



Volume 45, No. 9

October 1996

The Spoonbill

November 4 Meeting Speaker & Topic

*"A Good Birding
the
Upper Texas Coast"*
a presentation by
Delton Gooden

Join the OG and Mr. Gooden as he regales us with stories and slides from many outings birding the UTC. Mr. Gooden promises a few surprises as he takes us through UTC hot spots at High Island, Anahuac and the Bolivar Peninsula.

The November meeting is set for Monday, November 4, 7 P.M. at St. Phillips' United Methodist Church, 5501 Beechnut @ Renwick.

November Learning Corner

Bird Vocalizations
taught by Karen Beekman

Great opportunity to become a better birder by honing your auditory skills. Join Karen and other OG members at 6:30 p.m.

December 2 Meeting Speaker

Watch for the next *Spoonbill* for December's program.

Put on Your Thinkin' Cap

by OG Treasurer Bob Ohmart

Though our officers serve from June to June we budget on a calendar year basis. A 1996 budget status report and the proposed 1997 budget will be presented at the November 4 meeting.

The '97 budget will then be included in the November Spoonbill and voted on at the December meeting. Your comments, suggestions or recommendations are solicited.

Please be prepared to discuss them at the November 4 meeting. As an alternative call Dan Coleman (646-7028) or Bob Ohmart (579-7403). However, if you have strong feelings about a budget item it would be best to discuss them at the meeting.

It is not too soon to think about paying your 1997 dues. Dues are \$20.00 (\$8.00 for ONC and \$12.00 for OG) and should be paid to Mary Dodson, 9618 Longmont, Houston, TX 77063. Checks maybe given to Mary at the meetings or to Bob Ohmart if Mary is not there.

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The Spoonbill

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missions *by the 15th of every
month* for possible inclusion.
*Include the author's or a contact
name, address and phone num-
ber.*

August Meeting Minutes

August 5, 1996: Chairman Bob Luckner called the meeting to order and asked any visitors to introduce themselves. He then announced that the OG meets on the first Monday of each month, however September's meeting will be on the 9th which is the second Monday due to the Labor Day holiday. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. with a learning corner starting at 6:30 p.m.

The September meeting and possibly the October meeting will be at St. Philips United Methodist Church. Check the Spoonbill for updated information. The speaker will be Jim Morgan at the Sept. 9 meeting. There was an error in the name in the Spoonbill. Bob asked for a volunteer for the job of field trip chairperson. He indicated that the chairperson does not have to lead trips or even be able to identify birds, but they must be willing to contact members to lead field trips.

There will be a mid-September field trip to the Hawk count. Check the spoonbill for times and who will be leading the trip. The October program will be by David Dauphin. He will decide what he wants to speak about. Don Richards announced two new intermediate birding classes. One will be on peeps and the other on terns.

Bob will be assisted by Vice Chairman Dan Coleman in handling the OG business. Bob will be traveling out of town on business during October, No-

vember and December and will be unable to make the meetings. He will take care of OG business as best he can when he is here. Rob Thacker gave a very informative and humorous talk on birding in Venezuela.

Submitted by Janet Rathjen, Secretary.

Convergence at Smith Point

Six southeast Texas groups descended on Smith Point on September 29 for their annual Hawk Watch trips. Among the gaggle of birders was our own OG.

OG member and official Hawk Watcher John Bregar said the highlight of the day was a Merlin munching on a Blue Grey Gnatcatcher. Also observed overhead peregrine falcon, *many* accipiters and a few Broad-winged hawk kettles after 10 a.m.

Late morning the OG field trip broke-up with some headed for Anahuac and some to High Island. November's field trip is set for Anahuac.

Calendar

November 9-10 - Armand Bayou Fall Festival. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Armand Bayou. Call 474-2551.

November 6-10 - Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival. Harlingen, TX. Call 800-531-7346.

November 14-17. TOS Fall Convention. Kingsville, TX. Call Anse Windham at 512-595-5382

November 16. OG Field Trip. Anahuac NWR. Call David 520-5906.

August 1996 Report

Editors: Phyllis & Tony Frank

Mail CH submission to:

1506 Richvale Ln., Houston TX 77063-5419

After several months of drought, the rain finally started in July and continued in August. August was wetter than normal in the Houston area. A welcome change. Early migrants are noted in the month. October should be a good month for the continuation of hawk migration. Every one is encouraged to submit their reports to the CH. New forms are available at meetings as well as directly from the CH editors.

All reports are due October 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 all those good birds. And with all the reminders completed - on to the birds.

