporo, an isolated town of about 3000 on the palm-studded savanna of the eastern department of Casanare. My first new species came only a minute after stepping down from the 12-seater plane. There on the grassy runway, paying little attention to the crowd of people and the roar of the propellers, was a pair of Southern Lapwings. These were the first of a fine group of tropical lifers.

The lowlands of eastern Colombia have a warm, humid climate, much like Houston's in summer, with perhaps a little

more breeze. Paz de Ariporo is a weedy, unkempt town, just right for one who must do his birdwatching on the go; it was quite lively with birds. Constantly overhead was a swirl of black buzzards, that symbol of the New World tropics. Some of them roosted in shady courtyards and, before taking flight in the morning, mingled with chickens near back doors. Similar to our grackles, but smaller and even bolder, were the Carib grackles. As I ate lunch one afternoon in an open-air restaurant, one of these sleek opportunists descended under the corrugated plastic roof to an unoccupied table and began to eat grains of cooked rice that had fallen from forks. Gray-breasted Martins were sitting on the power lines. In the lot next to the church shiny Cowbirds and Cattle Tyrants carried on their mutually beneficial relationship with two horses, the latter bird, more like a thrasher than a flycatcher, sometimes perching on the horses' backs. Tropical Mockingbirds crept through garden shrubbery, Bananaquits and Glittering-throated Emeralds gleaned among hibiscus and other flowers, and Palm and Blue-gray Tanagers played chase in the mango trees. Walking down sandy side streets during our afternoon visit, we scared up Ruddy Ground Doves, Scaled Doves (similar in appearance and behavior to Inca Doves), Lesser Goldfinches, and flocks of lovely little Orange-fronted Yellowfinches. At dusk Tropical Kingbirds streamed in from the countryside to roost in the trees of the main plaza.

BAJA WILDLIFE TOUR

Armand Bayou Nature Center is offering a trip to Baja, California (Cabo San Lucas) on January 12-19, 1985. Plant and animal life in and around the Sea of Cortez will be featured, including a possible Gray Whale migration. \$650.00 per person (includes airfare and accommodations). Call Steve Russell or Gary Freeborg for more information at 474-2551.

Noel's Niche Looking Back

by Noel Pettingell

.....Ten Years Ago This Month
From November, 1974 Spoonbill:

"PEREGRINE FALCONS RESCUED"

"Chester Rogers, in his column in the Baytown Sun of October 18, 1974, reports that three Baytown men, fishing near Smith Point, noticed a bunch of hawks floating in the water, trying to swim like they were ducks or sea gulls. They used a dip net to lift the stricken birds out of the water, for a hawk, like a lot of birds not used to water, finds it difficult to handle wet feathers. They picked up about eight of the soaked peregrine falcons and headed back to the landing place at Robbins Park. They put the birds out on the ground and they started trying to dry out the wings. Six of the birds made it to nearby brush and flew away. One apparently died of exhaustion and another, with a broken wing, died of a heart attack. The trio would have picked up more; the desperate hawks fought valiantly to flee this strange boat filled with men. If it was exhaustion after a long migratory flight, that landed them in the bay, one wonders at the strange quirk of fate that allowed them to pass over land between the Gulf and the Bay.

The incident was reported to Texas Parks & Wildlife. Does anyone know of any other reports of this incident?

For the past three years volunteers have assisted Texas Parks & Wildlife biologists in making a Peregrine Falcon check to determine the status of the peregrine. This year the check started Sept. 25, and ended Oct. 25. Each year's sighting will be compared with the last to see if peregrine numbers are declining, increasing, or remaining stable."

.....Twenty Years Ago This Month
From November, 1964 Spoonbill:

"NOTES FROM CLEARING HOUSE REPORT"

"I got 71 species on the 3rd, (81)15, (79)16, (103)19, (85)20; 169 in Oct., (280) 30 year total, (137) first half, (167 in 1959), 30 year total (256); (147) in second half, (163 in 1954), (252) in 30 years.

Water Thrush (sp.) none the whole season, first time in over 30 years.

The Spoonbill Staff

Editor	B.C. Robison
Art Editor	Linda Feltner
Layout Artist	Connie Clark
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Labels	Peggy Milstead
Mailing Committee	Beth Hudson Yetta Chapman
Checklist Committee	Connie Schimbor Ben Feltner Noel Pettingell Jim Morgan

October 16 was my big day, even though I got only 79 species. Sanderling, Stilt and Pectoral Sandpipers, Ground Dove, Pigeon Hawk and Sharp-tailed Sparrow were good finds; better were Sprague's Pipit, second for October, Ani first for October, Harlan's Hawk my second individual (3rd year for this one), Say's Phoebe my second (in the same place the first one had stayed three winters) but best of all a Black-throated Gray Warbler, A Lifer." Arlie K. McKay

.....Thirty Years Ago This Month
From November, 1954 Spoonbill:

"Harry C. Oberholser (Head of Bureau of Biological Survey & author of BIRD LIFE OF LOUISIANA and forthcoming BIRD LIFE OF TEXAS; Cleveland O.)... 'I hope that you can furnish me with all the (SPOONBILL) numbers so far published and will enter my name as a subscriber (as) anything concerning birds in Texas is of interest to me, and I am trying to keep up to date...'

'...Efforts are now being made to secure the funds necessary for the publication of my work on Texas birds, which lack is the only reason this has not been printed...'

Postscript: Some 20 years were to elapse before Harry Oberholser's manuscript was at last published - 11 years after his death on Dec. 25, 1963 (see this column in Jan. 1984 Spoonbill). The story behind the eventual publication of this comprehensive two-volume study of Texas birds is detailed in the preface, from which the following paragraph is taken:

"After a period of unsuccessful search for financial support, the break came. A lecture given by Dr. Oberholser on Texas birds to a Texas audience early in the history of the project bore fruit. The audience included Mrs. Joseph Lamar Hooks of Beaumont, Texas, whose interest in birds was so great that she furnished data to Dr. Oberholser and hoped to see the book eventually published. This interest resulted many years later in the establishment by her daughter, Mrs. Marrs McLean of San Antonio, of the Corrie Herring Hooks Fund at the University of Texas for the publication of 'The Bird Life of Texas.'"

