

# THE SPOONBILL

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VOLUME XX, No. 3  
July, 1971

Common Names for Red-Headed Woodpecker:  
Redhead, Tricolor; Tri-colored Woodpecker;  
White-shirt; Jellycoat; Shirt-tail,  
Patriotic Bird; Flag Bird.

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IN MEMORIAM by Sarah Gordon

The death of Dr. Hardin Craig, Jr. is a great loss to the Ornithology Group. He accomplished much in his lifetime through his appreciation of birds and by sharing his knowledge and interest in them. Dr. Craig's contributions to THE SPOONBILL and as a member of many tents will be greatly missed. Our sincere condolences to Mrs. Craig and his family.

193 SPECIES BY ONE PARTY ON APRIL 22 ESTABLISHES NEW TEXAS RECORD by Noel Pettingell

"Big Day" history in the Lone Star State was made when a one-car party of 5 "hard Core" birding enthusiasts recorded 193 species (including Rock Dove) along the traditional Houston to Galveston route between 4:50 AM and 7:45 PM on April 22, 1971. Participants in this Momentous Marathon were:

James A Tucker from Austin (founder of the American Birding Assn. in 1968 and editor of ABA's unique "bird-listers Bible", Birding)  
Charles ("Chuck") Turner from Apopka, Fla. and Philip H. Warren from Orlando, Fla.  
T. Ben Feltner and the writer from Houston

Our itinerary included 5 key areas, each containing essential species usually not found elsewhere along the route. The importance of these various habitats to the final outcome of a maximum species count is clearly evident throughout the following chronological account of the April 22nd all-out bird-finding effort:

## AREA 1 - Sheldon Reservoir/Lake Houston

Essential pre-dawn species added here were Barred, Horned and Screech Owls. After day-break (5:30) we found such "exclusive essentials" Anhinga, Wood Duck, Purple Gallinule (at Buckhorn Lake 3 mi. east of Sheldon Res.), Pileated/Red-bellied/Red-headed/Downy Woodpeckers, Common Crow, E. Bluebird, Pine Warbler, and Am. Goldfinch. Other essentials recorded here but also found elsewhere included Swainson's/Kentucky/Hooded Warblers and Chipping Sparrow. We missed Olivaceous Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Cliff Swallow, and Yellow-throated Vireo, but found the following "bonus" (i.e. unexpected) species to replace them: Double-crested Cormorant, Franklin's Gull, Cape May Warbler, and Swamp Sparrow. By the time we left Area 1 at 9:15, we had listed an even 100 species (Rock Dove not yet added).

## AREA 2 - Lynchburg/Baytown Tunnel

Important species here were White Pelican, Lesser Scaup, Black Vulture, Red-tailed/Red-shouldered/Broad-winged Hawks, Common and Black Terns, and Water Pipit. Although we missed Swainson's Hawk a bonus Osprey took its place and our list totaled 120 species when we had finished covering Area 2 (10:45 AM).

## AREA 3 - La Porte/Seabrook

Compton's Woods (north of Seabrook near Galveston Bay) is an excellent "migrant trap" and it was here that we increased our warbler list from 16 to 26 species, which proved to be the day's final total and possibly an all-time high for a single party in Texas. Other essential species added here included Wood Pewee, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Veery, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We missed Scarlet Tanager but a Sharp-shinned Hawk was a bonus replacement. Our party total at 12 noon was 136 species (Rock Dove still unrecorded), no additions to the list being made prior to departure from Area 3 at 12:30 PM.

AREA 4 - Kemah/Texas City

This segment of the Big Day Route traverses the Galveston County mainland and includes marshes adjacent to the west side of Galveston Bay and about one third of the 5-mile-long Texas City Dike. The best bird of the day (Lifer No. 500 for the writer) was found on the south side of the dike 1 1/2 miles east of Bay St. - an Arctic Loon, accidental anywhere and anytime in Texas until the winter of 1968/1969. Excellent comparisons of this species with noticeably-larger, heavier-billed Common Loons were made by all observers. Eared Grebes were also added at this site and a short time later Reddish Egrets (including one in rare white-phased plumage) were found in a marsh south of the dike, when we left Area 4 and the mainland shortly after 1:30 PM there were 148 species (Rock Dove included) on the party list.

