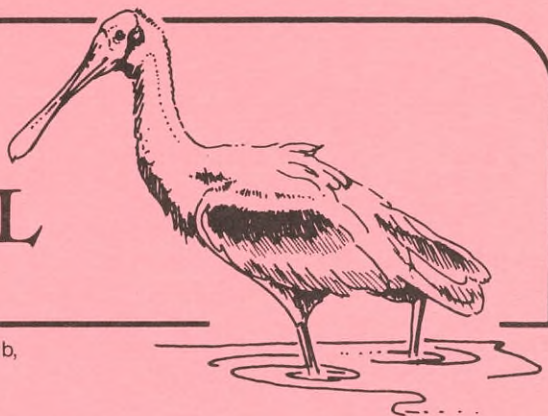


The SPOONBILL



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

Volume XXXVIII, No. 2
February 1984

Coming Events

- February 25
Saturday Deadline for The Spoonbill
announcements, articles, etc.
- March 1
Thursday OG regular meeting, Bayou
Manor Auditorium at 7:30 p.m.
Ed Kutac, author of "Texas
Birds" will speak about
Texas Outdoors.
- March 3
Saturday OG Field Trip to West Harris
County led by Ron Braun.
Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Bear
Creek Park playground area -
just to the left after enter-
ing park from Clay Road.
Bring lunch if you plan to
bird all day.
- March 3
Saturday Clearing House and Outer
Circle deadlines for February.
- March 13
Tuesday ONC Regular Meeting, "Toxic
Wastes" - Anne Alexander,
Director, Houston Toxic Sub-
stances Task Force. The
Garden Center, 1900 Hermann
Drive, 7:30 p.m.
- March 14
Wednesday Piney Woods Wildlife Society
regular meeting at 7:30 p.m.
Room A-126 of the Academic
Building, North Harris County
College Campus. John Prebost,
Assistant Aquarium Supervisor
from the Houston Zoo will
speak about exotic fish.
- March 24
Saturday ONC Photography Field Trip
to Louisiana, bus trip led
by Harry and Avis Brister.
- March 24-25
Saturday, Sunday ONC Visitors' Day and Weekend
at Little Thicket Nature
Sanctuary.
- March 25
Sunday Deadline for The Spoonbill
announcements, articles, etc.

April 3
Tuesday

Clearing House and Outer
Circle deadlines for March.

April 5
Thursday

OG regular meeting. "Birds
of the Rio Grande Valley by
Father Tom Pincelli.

April 7
Saturday

OG Field Trip to the coast
(High Island, etc.) to look
for spring migrants. Details
later.

MARCH MART

Annual Plant Sale at Mercer
Arboretum on March 23 and 24. Easy to grow
herbs, native shrubs and trees, and wild-
flowers such as bluebonnets will be for sale.
For more information, call the Mercer Ar-
boretum at 443-8731. It is located at
22306 Aldine Westfield Road.

A NOTE OF THANKS

Peggy Milstead has done a great
deal of work in revising our package of
birding maps. She has done a wonderful
job of redrawing and updating them and has
included a Fort Bend-Manor Lake map not pre-
viously in the package. Thanks Peggy for a
fine job.

SOUTHEASTERN AIRZONA TRIP - JUNE 16-24, 1984

Ben Feltners Peregrine Tours is
offering a birding trip to Southeast Arizona
June 16-24, 1984. This is a special package
for Houston birders. Fly from Houston to
El Paso, then drive to the Ciricahua Mountains
to begin birding. Other places visited will
be the Huachuca Mountains and Mile-Hi Ranch
at Ramsey Canyon, Patagonia, and Silver City,
New Mexico. This tour will be limited to 15
participants, and registrations must be re-
ceived by April 1. Call Peregrine Tours,
520-7747, for more details.

Noel's Niche Looking Back

MINUTES OF THE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP MEETING- FEBRUARY 2, 1984

...Ten Years Ago This Month
from February 1974 Spoonbill:
"T. Ben Feltner Finds 431 Species in Texas
During 1973"

"Ben found 422 of the 445 species which occur annually in Texas, plus the following 9 'bonus birds' in 1973:
Goshawk (Jan. 12 at Sheldon Reservoir)
Red Crossbill (Jan. 20 at Bastrop St. Pk.)
Evening Grosbeak (Same date & location)
Oldsquaw (Jan. 21 at Texas City Dike)
Black-legged Kittiwake (Jan. 22 at TCD)
Clark's Nutcracker (Feb. 28 at Ft. Davis & Mar. 2 in Guadalupe Mountains)
Arctic Loon (Mar. 3 at Balmorhea Lake)
Ruff (Mar. 31 in Chambers Co.)
Red Phalarope (Sept. 20 at Austin Sewage Ponds)
Of the 47 warbler species occurring regularly in Texas, only the following six were missed by Ben in 1973: Virginia's, Tropical Parula, Black-throated Blue, Hermit, Prairie, and Painted Redstart.