Course In Christmas Bird Counting

Rice University Offices of Continuing Studies and Special Programs will be offering a short course entitled "Christmas Bird Counting." The course will be taught by Elaine Robinson Adams. For more information call Joanne Hyland at 520-6022.

A Word of Thanks

To the people who so generously gave of their time to produce the new OG Roster: Barbara Darr (organizing, compiling and typing), Aron & Karen Stoley (mimeographing), and Yetta Chapman (collating, labelling and mailing). An excellent job by some very dedicated folks.

1984 Christmas Bird Counts

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| <p>Saturday
Dec. 15</p> | <p><u>Houston, Texas C.B.C.</u>
(Houston Outdoor Nature Club) Contact your last year's area leader or call Don Richardson at 661-1365(h) or 656-3445 (w), or call Randy Pinkston at 928-3046(h) before 8 PM, (w)920-2831.</p> | <p>Thursday
Dec. 20</p> | <p><u>Armand Bayou, Texas, C.B.C.</u>
For details call the Nature Center at 474-2551, or call Stennie Meadours at 471-6254 (h), or 479-5981 (w). A pre-count field trip will be held Sat. Dec. 15, meet at Armand Bayou parking lot at 6:30 a.m.</p> |
| <p>Saturday
Dec. 15</p> | <p><u>Spring Creek, Texas C.B.C.</u>
(Piney Woods Wildlife Soc.) Call Gary Clark at 367-2042 (h) or 443-5717 (w), or call Mike Austin at 482-1454 (h) or 482-7360 (w) for complete details.</p> | <p>Friday
Dec. 21</p> | <p><u>Lake Livingston (upper), C.B.C.</u> For details of this count, call Tony Gallucci the above listed numbers.</p> |
| <p>Saturday
Dec. 15</p> | <p><u>Corpus Christi, Texas C.B.C.</u>
Contact Gene Blacklock, compiler, Welder Wildlife Foundation, P.O. Drawer 1400, Sinton, Texas 78387 or call (512)364-2643 for details.</p> | <p>Friday
Dec. 21</p> | <p><u>Beech Creek, Texas C.B.C.</u>
(Big Thicket Nat'l Preserve) Contact David Dunatchik, compiler, at P.O. Box 7408, Beaumont, TX 77706 or call him at (409)898-4621 (h) or at (409)839-2689 (w).</p> |
| <p>Sunday
Dec. 16</p> | <p><u>Freeport, Texas C.B.C.</u>
(Houston Audubon Society) Regular Participants please contact your area leader, New Participants and those wishing to change areas please contact Jim Morgan at 461-3080. This count is consistently one of the best in the U.S. and has led the nation in past years.</p> | <p>Saturday
Dec. 22</p> | <p><u>Galveston, Texas C.B.C.</u>
Contact Arch Dillard for details at (409)938-1614(h) or (409)761-2367 (w).</p> |
| <p>Tuesday
Dec. 18</p> | <p><u>Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR C.B.C.</u> Participants should be at the Refuge office by 6:00am for coffee & doughnuts. For more details of count call Wayne Shifflett or Gary Montoya at (409)234-3021.</p> | <p>Sunday
Dec. 23</p> | <p><u>Buffalo Bayou, Texas C.B.C.</u>
Participants meet at the Rice Food Market at 6:30 a.m. at Post Oak Lane & San Felipe. For more information, call Randy Pinkston at 928-3046 before 8 PM(h), 920-2831(w).</p> |
| <p>Tuesday
Dec. 18</p> | <p><u>Welder Wildlife Refuge, Texas C.B.C.</u> Contact Gene Blacklock at Welder Wildlife Foundation, P. O. Drawer 1400, Sinton, TX 78387, or call (512)364-2643.</p> | <p>Friday
Dec. 28</p> | <p><u>Old River, Texas C.B.C.</u> Call Jonell Buckels in Mont Bellview at (713)576-2504 or write to Rt. 2, Box 136, Dayton, TX 77535, or call Frankie Daves at (409)258-2560.</p> |
| <p>Wednesday
Dec. 19</p> | <p><u>Lake Conroe, Texas C.B.C.</u>
For complete details call Kelly Bryan at (409)856-2769 or Tony Gallucci, co-compiler, at 443-1153 (Houston No.) or (409)594-2541.</p> | <p>Saturday
Dec. 29</p> | <p><u>Brazoria, Texas C.B.C.</u> Call Tom Taroni at (409)297-5563 for more details.</p> |
| <p>Wednesday
Dec. 19</p> | <p><u>Turkey Creek, Texas C.B.C.</u>
(Big Thicket Nat'l Preserve) Contact David Dunatchik, compiler, at P.O. Box 7408, Beaumont, TX 77706, or call him at (409)898-4621 (h) or (409)839-2689 (w) for details.</p> | <p>Saturday
Dec. 29</p> | <p><u>Tenaha-Timpson-Bobo-Blair, Texas C.B.C.</u> Call Randy Pinkston (h) before 8 PM 928-3046 or (w)920-2831.</p> |
| <p>Thursday
Dec. 20</p> | <p><u>Lake Livingston (lower), Tex. C.B.C.</u> Call Tony Gallucci for count details at 443-1153 (Houston No.) or (409)594-2541. This count has produced two new state records in the Black-headed Gull and the Snow Buntings.</p> | <p>Saturday
Dec. 29</p> | <p><u>Rio Corona, Tamaulipas, Mex. C.B.C.</u> For complete information contact Gene Blacklock, compiler, at the Welder Wildlife Refuge or call him at (512)364-2643.</p> |
| <p>Thursday
Dec. 20</p> | <p><u>Lake Livingston (lower), Tex. C.B.C.</u> Call Tony Gallucci for count details at 443-1153 (Houston No.) or (409)594-2541. This count has produced two new state records in the Black-headed Gull and the Snow Buntings.</p> | <p>Tuesday
Jan. 1</p> | <p><u>Cypress Creek, Texas C.B.C.</u>
For count details, call Ted Eubanks at 666-7639 (h) or 468-8500 (w).</p> |

Wednesday El Naranjo, San Luis Potosi,
Jan. 2 Mexico C.B.C. Tropical birding
only one day's drive from
Houston. You are invited to
participate in Tropical
America's oldest continuous
count. For transportation,
carpooling or other details
contact the Peregrine office,
P.O. Box 2074, Humble, Texas
77347 or call 441-1220.