- Whsl-Duck, Fulvs 4-4 1/1 CH-AW(1)4,DV
 Duck, Mottled 4-4 1/10 CH-AW(1)4,DV
 Shoveler, Northrn 4-10 2/3 CH-AW(1)4,DV; CH-AW(2)10,DV
 Kite, White-tailed 10-10 1/1 CH-AW(1)10,DV
 Kite, Mississippi 15-15 1/15 HA-(15)15,X
 Hawk, Broad-winged 24-24 1/1 GA-HI(1)24,DV
 Moorhen, Common 24-24 1/1 CH-AW(1)24,DV
 Tern, Gull-billed 4-4 1/2 CH-AW(2)4,DV
 Tern, Black 4-4 1/1 CH-AW(1)4,DV
 Dove, Rock 1-31 1/30 HA-(30)1-31,X
 Dove, Mourning 1-31 1/8 HA-(8)1-31,X
 Dove, Inca 1-31 1/6 HA-(6)1-31,X
 Cuckoo, Yel-billed 10-10 2/8 CH-AW(2)10,DV; GA-HI(6)10,DV
 Nighthawk, Common 1-31 2/11 CH-AW(5)10,DV; HA-(6)1-31,X
 Chuck-wills-widow 24-24 1/1 CH-SP(1)24,DV
 Hummer, Ruby-thrt 10-31 3/11 GA-HI(3)10,DV; GA-HI(5)24,DV;
 HA-(3)13-31,X
 Hummer, Rufous 29-31 2/2 HA-(1)29-31,X; HA-(1)31,PTF
 Kingfisher, Beltd 10-10 1/1 GA-HI(1)10,DV
 Wdpeckr, Red-bell 18-27 3/4 CH-SP(1)18,DV; GA-HI(1)24,DV;
 HA-(2)27,X
 Wdpeckr, Downy 4-24 5/7 CH-AW(1)4,DV; CH-AW(2)10,DV;
 CH-AW(1)18,DV; GA-HI(1)24,DV; HA-(2)24,X
 Wdpeckr, Pileated 24-24 1/1 CH-SP(1)24,DV
 Flycatch, Olv-sid 10-24 3/5 GA-HI(2)10,DV; GA-HI(2)18,DV;
 GA-HI(1)24,DV
 Wood-Pewee, East 18-18 2/2 CH-AW(1)18,DV; GA-HI(1)18,DV
 Flycatch, Yel-bel 4-18 4/7 CH-AW(1)4,DV; CH-AW(2)10,DV;
 GA-HI(3)10,DV; GA-HI(1)18,DV
 Flycatch, Least 4-4 1/1 CH-AW(1)4,DV
 empidonax, sp. 10-24 6/12 CH-AW(2)10,DV; CH-SP(2)18,DV;
 CH-SP(1)24,DV; GA-HI(4)10,DV;
 GA-HI(1)18,DV; GA-HI(2)24,DV
- Flycatch, Gr Crst 10-24 4/7 CH-AW(1)10,DV; CH-AW(1)18,DV;
 GA-HI(3)10,DV; GA-HI(2)24,DV
 Kingbird, Eastern 4-10 3/21 CH-AW(2)4,DV; CH-AW(15)10,DV;
 GA-HI(4)10,DV
 Swallow, Barn 18-24 2/55 CH-SP(25)18,DV; GA-HI(30)24,DV
 Jay, Blue 1-31 1/12 HA-(12)1-31,X
 Chickadee, Carol 10-18 2/4 CH-AW(2)10,DV; CH-AW(2)18,DV
 Gnatcatch, Blu-gra 10-24 8/62 CH-AW(4)10,DV; CH-AW(4)18,DV;
 CH-SP(10)18,DV; CH-SP(12)24,DV;
 CH-AW(1)24,DV; GA-HI(5)10,DV;
 GA-HI(1)18,DV; GA-HI(25)24,DV
 Robin, American 10-20 2/4 GA-HI(2)10,DV; HA-(2)20,X
 Catbird, Gray 4-24 3/1 CH-AW(1)4,DV; CH-AW(1)10,DV;
 CH-AW(1)24,DV
 Mockingbird, N 1-31 1/4 HA-(4)1-31,X
 Shrike, Loggerhed 10-18 2/4 CH-AW(3)10,DV; HA-(1)18,X
 Starling, Euro 25-25 1/50 HA-(50)25,X
 Vireo, Red-eyed 18-24 2/4 CH-SP(1)18,DV; GA-HI(3)24,DV
 Warb, Blue-winged 18-24 3/3 CH-AW(1)18,DV; GA-HI(1)18,DV;
 GA-HI(1)24,DV
 Warb, Yellow 10-24 4/5 CH-AW(2)10,DV; CH-AW(1)18,DV;
 GA-HI(1)18,DV; GA-HI(1)24,DV
 Warb, Blk-thr Grn 10-10 1/1 GA-HI(1)10,DV
 Warb, Yel-throat 18-18 1/2 CH-SP(2)18,DV
 Warb, Blk-and-wht 4-24 6/10 CH-AW(1)18,DV; CH-SP(1)18,DV;
 GA-HI(1)4,DV; GA-HI(2)10,DV; GA-HI(2)18,DV;
 GA-HI(3)24,DV
 Redstart, Amer 10-18 2/4 GA-HI(1)10,DV; GA-HI(3)18,DV
 Warb, Kentucky 18-18 1/3 GA-HI(3)18,DV
 Yellowthroat, Com 4-18 4/14 CH-AW(3)4,DV; CH-AW(8)10,DV;
 CH-AW(2)18,DV; GA-HI(1)10,DV
 Warb, Hooded 18-24 4/10 CH-SP(1)18,DV; CH-SP(2)24,DV;
 GA-HI(1)18,DV; GA-HI(6)24,DV