Ben's Texas total as of May 13 was 397 species, thereby exceeding the previous personal record for this state of 396 set by Jim Tucker in 1971. On December 2nd he surpassed the all-time highest annual record of 428 species within a single state which had been established within California by Richard Stallcup in 1972.

Ben Feltner's big year was a truly remarkable birding feat from many aspects, but perhaps the most impressive result was that he had seen more species in Texas within a single year than he had recorded during all his 22 previous years of birding in the Lone Star State..."

...Twenty Years Ago This Month
From February 1964 Spoonbill:
"A Challenge to Conservationists---Richard Pough"

"Pulling the Attwater Prairie Chicken Back From the Brink of Extinction."

"Some 3,428 acres of prairie... occupied by several hundred... prairie chickens, is now under option to conservation interests. The total cost of the land will be \$364,000 which is less than many an art museum has paid for a single painting in recent years. Is that which the Lord produced less worthy of preservation than a painting from the hand of man?"

(The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge was established on July 1, 1972 as a result of purchases made by The Nature Conservancy of Texas and The World Wildlife Fund. As of June, 1983 the Refuge encompassed a total of 8,000 acres. Prairie Chicken population in this area numbered some 25 birds in 1965, 125 in 1975, and 180-200 in the spring of 1983. The original Texas population of 1,000,000 birds was reduced to less than 1,000 by 1965, increased to an estimated 2,400 by 1975 and declined to approximately 1,300 in 1983...)

Don Richardson, OG Chairman, called the meeting to order and announced that the minutes of the last meeting were printed in the January Spoonbill. There were no additions or corrections. There was no treasurer's report available. David Dauphin announced that Clearing House reports were due and encouraged their prompt submission. He also asked that field notes be submitted when required and that they be thorough but specific to the bird being reported.

Meg Temkin was present and prepared to take care of any aluminum collected by our members. Don reported that the January Spoonbill had been printed by a new printer at considerably less cost than we are used to. He asked for comments or complaints. B. C. Robison talked about several new (regular) features including a "Learning Corner" and book reviews.

Don announced that dues are due and encouraged all members to pay up promptly. A newly revised set of birding maps has been printed and are available at 25¢ per set. Peggy Milstead was thanked for the great deal of work she did in preparing them. The February 4 field trip to Lake Livingston was announced as was the March 3 trip to West Harris County. Linda Douglas reported that the March program is to be presented by Ed Kutac - author of Texas Birds.

Don introduced Gary Montoya who presented a program on the Attwater Prairie Chicken and the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuges.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The South Central Region of the Hawk Migration Association of North America will sponsor a 4-day conference on birds of prey from March 29 through April 1 at the Airport Hilton in McAllen, Texas.

In conjunction with the seventh annual spring Rio Grande close-site study, to be held on Saturday, March 31, the conference will include (besides hawk watching in the mornings) presentation of papers, a panel discussion on problems of hawk identification, and a birds in art display.

Those wishing to present papers on various aspects of raptor behaviour, identification, migration, etc. should send an abstract to Mrs. Gladys Donohue, P. O. Drawer 400, Penitas, Texas 78576.

For more information and registration forms, write Mrs. Donohue at the above address or phone (512)581-6545. Preregistration is necessary in order to get hotel convention rates.

We will welcome all admirers of raptors.

EASTERN MEXICO - ONE MORE TIME ...

Jim Morgan

Is 400 species possible in two weeks of birding in Eastern Mexico? You bet! Tony Gallucci, John Eyre, John Raines and I saw 399 species, and heard four more species, for a total of 403 in two weeks of birding from Monterrey to Merida in the eastern Gulf/Caribbean slope habitats of Mexico. Personal highlights of this trip follow.

John Eyre and John Raines flew in from England and met Tony and me at the Houston airport on December 27th where we proceeded onward to Monterrey that night.

Our birding began on December 28th with roadside observations, and several stops along the way, while en route to Mante in the state of Tamaulipas. Mante was to be our "base" for birding in the El Naranjo area the next two days.

El Naranjo, even after five trips there, continues to be one of my favorite Mexican birding areas. This year, even though significant freeze damage had occurred in the area, the birding within the El Naranjo Christmas Count circle was again very good. On our first day we saw nifty Mexican species like Barred Antshrike, Blue Mockingbird, Rufous-browed Peppershrike and Crimson-collared Grosbeak. The highlight of the day was watching 147 (counted!) Military Macaws coming into feed in a row of Chinaberry trees. With a background of a green mountainside these beautiful, very large parrots put on a fantastic show. We watched them for 30 minutes while they flew, landed in the trees, fed, preened and just sat as we leisurely observed them with binoculars and scopes as close as 50 to 200 meters.

The next day at El Naranjo was the Christmas Count. Our party worked the eastern third of the circle, and while we did not record as many species as last year, we did have some good finds. Best of all were Black Hawk-Eagle and American Woodcock. We also saw other nice birds such as Peregrine, Bat and Aplomado Falcons, Tufted Flycatcher, and Mangrove Swallow.