Minutes of the Ornithology Group Meeting October 4, 1984

The meeting was brought to order at 7:31 p.m. by the Chairman, Don Richardson. Peter Vennema gave the treasurer's report with a bank balance showing of \$5,607.00. Don Richardson announced that we are now selling "Checklists of North American Birds" published by the Tucson Audubon Society. Ron Braun stated there were three good birds in the area: Western Wood Pewee, Common Raven and Brant. Maxine Davis reported we have been getting a lot of requests for maps, checklists and information. Gene Heitzman announced the list of Christmas Bird Counts that will be published in The Spoonbill. B.C. Robison made an appeal for typists for The Spoonbill.

Stennie Meadours has been working on protection for Bolivar Flats and has asked for any history of effort in the area, any input, any pictures, and endorsement from the OG for her efforts with Galveston County to designate Bolivar Flats a Bird Sanctuary. Please contact Stennie at 471-6254 with any information you may have. Gene Heitzman announced that Robert Morton will speak at the next ONC meeting about Galveston beaches. Bob Behrstock of Peregrine Tours stated there is room for a few more people for the November 30th trip to the Valley. Also, Bob announced that Peregrine is planning an OG tour in May, 1985 to Southern Florida, and requested anyone wishing ride information for the El Naranjo CBC to contact the Peregrine office. Further announcements included notification that Carol Meyer of TWRC will be giving a demonstration on hawks and owls at the Museum of Natural Science on October 13 in celebration of Birds of Prey Conservation week.

Jim Morgan then made a motion that the OG support Stennie Meadour's efforts at the Flats. The motion passed unanimously. Marilyn Crane gave the evening's presentation on her trip to Alaska last June. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05.

Clearing House

OCTOBER, 1984

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made on the Upper Texas Coast. How to read the CH: Species: Location--(how many)date,observers. Those common species which can be easily identified and are widely distributed in the UTC will also be listed, followed by the number of reports, with the lowest and highest number, and the total number of individuals seen in parentheses, i.e. (1-40;82). Noteworthy sightings will be underlined, capitalized, or both, according to their status. All observations reported below must be accepted by the Checklist Committee (Ben Feltner, Jim Morgan and Noel Pettingell) before they are considered valid and included in the next checklist. Sightings lacking details, when required, will not be included in the Clearing House. Submitters who forget details should send their notes to a member of the Checklist Committee.

Location Codes

A = Anahuac N.W.R.
BF = Bolivar Flats
BCP = Bear Creek Park
BBCR = Bob's Bait Camp Road
BBSP = Brazos Bend State Park
Bolv = Bolivar
CC = Chambers Co.
EG = E. Galveston Is.
ELM = Edith L. Moore Nature Sanc.
GISP = Galveston Island State Park
Galv = Galveston Co.
HI = High Island
SB = San Bernard N.W.R.
SEH = Southeast Houston
SWH = Southwest Houston
WL = Warren Lake
WG = West Galveston Is.
WH = West Houston
WHC = West Harris Co.
WMP = White Memorial Park
WOB = White Oak Bayou

Grebe, Eared: A--(1)14, BB
Grebe, Pied-billed: 11 reports (1-35;61)
Pelican, American White: 8 reports (1-150;498)
Cormorant, Double-crested: 10 reports (1-20;47)
Cormorant, Olivaceous: BF--(20)6,H; (60)6,M;
Galv/cc--(1)6,7,14,20,21,BB; SB--(2)13,OG
Anhinga: SB--(1)13,OG; BBSP--(150)13,TM; A--
(1)14,BB; WHC--(2)28,C
Heron, Great Blue: 15 reports (1-30;80)
Heron, Green-backed: 10 reports of one bird each
Heron, Little Blue: 10 reports (1-5;17)
Egret, Cattle: 12 reports (1-100;322)
Egret, Reddish: WG--(3)4;(2)17; EG--(2, inc. 1 white
phase)5,21,JJH; BF--(15)6,H,M; Galv/cc--
(1)6,7,13,14,20,21,BB; SB--(1)13,OG
Egret, Great: 18 reports (1-150;344)
Egret, Snowy: 17 reports (1-250;339)
Heron, Tricolored: 14 reports (1-25;57)
Night-Heron, Black-crowned: SEH--(3)2,RP; Bolv--
(20)6,M; Galv/cc--(1)6,7,13,14,20,21,BB; WHC--
(40)28,C
Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned: Westbury--(1)2,PM;
Bolv--(1)6,M,BB; SB--(1)13,OG; SEH--(1)18,RP; WHC--
(1)28,C
Bittern, American: A--(1)6,M; SB--(3)13,OG
Stork, Wood: BBSP--(35)13,TM
Ibis, White-faced: A--(120)6,M; Galv/cc--
(1)7,14,20,BB; WHC--(120)28,C
Ibis, White: 10 reports (1-80;132)
Spoonbill, Roseate: BF--(1)6,M; SB--(15)13,OG;
Galv/cc--(1)13,14,20,21,BB; WG--(10)17,(4)20,JJH
Goose, Greater White-fronted: WHC--
(12)4,SP;(2000)28,C; WL--(50)6,SW; A--(14)20,BB
Goose, Snow: WHC--(3)4,SP;(500)28,C
Goose, Sp.: CC--(40)6,M
BRANT: WL--(1)4,SP (would be 2nd UTC record, if
accepted - see notes, ed.)
Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied: WHC--(11)4,SP;
(115)28,C;(15)30,A; BBSP--(85)13,TM
Whistling-Duck, Fulvous: WHC--(3)4,SP;(13)28,C; A--
(10)6,M
Mallard: WHC--(20)28,C
Duck, Mottled: 6 reports (1-100;181)