Clearing House

Warb, Canada 10-24 5/6 CH-SP(1)18,DV; CH-SP(1)24,DV;
 GA-HI(1)10,DV; GA-HI(1)18,DV; GA-HI(2)24,DV
 Cardinal, Northn 1-31 1/2 HA-(2)1-31,X
 Bunting, Painted 4-18 2/2 GA-HI(1)4,DV; GA-HI(1)18,DV
 Dickcissel 24-24 1/1 GA-HI(1)24,DV
 Grackle, Gr-tail 29-29 1/12 HA-(12)29,X
 Oriole, Orchard 4-24 6/24 CH-AW(1)4,DV; CH-AW(1)10,DV;
 GA-HI(10)4,DV; GA-HI(2)10,DV; GA-HI(4)18,DV;
 GA-HI(6)24,DV
 Sparrow, House 1-31 1/40 HA-(40)1-31,X

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 519

LIST OF OBSERVER CODES: Don Verser (DV); Phyllis & Tony Frank (PTF);
 P. D. Hulce (X)

LIST OF LOCATION CODES: Anahuac NWR (AW); High Island (HI); Smith Point (SP)

LIST OF COUNTY CODES: Brazoria (BR); Chambers (CH); Fort Bend (FB); Galveston (GA);
 Harris (HA); Jefferson (JE)

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher - D. Verser August 4, 1996

During the hour visit, gave two short episodes of the "pr-wee" call note sounding very similar to a Peewee. Upperparts including head and face were green. Two bold wing bars and uniform eye ring. The head always appeared very rounded not peaked. The bill looked large (wide) and lower mandible was entirely orange. Underparts generally yellow but washed with olive downsides and across breast and into throat area. No contrast between face and breast. Center of throat was yellow.

cont'd on last page



The INTERNET and the Birds of the Upper Texas Coast

by OG Field Trip Chair David Sarkozi
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I've subscribed to *BirdChat*, the INTERNET e-mail list for birdwatchers for about two years. I sometimes follow the INTERNET ('Net) news group *rec.birds*. Both are great sources of all kinds of information about birds and birding all over North America. Subscribers can post questions and get lots of very quick answers or enter into sometimes very long discussions on almost any birding topic.

One question that always seemed to come up was "I'm going to be in Houston and what are some good birding locations" or "Please send me information on birding around Houston." I answered a lot of them. Although, it never was a chore talking about our incredible birding area and sharing the tons of knowledge I've garnered from being an OG member, it did seem that I was always saying the same things over and over. I also began to wonder about those who were too timid to stick their heads up in a national forum (thousands in some cases are out there reading, but only a few hundred ever have anything to say). Were they missing out on some information that would make birding more fun?

Enter the World Wide Web (WWW), the 'NET's great, graphical network of personnel publishing and information sharing that spans the entire world. Publishing a "page" on the WWW has become cheap, real cheap. There already were a couple of birding WWW pages, and the service I was subscribing to allowed me to have my own WWW page. I decided to create a WWW guide to birding on the Upper Texas Coast and *Birds of the Upper Texas Coast (BUTC)* was born.

I knew from responding to queries about UTC birding out-of-area birders want to know how and where to find particular species. So, when I began to create the WWW page I started by making a list of birds easier to find on the UTC than in most of the rest of North America. Next, I wrote short articles on each bird telling visitors to the *BUTC* where to find a species and what to look for.

The INTERNET and the Birds of the Upper Texas Coast

But I saw a problem. I was listing all these great birding locations but how would a visitor know how to get there? So, I took a step back and created a list of birding locations on the UTC. The *BUTC* includes directions on how to find featured locations plus a short sketch of what to expect to see. When I mention a location in my articles on each bird I *linked* the name back to my location document. This allowed birders to immediately jump to more information about a birding location (e.g. Brazos Bend State Park) if they wanted to know more. It took a good amount of time to write all that up. There's a lot of places to bird in this area and many can't be covered in just a paragraph.