The following day we were en route to Tuxpan, but we made numerous birding stops along the way. We found another Peregrine before reaching Tampico, and south of Tampico we found a beautiful adult Great Black Hawk and a Gray-necked Wood-Rail.

After spending the night in Tuxpan we proceeded on towards Teziutlan. Our route carried us along the coast to Nautla before we turned inland and up into the mountains. Near Nautla we found numerous waders, ducks and shorebirds, including Collared Plover. Also, we found our first Laughing Falcon of the trip just as we turned inland. The rest of the day was spent birding up the slope and into the cloud forest.

The following day was the Teziutlan Christmas Count and our party worked the eastern part of the circle. We found two of

the area specialties, Emerald Toucanet and Azure-hooded Jay, along with Eye-ringed Flatbill, flocks of White-collared, Chestnut-collared, and Vaux's Swifts, and flocks of euphonias. Our party recorded over 100 species on count day, which turned out to be a real good total for the area we were assigned.

We birded one and a half more days before leaving Teziutlan and we had some of our best birding of the entire trip. My highlight was finding a "most wanted" bird - the Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo. We found a second one an hour later about a mile away. What a great bird! We also located a beautiful male Aztec Thrush and flocks of Gray Silky Flycatchers, plus such warbler delights as Hooded Yellowthroat, Slate-throated Redstart and Red Warbler. We encountered one massive flock of about 1,000 birds in the highlands which is always one of the highlights of Mexican birding. This flock included hundreds of Pine Siskins, Black-headed Siskins, numerous Bushtits and Mexican Chickadees, plus large numbers of Olive, Townsend's and Hermit Warblers, along with a nice mixture of Mexican species and a few Red Crossbills. It took us over an hour to thoroughly work this flock!

While en route to Catemaco we made the traditional stopover east of the city of Veracruz where Aplomado Falcon, Double-striped Thick-Knees, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and Grassland Yellow-Finch were found by the Peregrine Tour just ahead of us. We enjoyed seeing each of these species, even though all were to be seen again later in the trip. Further on towards Catemaco we found two Crane Hawks.

We stayed only one day at Catemaco but still we were able to find White Hawk, Collared Aracari, Keel-billed Toucan, Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet, Tawny-crowned Greenlet, and Gray-headed Tanager, along with many other rain forest species.

Our next stop was Palenque, in the state of Chiapas, where we spent three full days. This great area provided super birding once again. We birded around the ruins, along the Ocosingo highway, the roads to Chancala and La Libertad, plus the grounds of the Nu-Tu-tun restaurant/hotel.

At the ruins we had two White Hawks soaring, four species of trogons, two Northern Royal Flycatchers, Lovely Cotinga, Red-legged and Green Honeycreepers, plus a host of other species. Along the Ocosingo highway we had a great view of a perched Black Hawk-Eagle, where we could see all of the bird perfectly in the scope. At the far end of the road to Chancala we had eight species of tanagers, including Golden-masked, Scarlet-rumped and Crimson-collared. On the road to La Libertad we had our second Gray-necked Wood-Rail, plus Sandhill Crane and Botteri's (Yellow-carpalled or Peten race) Sparrow. In the whole area we had nine species of hummingbirds during the three days. Also, a real treat was a night of owling when Bob Behrstock of Peregrine Tours called up Mottled Wood-Owl and Black and White Owl, plus we also heard, but did not see,

Crested Owl.

En route to Merida we took the road to La Libertad and Emiliano Zapata, then out to the main highway. This provided two pair of Aplomado Falcons, a nesting colony of Ringed and Amazon Kingfishers, and hundreds of sunning Iguana lizards. In the "Jabiru Marsh" we had an adult Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, and further along the highway we had a Black-collared Hawk right next to the road in the state of Tabasco. Later, in the state of Campeche, Tony spotted an interesting group of raptors. When we stopped, Tony called our attention to a bird right above us - an adult King Vulture! We finished this day looking at Yucatan Jays and Orange Orioles in the state of Yucatan.

On January 11 we departed Merida via Cancun, then on to Houston, all by air. The area around the Cancun airport provided three additional species before leaving Mexico.

The final trip total of 403 species included 31 species of raptors, 39 species of warblers, and 17 species of tanagers. This was one good birding trip!

If you can, bird Mexico as soon as possible. Many of our days were spent birding with a background of sound produced by the axe, the machete, and even a chain saw. One only hopes that enough habitat will be left to allow another party to observe over 400 species in two weeks in eastern Mexico. Otherwise, many great birding experiences will be lost to others in the future.