Gadwall: A--(10)14,(100)20,BB; WHC--(100)28,C
 Pintail, Northern: A--(30)6,M; (1)7,14,BB; WHC--
 (200)28,C
 Teal, Green-winged: A--(30)6,M; (1)7,BB; WHC--
 (300)28,C
 Teal, Blue-winged: 9 reports (1-1000;1673)
 Wigeon, American: A--(300)6,M; (6)20,BB; WHC--
 (200)28,C
 Shoveler, Northern: 8 reports (1-400;661)
 Duck, Wood: SB--(1)13,OG; yard--(2)23,RP; Irvington
 Blvd--(1)29,WC
 Redhead: WHC--(2)28,C; (2)30,A
 Duck, Ring-necked: A--(2f)20,BB; WHC--(1)28,C
 Canvasback: A--(1 m.)20,BB; WHC--(6)28,C; 30,A
 Scaup, Lesser: WHC--(400)28,C
 Duck, Ruddy: A--(3)7,(10)20,BB
 Vulture, Turkey: 9 reports (3-30;89)
 Vulture, Black: CC--(1)7,BB; BCP--(2)12,SP; SB--
 (15)13,OG
 Kite, Black-shouldered: Galv/cc--(1)7,13,14,21,BB;
 (3)13,JJH; SB--(6)13,OG
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: Bolv--(2)6,M; Galv/cc--
 (1)6,7,13,BB; WG--(1)13,JJH; SB--(2)13,OG; BBSP--
 (1)13,TM; SWH--(1)20,TM
 Hawk, Cooper's: WL--(1)6,SW; SB--(1)13,OG
 Hawk, Red-tailed: CC--(1)7,14,20,BB; SB--(1)13,OG;
 WHC--(10)28,C
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: 6 reports (1-6;16)
 Hawk, Broad-winged: CC--(1)6,M; (1)7,BB; BCP--
 (1)12,SP; SB--(1)13,OG; SEH--(4)26,RP
 Hawk, Swainson's: WHC--(3)4,SP; Needville--(1)6,SW
 Harrier, Northern: 12 reports (1-150;200)
 Osprey: Galv/cc--(1)6,7,20,BB; SB--(2)13,OG; BF--
 (1)17,JJH
 Caracara, Crested: Damon--(1)6,SW
 Falcon, Peregrine: A--(1 ad.)7,BB; SB--(1)13,OG
 Merlin: SB--(1)13,OG; BBSP--(1)13,TM; GISP--
 (1f)21,BB
 Kestrel, American: 19 reports (1-50;140)
 Bobwhite, Northern: CC--(8)6,M; A--(1)6,14,BB; WHC--
 (1)30,A
 Crane, Sandhill: WHC--(6)30,A
 Rail, King: BBCC--(1)7,14,20,BB; A--(1)7,14,20,BB;
 SB--(2)13,OG
 Rail, Clapper: BF--(1)6,JJH; HI--(1)13,BB
 Rail, Virginia: SB--(15)13,OG
 Sora: SB--(1)13,OG
 Rail, sp.: A--(1)6,M
 Gallinule, Purple: A--(5)6,M; (8)14,(1)20,BB
 Moorhen, Common: 5 reports (1-1000;1026)
 Coot, American: 7 reports (1-1000;1614)
 Oystercatcher, American: BF--(10)6,H;
 (8)M,(8)17,JJH; Bolv--(8)6,13,(15)21,BB
 Plover, Semipalmated: 6 reports (1-2;7)
 Plover, Piping: WG--(3)4,JJH; BF--(12)6,H,(10)M;
 (3)17,JJH; Bolv--(1)6,14,20,BB; Surfscided--(3)14,SW
 Plover, Snowy: BF--(7)6,H;(9)M;(20)21,BB
 Plover, Wilson's: BF--(2)6,H,M;(1)21,BB
 Killdeer: 10 reports (1-200;270)
 Plover, Black-bellied: 6 reports (1-100;225)
 Turnstone, Ruddy: 6 reports (1-20;40)
 Snipe, Common: Galv/cc--(1)4,JJH;(2)21,BB; SB--
 (2)13,OG
 Curlew, Long-billed: 8 reports (1-10;25)
 Whimbrel: BF--(1)6,H
 Sandpiper, Spotted: Bolv P--(2)6,M
 Willet: 8 reports (1-100;167)
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 7 reports (1-30;53)
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: Galv/cc--(5)6,M; SB--(2)13,OG
 Knot, Red: 6 reports (3-8;27)
 Sandpiper, Pectoral: HI--(1)6,BB; Needville--
 (35)6,SW
 Sandpiper, Least: BF--(1)6,H;(15)M; SB--(3)13,OG;
 WHC--(2)30,A
 Dunlin: BF--(2)6,H; M;(1)6,7,21,BB
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: BF--(100)6,H;(40)6,M;
 Galv/cc--(1)13,BB
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: Galv/cc--(1)13,BB; SB--
 (1)13,OG; WHC--(20)28,C
 Dowitcher, sp.: WG--(3)4,JJH; Galv/cc--(50)6,M
 Sandpiper, Western: BF--(250)6,H;(300)M; SB--
 (3)13,OG; WHC--(20)30,A
 Godwit, Marbled: BF--(20)6,H;(30)M; Galv/cc--
 (10)6,M;(4)17,JJH
 Sanderling: 5 reports (1-300;531)
 Avocet, American: 6 reports (3-250;355)
 Stilt, Black-necked: 4 reports (1-30;52)
 Gull, Herring: BF--(1)6,M;(3)17,JJH; HI--
 (2)20,21,BB
 Gull, Ring-billed: 9 reports (1-125;156)
 Gull, Laughing: 8 reports (1-2500;6906)
 Gull, Franklin's: A--(1)14,BB
 Tern, Gull-billed: SB--(3)13,OG; A--(1)20,BB
 Tern, Forster's: 9 reports (1-100;137)
 Tern, Common: BF--(1)6,H; Galv/Bolv--(50)6,M
 Tern, Royal: 7 reports (1-700;1593)
 Tern, Sandwich: Galv/Bolv--(30)6,M; BF--(3)17,JJH
 Tern, Caspian: 5 reports (1-75;115)
 Tern, Black: A--(2)6,14,BB
 Skimmer, Black: 6 reports (1-700;1607)
 Dove, Rock: 7 reports (1-120;263)
 Dove, White-winged: Galv--5 reports (1-8;24)
 Dove, Mourning: 14 reports (1-100;416)
 Ground-Dove, Common: SB--(1)13,OG
 Dove, Inca: 9 reports (1-50;145) (50 from Hamilton's
 neighborhood in Galv., daily - ed.)
 Parrot, Yellow-headed: SWH--(1)11,TM (escaped bird)
 Parakeet, Monk: Pasadena--(1)5,GS
 Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: WMP--(1)14; HI--
 (2)20,21,21,BB; WG--(1)20,JJH; SWH--(1)20,TM;
 (late movement on the 20th? - ed)
 Ani, Groove-billed: Yard--(5)8,(3)15,JJH
 Barn-Owl, Common: HI--(1)6,BB; WG--(1)13,JJH
 Screech-Owl, Eastern: SEH--(1)28,RP
 Owl, Barred: BBSP--(1)13,TM
 Chuck-will's-widow: HI--(2)6,14,(1)20,BB; WOB--
 (1)20,WC
 Nighthawk, Common: HI--(2)13,(1)20,21,BB; Westbury--
 (1)17,PM; WOB--(1)18,WC; yard--(2)19,29,JJH; SWH--
 (1)22,TM; SEH--(9)all month,RP
 Swift, Chimney: 19 reports (1-200;735)
 Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: 21 reports (1-40;82)
 Hummingbird, Black-chinned: yard--(2)13,RP (see
 notes, ed.)
 Hummingbird, Rufous: yard--(1)6-8,JM; yard--(1)13,RP
 (photographed in hand, ed.)
 HUMMINGBIRD, BUFF-BELLIED: Algoa--(1)12-14,DDW (new
 early record - see notes, ed.)
 Kingfisher, Belted: 8 reports (1-6;18)
 Flicker, Northern: 8 reports (1-9;22)
 Woodpecker, Pileated: WMP--(3)7,BB; SB--(2)13,OG;
 BBSP--(2)13,TM
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 13 reports (1-16;57)
 Woodpecker, Red-headed: WMP--(1)7,BB
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: Kempner P--(1)5,RP; SEH--
 (1-2)20-31,RP; WOB--(1)28,WC
 Woodpecker, Hairy: Northshore--(1)13,CB
 Woodpecker, Downy: 5 reports (1-2;7)
 Kingbird, Eastern: 5 reports (1-7;15)
 Kingbird, Western: SB--(2)13,OG; WL--(1)30,A
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: 13 reports (1-225;449)
 Phoebe, Eastern: SB--(12)13,OG
 Flycatcher, Acadian: HI--(1)13,14,BB
 Flycatcher, Least: HI--(1)13,BB
 Empidonax, species: Bolv--(1)6,M; SB--(4)13,OG
 Pewee, Eastern: 8 reports (1-3;16)
 Flycatcher, Olive-sided: CC--(1)6,M; WOB--(1)6,WC;
 Bolv P--(1)6,BB
 Flycatcher, Vermilion: SB--(1)13,OG
 Lark, Horned: BF--(5)6,H;(1)M
 Swallow, Tree: 7 reports (1-50;66)
 Swallow, Bank: CC--(2)6,M; SB--(1)13,OG
 Swallow, Rough-winged: 6 reports (1-200;426)
 Swallow, Barn: 8 reports (1-1000;1591)
 Swallow, Cliff: CC--(3)6,M
 MARTIN, PURPLE: WHC--(5 imm.)30,A (new late date -
 see notes, ed.)
 Swallow, sp.: SEH--(1)11,(50)20,(15)21,(50)27,
 (30)28,RP
 Jay, Blue: 14 reports (1-200;296)
 Crow, American: 7 reports (1-30;78)
 Chickadee, Carolina: 9 reports (1-30;74)
 Titmouse, Tufted: 8 reports (1-20;45)
 Wren, House: 7 reports (1-5;11)
 Wren, Carolina: ELM--(2)8,SP;(2)28,C; SB--(4)13,OG;
 BBSP--(3)13,TM
 Wren, Marsh: WOB--(1)1,WC; A--(1)20,BB
 Wren, Sedge: SB--(15)13,OG
 Mockingbird, Northern: 17 reports (1-35;154)
 Catbird, Gray: 11 reports (1-5;26)
 Thrasher, Brown: 15 reports (1-15;82)
 Robin, American: SEH--(1)7,17,(2)27,RP; Galv--
 (1)19,BB; WOB--(1)27,WC
 Thrush, Wood: Galv--(2)14,SW; (1)19,JJH; WOB--
 (1)26,WC; yard--(1)27,GC
 Thrush, Hermit: Galv--(2)23,JJH
 Thrush, Swainson's: Galv--(1)5,RP; 23,JJH; HI--
 (1)13,20,BB
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 3 reports (6-15;33)
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 11 reports (1-5;20)
 Pipit, Water: WHC--(3)28,C
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 13 reports (1-50;154)
 Starling, European: 14 reports (1-400;1204)
 Vireo, White-eyed: 6 reports (1-2;7)
 Vireo, Solitary: HI--(1)13,14,BB
 Vireo, Red-eyed: Galv--(3)5,RP,(2)6,M,(1)17,19,JJH;
 HI--(1)13,20,BB; WOB--(1)25,WC
 Vireo, Philadelphia: HI--(1)14,20,BB; WG--(1)14,SW
 Vireo, Warbling: Bolv--(1)6,M; HI--(2)13,(1)21,BB
 Warbler, Black-and-white: 15 reports (1-5;28)
 WARBLER, WORM-EATING: HI--(1)20,BB (new late date -
 see notes, ed.)