With location information and links done I was ready to go back to writing about birds. Soon I decided that pictures would be nice too. One of the neat things about the 'NET is that you can link to the resources of another page. I started searching for pictures of the birds already on the 'NET and started to accumulate lots of links where there was birding information. I thought to myself that others birders on the 'NET would find these links interesting so I started a document that was a collection of birding links around the world.

OK, back to writing bird articles. I did lots of research on the 'NET for each bird; trying to be as accurate as possible. During this process I uncovered another resource I felt others might want to check: all the references I was finding so useful. Of course, another document listing great bird references.

It took about two months to finish writing the 76 species articles. I found that learning about birding was every bit as much

fun as birding. When the articles were done I missed the creative process. Since, WWW publishing is cheap, I started looking for more projects.

I decided to do an e-mail directory of Texas birders. During the initial phase of the project I got lots of help via e-mail correspondence with other birders around the state. I simply added these folks to an e-mail directory of birders around Texas. When RBA's Steve Matherly went to Attu this Summer, I started

posting the Texas RBA to the North Birding Hotline Cooperative. Converting it to a document to add to *BUTC* was easy!

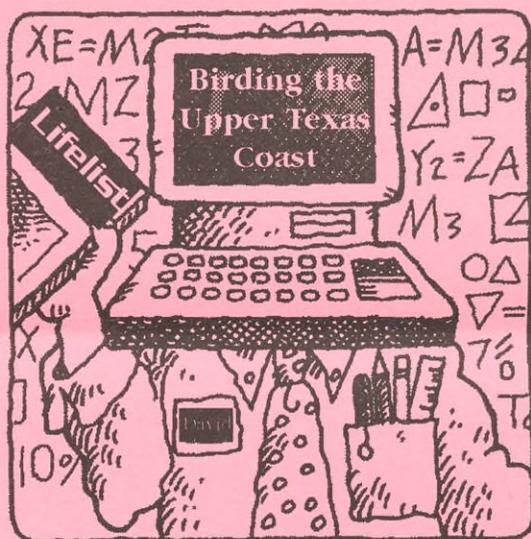
On other WWW pages I had seen pages with "clickable maps" for birding. This feature allows WWW viewers to put a mouse pointer over a point on the map, click and the viewer "jumps" to a document telling you about the area you clicked on. What a great feature for converting the OG Birding Maps into on line maps. By the time you

read this "clickable" maps of Brazoria, Chamber, Fort Bend, Galveston, and West Harris/Waller Counties will be done.

So far, I think it has been a very successful and rewarding project. Feedback and comments have been constructive and well meaning. Almost everyone's input has been useful. One measure of success for *BUTC* is the drop in requests for information about UTC birding.

Here's a peek at *Birds of the Upper Texas Coast*:

- ◆ Information on locating and identifying 76 species of birds on the Upper Texas Coast (UTC);
- ◆ UTC "Best Birding" locations guide and



The INTERNET and the Birds of the Upper Texas Coast

checklist;

- ◆ Range maps for *most* species listed;
- ◆ Texas Rare Bird Alert transcript;
- ◆ A Directory Texas Birders' E-mail address book;
- ◆ Conservation Action Alerts and legislation search;
- ◆ County Birding Maps;
- ◆ Reference book list for Texas Birders;
- ◆ Links to other Birding pages on the WWW;
- ◆ My photo gallery of best Bird Pictures
- ◆ Information on Pelagic Tours on the Texas Coast;
- ◆ An Illustrated North American Checklist, my Cyber checklist.

The future of *BUTC*:

- ◆ Audio of the UTC birds;
- ◆ Birding Trip Guides from Houston
- ◆ More Information on Jefferson County;
- ◆ Birding car pool exchange;
- ◆ Bar graph checklist;
- ◆ Electronic Clearing House submission;
- ◆ A User updatable report log.

Lastly, you can help make *BUTC* better. I need help keeping the birding maps current. I REALLY need help creating a birding map of Jefferson County. Don't be bashful with your suggestions; the sky's the limit.

Clearing House

Least Flycatcher - D. Verser August 4, 1996

Would occasionally produce a "whit" call note. Gray above and white below without any green or yellow tones. Plumage appeared very worn. A white eyering was clearly evident but not as prominent as that of a typical Least. Whitish in front of the eye. Tail seemed long suggesting a short primary extension.

Catbird - D. Verser August 4, 1996

Jumped into clear view at Anahuac willows. Uniformly dark gray overall with black cap and tail.

American Redstart - D. Verser August 10, 1996

Female type with gray upperparts and bright yellow wings and tail patches. Frequently fanned tail and wings as it investigated the water drip at Boy Scout woods.

American Redstart - D. Verser August 18, 1996

Three separate observations at Smith Oaks. One male, one female and one with a touch of orange on sides of breast but otherwise gray/white with yellow tail/wing spots like female.

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