EL NARANJO CHRISTMAS COUNT **Ben Feltner**

One of the nicest things about the El Naranjo Count is that its location assures one of a warm tropical count day. Situated 22°30'N longitude and 99°24'W latitude, it lies well below the Tropic of Cancer in the land of banana trees, mangoes and papayas. This year, however, they were all dead and the "warm tropical count day" never materialized. The same hard freeze that locked up the U.T.C. partially froze Galveston Bay and played havoc with the Valley's citrus crop did not halt at the border. The "Siberian Express" made a whistle stop of Northeastern Mexico, and its effects were devastating. Around El Naranjo, where such weather is unprecedented, the air was redolent with the odor of freshly dead greenery, and many of the shrubs showed signs of severe "frost burn". Even big strangler figs suffered and had lost their leaves and fruit. Normal bird food crops were, in many cases, gone, but despite all the damage our total count was up over last year; thanks mostly to the influx of good birders and new talent that joined this year's tropical tally-up.



Again the Jim Morgan/Tony Gallucci team took honors for the best count bird. This year they were joined by John Eyre and John Raines from England. Mr. Eyre was a former resident of the U.T.C. and was quite active in the O.G. when here. This Anglo-American contingent found a Black Hawk-Eagle (a spectacular bird of prey I have only seen once that far north in 23 years of birding there); and an American Woodcock (recorded only twice before in Mexico). The cold weather to the north was unquestionably responsible for the Woodcock, but the Black Hawk-Eagle remains inexplicable. In all, the Morgan party recorded 125 species including sixteen raptors on the day. Among that total were both Peregrine and Aplomado Falcons. Quite a performance!

George and Carol Harmon of Quinlan, Texas teamed up with Bob Behrstock and ferreted out some rather "good" birds themselves. Locating three species of trogons was no small feat, but Violaceous, Elegant and Mountain were all found. In addition, they recorded a sometimes difficult Blue-crowned Motmot, and a pair of Fan-tailed Warblers. The Stone brothers of San Antonio, Byron, Don and Matt, worked the area around El Salto Falls. They also found a pair of Fan-tailed Warblers as well as an Ovenbird, Crimson-collared Grosbeaks and both saltators. The El Salto area was one of the hardest hit by the weather, but still produced 83 species. Another group of El Naranjo rookies, from Houston this time, P. D. Hulce, John LaGrue and Steve Schultz, turned in exclusives in the form of Ruddy Ground Dove, White-throated Robin and Thicket (formerly Rufescent) Tinamou. At El Naranjo everyone gets to contribute, as there are always more birds than birders.

Yet another party led by Canadian David Mark consisted of Houstonians: Robert Thacker, Carol Sloan and Larry White. Under Dave's aegis they found Singing Quail, Azure-crowned Hummingbird and Flame-colored Tanager as their quality birds. Their total of 83 species tied the El Salto party. Incidentally Larry White, a relative novice in the birding game, is rapidly displaying those careful talents that make for a good birder.

The final party consisted of Angus Brown, June Smith, Linda and me. We birded the western third of the circle as usual. Our on again, off again water supply, Laguna Larga, was on this year, so we recorded 12 species of ducks including Canvasback and Cinnamon Teal. Our most spectacular birding came when we discovered over 100 orioles in a small citrus orchard. The fence consisted of living prickly pear, and the birds were feeding on ripe cactus fruit. Six species were represented including a rare Black-Vented Oriole and several Scott's Orioles which were new to the count. Presumably the freeze in the eastern area was responsible for this concentration in the west.

Despite the cold weather, count day started at 38°F and did not break 70°F all day, we totalled 231 species and all participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves. A universally shared spectacle of about 150 Military Macaws, present for several days, was probably everyone's highlight. There is something unique and curiously pleasing about watching a big flock of colorful macaws while one is clothed in down jackets and gloves. It will be a pleasant scene to recall on some Houston July day.

Clearing House - JANUARY, 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 of individuals seen in parentheses, i.e. (1-40). Noteworthy sightings will be underlined, capitalized, or both, according to their status. All observations reported below must be accepted by the Checklist Committee (Ben Felner, Jim Morgan and Noel Pettingill) 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.

Loon, Common: 15 reports (1-50)
 Grebe, Horned: 4 reports (1-9)
 Grebe, Eared: 7 reports (2-300)
 Grebe, Pied-billed: 12 reports (1-50)
 Pelican, American White: 10 reports (2-300)
 Pelican, Brown: E. Galveston--(1)15-31,m.ob. (good notes, ed.)
 Gannet, Northern: 3 reports (1-5)
 Cormorant, Double-crested: 9 reports (8-600)
 Cormorant, Olivaceous: 4 reports (1-10)
 Anhinga: Galveston--(1)28,A
 Heron, Great Blue: 18 reports (1-30)
 Heron, Green-backed: 3 reports (1-2)
 Heron, Little Blue: 9 reports (1-15)
 Egret, Cattle: 7 reports (2-100)
 Egret, Reddish: 3 reports (1-4)
 Egret, Great: 8 reports (2-50)
 Egret, Snowy: 10 reports (2-60)
 Heron, Tricolored: 7 reports (1-20)