Warbler, Golden-winged: HI--(1 m.)13,BB
 Warbler, Blue-winged: WOB--(1)27,WC
 Warbler, Tennessee: 10 reports (1-5;17)
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: SB--(1)13,OG
 Warbler, Nashville: 10 reports (1-6;23)
 Parula, Northern: HI--(2)13,20,BB; yard--(1)19,BB;
 SWH--(9)19,27,TM; WOB--(1)22,CC
 Warbler, Yellow: HI--(1)13,BB; SB--(3)13,OG; SWH--
 (2)20,27,TM
 Warbler, Magnolia: 8 reports of one bird each
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped: Kempner--(1)5,RP; 6,M; SWH--
 (5)18,27,TM; WHC--(2)28,C
 WARBLER, AUDUBON'S: Kempner--(2)5,RP, 6,M (new early
 date - see notes, ed.)
 Warbler, Black-throated Green: 7 reports (1-3;9)
 Warbler, Blackburnian: WH--(1)27,BH
 Warbler, Yellow-throated: Kempner--(1)5,RP; SB--
 (1)13,OG; WOB--(1)27,28,WC; yard--(1)29,RT
 Warbler, Pine: WH--(1)27,BH
 Warbler, Palm: SB--(1)13,OG
 Ovenbird: HI--(2)13,(5)20,21,BB; SB--(1)13,OG; WG--
 (1)14,SW; WOB--(1)20,27,WC
 Warbler, Kentucky: SB--(1)13,OG
 Yellowthroat, Common: 9 reports (1-15;38)
 Chat, Yellow-breasted: yard--(1)12,WC; SB--(1)13,OG
 Warbler, Hooded: HI--(1)13,(2)20,BB; WOB--(1)27,WC
 (27th may be new late date - see notes, ed.)
 Warbler, Wilson's: HI--(1)6,13,BB; SB--(8)13,OG
 Warbler, Canada: HI--(1)14,20,BB; SB--(1)13,OG; WOB--
 (2)26,(1)27,WC (notes submitted, ed.)
 Redstart, American: 22 reports (1-5;44)
 Sparrow, House: 8 reports (1-100;263)
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 7 reports (1-200;339)
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 8 reports (1-10,000;15,897)
 Oriole, Orchard: Kempner--(1)5,RP,6,M
 Oriole, Northern: Kempner--(2f)5,RP; (1)6,M; WOB--
 (1)28,WC
 (Oriole, Bullock's): Kempner--(2 ad.m,1f)5,RP
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: A--(200)6,M; CC--(100)6,7,BB;
 SB--(200)13,OG (see notes on yellow-eyed form,
 ed.)
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 12 reports (1-600;1413)
 Grackle, Common: 5 reports (1-75;211)
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 8 reports (1-5000;5756)
 TANAGER, SCARLET: yard(Galv)--(1)5,JJH; HI--
 (1)21,BB; WOB--(1)25,WC (unusual number of fall
 reports - first record for last week of October -
 see notes, ed.)
 Tanager, Summer: Galv--(2)5,27,JJH; WOB--(1)6,14,WC;
 HI--(2)13,BB
 Cardinal, Northern: 14 reports (1-25;85)
 Grosbeak, Rose-breasted: 8 reports (1-5;20)
 Grosbeak, Blue: 9 reports (1-3;12)
 Bunting, Indigo: 8 reports (3-80;308)
 Bunting, Painted: HI--(1)24,BB
 Dickcissel: SB--(3)13,OG
 Sparrow, Savannah: SB--(20)13,OG; WHC--(6)30,A
 Sparrow, Seaside: SB--(10)13,OG
 Sparrow, Lark: SB--(1)13,OG
 Sparrow, Clay-colored: BBCC--(1)6,M (see notes, ed.)
 Sparrow, White-throated: ELM--(1)25,BB
 Sparrow, Fox: SB--(1)13,OG
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: SB--(9)13,OG
 Sparrow, Swamp: SB--(1)13,OG
 Sparrow, Song: SB--(2)13,OG

The following birds, requiring details, were
 submitted without them:
 Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied: yard(Galv)--(1)17,JJH
 (ID problem in the fall - see July Clearing House)
 WARBLER, WORM-EATING: yard--(1)29,RT (new late date
 if notes submitted)

CONTRIBUTORS - OCTOBER, 1984

A=party of Elaine Robinson Adams, Celeste Newton,
 Sue & Marion Krag, Kitty Tardy, Betsy Harwood;
 BB=Bob Behrstock; MB=Marcia Braun; RB=Ron Braun;
 CB=Charles Browning; C=party of Caroline Callery,
 Kendall Murphy, BH; GC=Glen Cureton; WC=Wesley
 Cureton; OG=OG field trip; H=party of JJH, Allen
 Mueller; JJH=Jane & John Hamilton; BH=Bob Honig;
 M=party of JM, RP; TM=Tommy Michael; PM=Peggy
 Milstead; JM=Jim Morgan; SP=Stan Perkins; RP=Randy
 Pinkston; GS=Gwen B. Smith; RT=Robert Thacker;
 SW=Steve Williams; DW=Diane & Doyle Wise.

EDITOR'S NOTES

GRIPES: From the onset, let me say that I very much
 appreciate everyone who takes of their precious
 time to fill out and send me a sighting list,
 whether monthly or occasionally. However, I do
 reserve the right to gripe about a few things at
 the risk of alienating those who contribute. So
 here goes. Numbers! Please send in a number

estimate for all species, even common birds. I
 realize that if one is out a lot, it is difficult
 to keep track of uninteresting birds, especially
 large numbers of common species. However, if you
 simply put a check or mark or date next to a
 species, all I can do is assume you saw one bird.
 Without a date, I can't even do that if I don't
 have enough reports to lump them. I feel, and I
 realize this is my opinion, that a best guess
 estimate of the number of individuals of a common
 species is superior to forcing me to record "1"
 when there are 30, 150, 500, or 5,000. If you
 would like to make comments such as "trillions",
 "too many", "a bunch", "a few", "not many", by all
 means do so - I welcome them BUT include a
 reasonable estimate number with them.