Night-Heron, Black-crowned: 4 reports (1-41)
 Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned: 4 reports (1-7)
 Bittern, American: Bolivar--(1)28,A
 Ibis, White-faced: 4 reports (5-600)
 Ibis, White: 4 reports (10-100)
 Spoonbill, Roseate: 6 reports (1-200)
 Goose, Canada: 8 reports (10-800)
 Goose, Greater White-fronted: 6 reports (10-1400)
 Goose, Snow: 7 reports (50-5000); W. Harris Co.--(600,000)7,B.
 Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied: 4 reports (2-105)
 Mallard: 5 reports (1-30)
 Duck, American Black: Galveston--(1)29,C. (see notes, ed.)
 Duck, Mottled: 7 reports (2-20)
 Gadwall: 6 reports (2-350)
 Pintail, Northern: 8 reports (1-200)
 Teal, Green-winged: 5 reports (4-300)
 Teal, Blue-winged: 4 reports (1-30)
 Teal, Cinnamon: 4 reports (1-17)
 Wigeon, American: 6 reports (1-300)
 Shoveler, Northern: 9 reports (2-300)
 Duck, Wood: 4 reports (1-18)
 Redhead: 5 reports (1-20)
 Duck, Ring-necked: 5 reports (1-30)
 Canvasback: 5 reports (2-90)
 Scaup, Greater: 4 reports (1-7) (good notes, ed.)
 Scaup, Lesser: 7 reports (2-5000)
 Goldeneye, Common: 4 reports (1-50)
 Bufflehead: 6 reports (2-200)
 Duck, Ruddy: 8 reports (1-200)
 Merganser, Hooded: 5 reports (1-43)
 Merganser, Red-breasted: 4 reports (2-45)
 Vulture, Turkey: 11 reports (2-70)
 Vulture, Black: 7 reports (1-12)
 Kite, Black-shouldered: 5 reports (1-5)
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: 3 reports (1-2)
 Hawk, Cooper's: 4 reports (1-3)
 Hawk, Red-tailed: 15 reports (1-35)
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: 10 reports (1-8)
 Hawk, Ferruginous: W. Harris Co. (Lake Warren)--(1)19,D(Previously reported, ed.)
 Hawk, Harris: Kemah--(1)15,E (notes, ed.); SE Brazoria Co.--(1)28,F (see notes, ed.)
 Eagle, Bald: 7 reports (7 ad. & 4 imm.)
 Harrier, Northern: 12 reports (1-60)
 Osprey: 4 reports (1-2)
 Caracara, Crested: W. Harris Co.--(1)14,6
 Falcon, Peregrine: 4 reports (1 each)
 Merlin: 3 reports (1 each)
 Kestrel, American: 16 reports (1-30)
 Prairie-Chicken, Greater: Dickinson--(8)21,H
 Crane, Sandhill: 4 reports (3-500)
 Rail, King: 4 reports (1-2)
 Moorhen, Common: 4 reports (1-10)
 Coot, American: 9 reports (4-1200)
 Plover, Semipalmated: 4 reports (1-7)
 Plover, Piping: 4 reports (4-23)
 Killdeer: 16 reports (2-100)
 Plover, Black-bellied: 7 reports (2-35)
 Turnstone, Ruddy: 3 reports (6-15)
 Woodcock, American: 4 reports (1-4)
 Snipe, Common: 6 reports (1-15)
 Curlew, Long-billed: 4 reports (1-23)
 Sandpiper, Spotted: 7 reports (1-20)
 Willet: 9 reports (2-45)
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 9 reports (1-32)
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: 5 reports (2-75).
 Sandpiper, Least: 6 reports (4-45)
 Dunlin: 4 reports (4-20)
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: 3 reports (3-30)
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: 5 reports (5-50)
 Sandpiper, Western: 4 reports (5-30)
 Godwit, Marbled: 3 reports (10-25)
 Sanderling: 6 reports (10-100)
 Avocet, American: 3 reports (10-600)
 Stilt, Black-necked: 3 reports (3-7)
 Gull, Great Black-backed: Kemah-Seabrook--(1)all month, m. ob., (previously reported, ed.); E. Galveston--(1)24-31,1, m. ob.(good notes, ed.).
 Gull, Herring: 5 reports (2-50)
 Gull, Ring-billed: 11 reports (2-2000)
 Gull, Laughing: 9 reports (12-5000)
 Gull, Bonaparte's: 4 reports (1-25)
 Tern, Gull-billed: 3 reports (1-5)
 Tern, Forster's: 7 reports (1-5)
 Tern, Common: 4 reports (1-4)
 Tern, Royal: 5 reports (2-20)
 Tern, Caspian: 3 reports (1-5)
 Skimmer, Black: 4 reports (3-75)
 Dove, Rock: 9 reports (5-1000)
 Dove, White-winged: 3 Galveston reports (2-9)
 Dove, Mourning: 14 reports (2-300)