So don't get bent out of shape and stop sending
 in sightings. Just include a best estimate of
 numbers of common birds. After all, what's
 uninteresting today may be quite interesting if
 the population crashes someday.

Also, drawings, field sketches, or photographs
 are excellent ways of documenting field
 characteristics of unusual species, but they
 should serve as supplemental information when
 submitting details of a sighting to the CH.
 Written notes can be reproduced for all to enjoy -
 drawings and photos generally cannot (without
 prior planning). Thus, in the future, send in
 written field notes and supplement them with a
 drawing if you like, but don't make the sketch or
 photograph the sole form of documentation.

And by all means, keep sending in your
 sightings.

LATE OR EARLY DATES: This was a great month
 (October generally is) for new early or late dates
 for a number of species. These were:

new late date
 Purple Martin - 10/30
 Worm-eating Warbler - 10/20
 Hooded Warbler - 10/27 (possibly)

new early date
 Buff-bellied Hummingbird - 10/12
 Audubon's Warbler (subspecies) - 10/5

first record for a week
 Scarlet Tanager - 10/25

YELLOW-EYED BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE: This is an
 interesting sighting in light of the fact that the
 eye was "bright yellow". Dr. George Lowry
 discusses a yellowish brown-eyed form of Louisiana
 in "Louisiana Birds". Several of us have seen, on
 the UTC, the dull yellowish brown-eyed form
 mentioned there. Dr. Lowry indicates that the
 Atlantic coast population of Boat-tailed Grackle
 has a "yellow" eye, presumably brighter yellow
 than the normal dull yellowish brown-eyed form of
 Louisiana. What does this mean in regard to the
 bird sighted by Jim and Randy - is it a bird of
 the Atlantic coast population or has the yellowish
 brown-eyed form of the Boat-tailed Grackle of
 Louisiana and Texas hybridized sufficiently long
 with the bright yellow-eyed Great-tailed Grackle
 to create a bright yellow-eyed form of the Boat-
 tailed? I told you it was interesting. And check
 out Plate 37 of "Alabama Birds" sometime.

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES - OCTOBER, 1984

BRANT: dark black head and bill; dark black neck and
 chest with thin white band at upper sides of neck;
 dark back but not as dark as head and neck;
 speckled brown/black belly; black legs. Was able
 to watch bird for 30 minutes through scope. ----
 Stan Perkins
 (sketch submitted - passed to Checklist Committee,
 ed.)

Black-chinned Hummingbird: two birds netted. Both
 immature males in that throat showed no signs of
 color but lines in throat were very dark and
 prominent. Strong orange wash of flanks not
 considered characteristic. Distress note lower
 pitched and less forceful than ruby-throated
 hummingbird. Central all green rectices and first
 adjacent all black rectices almost identical in
 length and wing chord of greater than 45.5 mm
 (both birds had measured wing chords of 46 mm)
 considered diagnostic for separation from
 female/immature ruby-throated. Bill & tail length
 longer than any immature male ruby-throated
 hummingbirds measured earlier. No noticeable
 difference in bill curvature or 10th primary

curvature vs. earlier immature ruby-throated. ----
-Ron Braun
(see Johnsgard "The Hummingbirds of North America"
pages 176-191 for a more complete discussion of
separating ruby-throated & black-chinned
hummingbirds. - ed.)

BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD: Large hummer with green
back, head, and throat. Belly was buffy, not
gray. Tail rufous. Red bill with dark tip. Seen
repeatedly at feeder at window at distance of 3-6
ft. "Chip" note quite distinct from that of ruby-
throats at feeder. ----Doyle & Diane Wise

PURPLE MARTIN: Large hirundinidae; dark with white
bellies; squarish tail. Immatures. ----Elaine
Robinson Adams

WORM-EATING WARBLER: the worm-eating warbler was
ochre chested, black and ochre head stripes,
foraging low. Looked just like the one in the
book. ----Bob Behrstock

(AUDUBON'S WARBLER): two winter-plumaged individuals
foraging in canopy of oaks in park. On each I
observed the following: large size for a warbler;
brown upperparts including sides of head; distinct
light eye-ring with no hint of a superciliary
stripe; two buffy-white wingbars; distinct patch
of light yellow stood out on chin and throat; less
distinct, small yellowish patch on sides at bend
of wing; remainder of underparts whitish with
indistinct streaking at chest and along sides;
underside of tail black with large white spots;
both birds frequently uttered characteristic
"chep" note. Observed repeatedly this day and on
06 October from as close as 4-5 meters; 10x50
binoculars; adequate light. First record for
first week in October. ----Randy Pinkston

Hooded Warbler: young male with almost complete
hood. Tail constantly fanned slightly to show
white. ----Wesley Cureton

Boat-tailed Grackle (Yellow-eyed form): Large
grackle, basically all black, with blue and purple
iridescent colors in some light conditions.
Large, keel-shaped tail. Bright yellow eye
distinctly and clearly visible. Bird was calling
while perched on a small post in Shoveler's Pond
at Anahuac NWR. Both observers heard the bird and
studied it in excellent light for about 5 minutes
with 10X binocs. The bird was photographed with a
400mm lens and the photos show the bright yellow
eye. The bird was seen at distances of 10-30 m.
Both observers are very familiar with the Great-
tailed and Common Grackles as well as the dark-
eyed form of Boat-tailed Grackle. The distinct
squeaky "rusty gate" call eliminates all other
grackles from consideration. ----Jim Morgan &
Randy Pinkston

Scarlet Tanager: Winter male. Bird was very close
and obviously a tanager by size, beak, etc.
Plumage was yellow-green, back very green. The
wings and tail were black. ----Jane & John
Hamilton

SCARLET TANAGER: Very greenish tanager. Uniform in
color, except that wings were only slightly
darker. Apparently first record for last week in
October. ----Wesley Cureton

Clay-colored Sparrow:

Appearance: Light colored, brownish sparrow 12-13 cm
in length; crown dark, brown in color with thin
black streaking, divided medially the entire
length of the head by a very distinct whitish-buff
stripe; superciliary stripe, pale buff in color,
and malar stripe, less buff and more white than
superciliary, forming a wide frame around a very
distinct brown cheek-patch bordered above and
below with black; black submalar streak very
distinct; lores pale brownish; side of neck a rich
gray forming a distinct collar, contrasting with
whitish underparts; back light brownish, boldly
streaked with black; brown of scapulars and wing
coverts also light, with slight hint of rufous;
rump not seen; tail light gray-brown, moderately
long and deeply notched; bill pinkish-brown, dark
at edges and tip; legs pale fleshy-pink; irides
dark.