Turtle-Dove, Ringed: Bellaire--(1-3)all month, m. ob.; W. Chambers Co.--(1-2)all month, m. ob.
 Dove, Inca: 3 reports (2-100)
 Barn-Owl, Common: 3 reports (1-10)
 Screech-Owl, Eastern: 4 reports (1-5)
 Owl, Great Horned: 4 reports (1-3)
 Owl, Barred: 3 reports (1-5)
 Owl, Short-eared: 3 reports (1-3)
 Hummingbird, Rufous: 3 reports (1-3)
 Kingfisher, Belted: 6 reports (1-10)
 Flicker, Northern: 7 reports (1-40)
 Woodpecker, Pileated: 6 reports (1-6)
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 11 reports (1-17)
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: 10 reports (1-10)
 Woodpecker, Hairy: NW Houston--(1)17,C.
 Woodpecker, Downy: 8 reports (1-15)
 Phoebe, Eastern: 6 reports (1-15)
 Jay, Blue: 15 reports (1-50)
 Crow, American: 6 reports (4-30).
 Chickadee, Carolina: 9 reports (2-20).
 Titmouse, Tufted: 7 reports (1-20).
 Wren, House: 6 reports (1-8).
 Wren, Bewick's: 3 reports (1-3).
 Wren, Carolina: 10 reports (1-15).
 Wren, Sedge: 4 reports (1-3).
 Mockingbird, Northern: 13 reports (1-30).
 Catbird, Gray: 4 reports (1-3).
 Thrasher, Brown: 8 reports (1-15).
 Robin, American: 12 reports (3-3000).
 Thrush, Hermit: 5 reports (1-4).
 Bluebird, Eastern: 4 reports (3-20).
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 10 reports (1-10).
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 13 reports (2-15).
 Pipit, Water: 6 reports (1-200).
 Waxwing, Cedar: 4 reports (4-30).
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 15 reports (1-30).
 Starling, European: 7 reports (5-5000).
 Vireo, Solitary: 8 reports (1-4).
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: 7 reports (1-20).
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped: 14 reports (2-100).
 Warbler, Pine: 6 reports (1-20).
 Warbler, Palm: 4 reports (1-4).
 Yellowthroat, Common: 6 reports (1-10).
 Warbler, Wilson's: 4 reports (1 each).
 Sparrow, House: 14 reports (1-1000).
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 9 reports (1-60).
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 10 reports (2-10000).
 Blackbird, Rusty: 3 reports (20-250).
 Blackbird, Brewer's: 6 reports (4-2500).
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: 3 reports (2-20).
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 11 reports (2-300).
 Grackle, Common: 9 reports (10-2000).
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 7 reports (4-5000).
 Tanager, Western: Houston--(1)8,A (see notes, ed.).
 Cardinal, Northern: 12 reports (1-40).
 Finch, Purple: 3 reports (1-3).
 Siskin, Pine: 3 reports (1-4).
 Goldfinch, American: 6 reports (2-200).
 Sparrow, Savannah: 11 reports (1-100).
 Sparrow, Grasshopper: W. Harris Co.--(3)21,A.
 Sparrow, Seaside: 4 reports (1-10).
 Sparrow, Vesper: 4 reports (2-15).
 Sparrow, LanK: 3 reports (1-3).
 Junco, Dark-eyed: 4 reports (1-30).
 Sparrow, Chipping: W. Harris Co.--(20-50)all month, m. ob.
 Sparrow, Field: 4 reports (1-6).
 Sparrow, Harris: W. Harris Co.--(1)29,J.
 Sparrow, White-crowned: 4 reports (1-10).
 Sparrow, White-throated: 9 reports (2-50).
 Sparrow, Fox: 4 reports (1-4).
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: 3 reports (1-20).
 Sparrow, Swamp: 4 reports (1-8).
 Sparrow, Song: W. Harris Co.--(2)29,J.
 Longspur, Lapland: 4 reports (25-100).

CONTRIBUTORS - January, 1984

A(Tommy Michael); B(Randy Pinkston); C(Steve Williams);
 D(Maurice & Virginia Gatlin); E(Don Richardson & Gil Douglas);
 F(Don & Ruthie Melton); G(Jerry Caraviotis); H(Marguerite Guice & Yetta Chapman); I(Mal Hodges); J(Jim Morgan);
 Mary Ann Chapman; Emery Froelich; Alma Barrera; Bob & Peggy Milstead; Don Richardson; Lee Richardson; Gil Douglas; Linda Douglas; Mark Magruder; Ed Rozenburg; Noel Pettingell; David & Jan Dauphin; Margaret Anderson; Bob & Edith Willman; Pat Smith; Laura Singleton; Noreen Damude; Bob Honig; OG Field Trip; HAS Field Trip; U.S. Coast Guard-Galveston Station.

NOTES

Black Duck: Green bill, purple speculum; dark body-head contrast; close to Mottled Duck; seen from 10 yds. in good light. - Steve Williams.