Voice: Occasionally gave a weak "chip" note.

Habitat: Weedy field bordered by tall hedgerow.

Behavior: Fairly timid, seeking refuge in hedgerow;
the bird was otherwise feeding by perching low on
ragweed stubble or other plants and picking seeds
from crabgrass tassels within its reach.

Observation: Observed on four occasions, once for at
least 2 minutes, over a 30-45 minute period at
midday from 12-15 meters; 10x50 and 10x40
binoculars; excellent light.

Similar Species: Immature or fall adult Chipping
Sparrow can be ruled out for several reasons
including our bird's gray collar contrasting with
whitish underparts, distinct submalar streak,
highly contrasting facial pattern (in particular
the black line bordering bottom of cheek-patch),
pale lores, and its overall pale appearance;
Brewer's Sparrow can also be ruled out by our
bird's contrasting collar and sides, contrasting
facial pattern, and its distinct medial crown-
stripe. ----Randyn Pinkston & Jim Morgan

Information on Zone-Tailed Hawks Requested

As you may be aware, there have
been increasing numbers of reports of
wintering Zone-tailed Hawks in the central
and southern portions of Texas in recent
years. I am interested in gathering as
much data as possible concerning these
reports including date, location, observers
and complete written details. I am speci-
fically interested in winter (Nov.-Feb.
inclusive) records from anywhere in the
state and any records of the species east
of the Balcones Escarpment.

If you have any information con-
cerning these sightings or know someone
who does, I would certainly appreciate
hearing from you. Those of you who are
area coordinators or persons to whom
other observers send their records to may
have some of the desired information tucked
away in files. If possible, would you
search your files for Zone-tailed records?

Eventually I hope to put together
a paper on these sightings and all con-
tributors will be acknowledged. Please
send your reports to Greg Lasley, 5103
Turnabout Lane, Austin, TX 78731 or call
(512) 454-7453.

Southern Florida For Houston Birders May 5-12, 1985

Next in Peregrine's series of
low-cost, custom-designed itineraries for
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species of birds, plants and other life
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pelagic trip into the Gulf Stream, the
Keys, the Everglades, and the Miami area.
The tour was designed and will be led
by Ben Feltner and Bob Behrstock, both
of whom have covered the areas to be
visited. As always, OG members will be
given first preference for signing up.
This tour presents numerous opportunities
for photographing birds, plants, and
mammals. For an itinerary, call Pere-
grine at 441-1220. Itineraries will also
be available at OG meetings.

OG Field Trip To San Bernard NWR by Jim Morgan

The OG's field trip to San Bernard NWR on Saturday, October 13, was enjoyed by approximately 45 participants. Even though the trip did not "officially" start until 8:00 a.m., the early arrivals enjoyed the presence of a Vermilion Flycatcher and a Yellow-throated Warbler at the refuge maintenance headquarters. The latter bird stayed in the oaks around the headquarters most of the day.

The featured event of this trip was the rail buggy rides provided by the refuge's Assistant Manager and Biologist, Mike Lange. Mike escorted four buggy loads of eager birders into a marsh full of mosquitoes with the hopes of finding Yellow Rails, and some of the other rail species. Unfortunately, a Yellow Rail was never seen on the day, but 15 Virginia Rails, a couple of King Rails, and a Sora were found. Numerous Sedge Wrens were also in the marsh, suggesting they were early this year or that our checklist is slightly off on abundance for the second week of October.

A real treat for this warm, muggy day was the number and variety of raptors. Thirteen species were seen, including 6 White-tailed Kites, 2 Osprey, a Merlin, and one (or possibly two) Peregrine Falcon(s). The latter bird put on quite a show for the "exchange" of birders on the last two buggy rides as it swooped low over the prairie before circling leisurely overhead.

Migrant Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were very much in evidence as were Blue Jays, the latter a much more abundant migrant on the UTC than many birders realize. Although Blue Jays are resident on the UTC, a large influx of this species can often be recognized during October. Such was the case on this day.

In addition to the above mentioned observations, the field trip recorded two Western Kingbirds, thirteen

species of warblers, and numerous early Savannah and Lincoln's Sparrows. A few observers were fortunate enough to see a Bobcat. In all, 106 species of birds were seen on the day.

Special thanks go to refuge Manager, Ron Bisbee and to his assistant, Mike Lange for a most enjoyable trip to what may be the most diversified and "birdy" NWR on the Upper Texas Coast.

Send requests for OG information, checklists, maps, to:
Maxine Davis, 10602 Cedarhurst
Houston 77096, 723-8559

Send bird records for Clearing House before 3rd of month to:
Ron Braun, 1302 Berrywood Ln.
Houston 77077, 496-3108

Rare Bird Alert (unusual birds - report or inquire):
Don Richardson, 5475 Grape
Houston 77096, (h) 661-1365,
(w) 656-3445

Rare Bird Alert Tape, sponsored by The Piney Woods Wildlife Society:
821-2846

Send announcements, articles, etc. for The Spoonbill to editor:
Dr. B. C. Robison
2330-1/2 Shakespeare
Houston, TX 77030

Send dues, subscriptions and changes of address to:
Peter Vennema, 2120 Tangley,
Houston 77005, 520-6803
Annual Dues: \$11.00
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Send bird records for The Outer Circle before 3rd of month to:
Dr. Steve Williams
Houston Baptist University
7502 Fondren, Houston 77074
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