Harris Hawk: Medium size hawk sitting in a tree. Black from head to his yellow toes except for...white leggings. Black tail with narrow white band seen at base of tail; rusty wing linings and shoulders. Telescope, binocs; good light; 150 ft. - Don & Ruthie Melton.

Western Tanager: Dirty yellow head, no eyestripes or eyerings; conical bill - larger than Sparrow's, smaller than Grosbeak's; Bird was 6.75 - 7 in. long. Belly was dirty white. Tail slightly forked. Dark wings with two thin, whitish wingbars. Responded to owl tape. Back and rump not seen. 12-25 ft., 5 min., good light. - Tommy Michael.

SPECIAL REPORT TO THE CLEARING HOUSE:

****Possible Spotted Redshank**** Sharp Road-W. Harris Co. - Jan. 8, 1984.

Time: 11:30 am

Distance: 150-200 yds.

Optics: Binocs & 20X telescope.

Length of observation: 20 min.

Habitat: Rice stubble field with water in furrows.

Appearance: This bird had a stance similar to yellowlegs. It was very dark both back and front when seen in bright, overcast light. The head and neck were somewhat lighter, but at first glance out into the field, it appeared to be an all charcoal colored bird. The color was not a "smooth" color, so possibly there were some bars on it. By "smooth" I think of a dove's color. It was in an area with Lesser Yellowlegs and Killdeer. It became nervous about our looking and began to bob quite a bit. All Redshanks bob often when disturbed. It walked around and once appeared to feed with his back toward us. We were unable to flush the bird so cannot describe the wings.

Size: Length estimated to be 13" - 14". Fairly long legs. Double the size of Killdeer, substantially larger than Lesser Yellowlegs in same fields of view through scope.

Bill: About 2 - 2 1/2 X the length of the head. Dark except for a light area near the base, making a somewhat two-toned bill. It resembled the Greater Yellowlegs, being either straight or slightly upturned.

Head and neck: Dark, but not as dark as the body. Faint eyestripe.

Body: Dark charcoal on back with some speckling or at least some variation. Where wings joined body it seemed to be pure black. Tail was darker on top than the back. Front of bird was as dark, perhaps darker than back, perhaps with some barring.

Legs: Orange-red in color - seen several times.

Conclusion: Probable juvenile Spotted Redshank. It had all the correct markings plus behavior.

- Margaret Anderson

The following birds were submitted without sufficient details; and, contributors should submit notes to a member of the checklist committee:

Parula, Northern: Freeport Jetties--(1)1, Mary Ann Chapman, Emery Froelich, Alma Barrera.

THE OUTER CIRCLE - JANUARY, 1984

Despite the nastiness of the weather and the appearance of the sun on fewer days than all but the rarest birds reported in this column, no less than 11 reports were received. Impressive! A special word of welcome for Anne Speers, Peter Vennema, Bob Behrstock, Larry White, and John Richards, who are first-time contributors to The Outer Circle. John owns a private lake called the Wetlands, near El Campo, in Wharton County, and graciously provided Dottie Leslie with a report from there. Observers are as follows: DL, Dottie Leslie and group; PV, Peter Vennema; SL, Anne and Fred Speers; Lois Lentz; SB, Anne and Fred Speers, Martha and Ray Branum; DR, Don Richardson; JD, Joyce Dolch; JM, Jim Morgan; GC, Gary Clark; W, Steve and Beverly Williams. Locations are as follows: (AT) Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR; (LC) LCRA Cooling Ponds near Fayetteville, Fayette Co. off S.H. 159. For counties: (AU) Austin; (WA) Waller; (MO) Montgomery; (WH) Wharton; (SJ) San Jacinto; (CO) Colorado (except Attwater NWR).

Species commonly seen in proper habitat this month were: Eared & Pied-billed Grebe; Cattle, Great & Snowy Egret; Canada, White-fronted & Snow Goose; Mottled, Gadwall, Pintail, Shoveler, Mallard, Lesser Scaup, American Wigeon & Ruddy Duck; Green-winged Teal; Black & Turkey Vulture; Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Marsh & Kestrel Hawks; Bobwhite; Killdeer; Common Snipe; Spotted Sandpiper; both Yellow-legs & Dowitchers; Mourning, Inca & Rock Dove; Barn & Barred Owl; Forster's Tern; Ring-billed Gull; Belted Kingfisher; Red-bellied, Downy & Flicker Woodpeckers; Eastern Phoebe & Bluebird; American Crow; Carolina Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; House & Carolina Wrens; Mockingbird; Brown Thrasher; Robin; Hermit Thrush; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Cedar Waxwing; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Yellow-rumped, Pine & Orange-crowned Warbler; Starling; Common & Great-tailed Grackle; E. Meadowlark; Red-winged & Brewer's Blackbird; Cowbird; Water Pipit; House Sparrow; Cardinal; American Goldfinch; Savannah, Chipping, Field, Vesper, White-crowned, White-throated, Lincoln's & Swamp Sparrow; Shrike.

White Pelican: SJ, Lake Livingston (28) 26 SB
 Double-crested Cormorant: many reports, with SJ,
 Lake Livingston (10,000+) 26 SB
 Am. Anhinga: CO, Eagle Lake (2) 27 JD
 Ross' Goose: AT (1) 15 DR
 Black-bellied Whistling Duck: WH, El Campo (32) 9
 Black Duck: WH, Wetlands (12) JR
 Blue-winged Teal: WH, Wetlands (50) JR
 Cinnamon Teal: AT (5) 12 PV; WH Wetlands (10) JR
 Wood Duck: SJ, Trinity River (6) 26 SB; MO Jones
 Forest (6) 12 GC
 Redhead: WH, Wetlands (4) JR
 Ring-necked Duck: MO Lake Conroe (4) 5 SL; LC (100)
 27 W
 Canvasback: MO, Lake Conroe (18) 5 SL; LC (150) 27 W
 Greater Scaup: LC (1) 27 W. Green-headed male in
 bright sunlight in 25x scope @ 75 yards
 Common Goldeneye: LC (2) 27 W; WH Wetlands (2) JR
 Bufflehead: WH, Wetlands (20) JR
 Cooper's Hawk: WA n. Brookshire (1) 27 W
 Sharp-shinned Hawk: MO, Conroe (1) 1-23 SL
 White-tailed Hawk: AT (6) 12 PV; (5) 15 DR
 Ferruginous Hawk: Excellent notes by Larry White;
 AT (1) 7
 Harris Hawk: WH, El Campo (1) 9 DL
 Bald Eagle: WA Sharp Rd. exit (1) 15 JM & (2) 21 Bob
 Behrstock; WH, Wetlands (3) JR; CO, Eagle
 Lake (1) 27 JD
 Osprey: MO, Lake Conroe (2) 5, (1) 20 SB (scarce in
 winter)
 Greater Prairie Chicken: AT (15) 12 PV & (3) 15 DR
 Crested Caracara: AT (13) 12 PV & (3) 15 DR; WH,
 Wetlands area (6) JR; CO Eagle Lk (2) 27 DL
 Ring-necked Pheasant: WH, El Campo (2) 8 DL
 Sandhill Crane: Numerous this winter. AT (325) 12 PV
 & (200) 15 DR; WH, El Campo (12) 8 DL &
 Wetlands (200) JR; CO, Columbus (300) 5 JD;
 WA n. Brookshire (80) 27 W
 American Woodcock: AU, w. Bellville (1) 28 W
 Caspian Tern: SJ, Trinity River (1) 26 SB
 Ground Dove: WA, Sharp Rd. (1) 15 JM
 Great Horned Owl: AT (4) 12 PV (heard) & (1) 15 DR;
 CO Altair (1) 13 W
 Short-eared Owl: AT (1) 12 PV
 Red-headed Woodpecker: MO, Jones Forest (6) 12 GC,
 Lake Conroe area (5) 1-31 SL
 Red-cockaded Woodpecker: MO, Jones Forest (5) 12,
 26 GC
 Pileated Woodpecker: MO (2) 1-31 SL, (2) 12, 26 GC

Pileated Woodpecker: MO (2) 1-31 SL, (2) 12, 26
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: CO, Columbus (4, one
 at same time) 6 JD
 Brown-headed Nuthatch: MO, Jones Forest (12) 12
 Lake Livingston (6) 26 SB
 Brown Creeper: MO (1-3) 12-21, SL & GC
 Bewick's Wren: AT (1) 15 DR
 Sedge Wren: AT (2) DR
 Golden-crowned Kinglet: MO, Jones Forest (1) 12
 Solitary Vireo: SJ, Double Lake (1) 27 SL
 Purple Finch: MO, Conroe (30+) 1-31 SL; CO Col
 (4) 30-31 JD
 Pine Siskin: WH, El Campo (1) 8 DL; CO, Columbu
 (2-5) 30-31 JD; MO, Conroe (4-5) 2-10
 Dark-eyed Junco: MO, Conroe (2) 1-31 SL
 Lark Sparrow: WH, El Campo (1) 8 DL
 Fox Sparrow: AT (2) 12 PV & 15 DR
 Song Sparrow: WH, El Campo (4) 8 DL; CO Frelsbt
 (6) 28 W

Typists

Send bird records for Clearing House before
3rd of month to:
David Dauphin, 7315 Cottonwood,
Baytown, Texas 77521
383-3955

Send bird records for Outer Circle before
3rd of month to:
Steve Williams, Houston Baptist
University, 7502 Fondren 77074
995-0166

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

Barbara Darr
Wanda Smith

Chairman & Rare Bird Alert (unusual birds -
report or inquire)
Don Richardson, 5475 Grape,
Houston, Texas 77096
Office - 656-6518
Home - 661-1365

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