AREA 5 - Galveston Island

Enroute to the South Jetty, we stopped to check the foliage around several homes and a city park for essential resident and migrant species. Inca Dove and Robin were followed by White-winged Dove (formerly a rare visitor to Galveston and now breeding in at least two localities on the Island) and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Even though no new warblers were added to the day's list on Galveston, we nevertheless identified at least 16 species while there - 11 of these in a single tree on 17th near Broadway! We reached the South Jetty at 3 PM with a total of 157 species for the day. The sand flats and marshes in this area yielded such essentials as Oystercatcher, Semipalmated/Piping/Wilson's Plovers Sandwich Tern, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow - plus an unexpected late-lingering Le Conte's Sparrow. By 3:30 we were on our way toward West Beach and West Bay, via numerous detours in order to cover essential marsh and mud flat habitats, key salt cedar sites, and dependable duck ponds. Our 4 PM total was 171 species, including Redhead and both dowithcers, and by 5 the Yellow-crowned Night Heron, both ibises, Ruddy Duck, Golden Plover Marbled Godwit and Western Kingbird had been added to the list. At this point our party total of 183 species (including Rock Dove) exceeded all previous counts by single groups within the 5-county Upper Texas Coast area - although we weren't aware of this at the time. Between 5 and 6 PM four more essential species were recorded (Bobwhite, Long-billed Curlew, Knot, Long-bill Marsh Wren) plus one bonus species - an unusually late Sparrow Hawk. An Am. Widgeon on a pond just before the old house on 13-Mile Road and a King Rail on the other side of the house increased the day's list to 190 species which, without counting the Rock Dove, equalled the all-time high Texas one-party record set in 1953 by 4 observers in the lower Rio Grande valley. The record was broken just before nightfall when the Seaside Sparrow was added at 6:41, which was followed shortly thereafter (6:45) by a very rare bonus species, a Lesser Nighthawk, in the same area that it had been seen and heard on the April 17th Big Day Run (i.e., Bob Smith Rdl near West Bay in the Jamaica Beach development).

Daylight birding had ended for us so while enroute to the site of what proved to be the last new bird of the day, we added up the species. None of us could believe that we had not only broken the regional one-party record, but the State record as well - until the list and totals were carefully rechecked and confirmed.

The species honored with the distinction of being the party's 193rd was a Barn Owl flushed by flashlight at 7:45 PM from a most appropriate setting for a bird symbolizing Wisdom: the Students Bookstore Bldg. at the University of Texas Medical Branch.....

\* \* \* \* \*

Being hard-core birders, we made one last attempt to add Avocet and/or Snowy Plover to our list by taking the ferry from Galveston to Bolivar Peninsula where we tried unsuccessfully to pick out these species on the sand flats by car headlights and flashlight. Since two thirds of all North American shore-birds occur in this area during April, it should be included in the Big Day Route if and when a planned tunnel or bridge ever replaces the ferry, the latter being too time-consuming to utilize in order to add species which might be found on Galveston along with others which could be missed due to the long excursion to Bolivar.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several factors contributed toward the unprecedented wealth of species recorded on April 22nd. Local weather conditions can have a significant bearing on the variety and individual numbers of species recorded during the peak spring migration period along the upper Texas coast. A wet norther just prior to a Big Day count is ideal as it keeps migrants grounded until the skies clear or the winds reverse their direction. But on April 21st and 22nd the winds were from the southeast and there was no rainfall in the

Houston/Galveston area on either day. However, the sky was overcast both days, possibly hampering the navigation of northbound migrants and consequently grounding many of them throughout much of the area traversed by the Big Day route. It's also possible that unfavorable weather was encountered by migrants while crossing the Gulf of Mexico, thus causing them to delay their northward flights on account of fatigue.

The date of the count was certainly a most important factor inasmuch as it was not only late enough to insure a wide assortment of spring migrants but also preceded the normal departure dates of many winter residents.

It was also of considerable importance to the successful outcome of the count that the party adhered to the planned route and timetable with a minimum of deviation throughout the day, and actively and thoroughly birded every essential habitat by eye and ear. Very little time was wasted searching for difficult species more easily found in subsequent areas so that the party was actually ahead of schedule both early and late in the day and in between was never more than an hour behind projected departure times.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although the April 22nd party missed some 22 species which normally occur during the last half of April along the Standard Big Day Route, only about 12 of these are usually found on Big Day counts. In any case, it was most surprising and encouraging to find that despite the current environmental crisis, a one-party count of over 200 species is still a realistic goal in the upper Texas coast area.

Final Facts and Figures/Party Count/April 22, 1971

Total Species: 193, including Rock Dove  
(Details on unusual species in Spoonbill, May 1971, pp. 3-6;  
complete list of species in Spoonbill, June '71)

Total Warblers: 26 species (including one "bonus", Cape May)

"Expected" Species Missed:

<u>Should be Found by Big Day Parties/Essential</u>	<u>Usually in Area But Not Always Found by Big Day Parties</u>
Olivaceous Cormorant	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-throated Vireo
Swainson's Hawk	Solitary Vireo
Avocet	Yellow Warbler
Cliff Swallow	Magnolia Warbler
Swainson's Thrush	Scarlet Tanager
	Am. Bittern
	Pintail
	Red-br. Merganser
	Snowy Plover
	Wilson's Phalar.
	Yel.-sh. Flicker
	Phila. Vireo
	Warbling Vireo
	Yellow-thr. Warbler
	Song Sparrow

"Bonus" Species Recorded/Not Expected Along Standard Big Day Route Last Half April

Arctic Loon	Franklin's Gull
Double-crested Cormorant	Lesser Nighthawk
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cape May Warbler
Osprey	LeConte's Sparrow
Sparrow Hawk	Swamp Sparrow

Species Missed by One or More Observers

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) Sharp-shinned Hawk   | (7) Cape May Warbler      |
| (2) Red-shouldered Hawk  | (8) Blackburnian Warbler  |
| (3) Broad-winged Hawk    | (9) Blackpoll Warbler     |
| (4) Western Sandpiper    | (10) LeConte's Sparrow    |
| (5) Chuck-will's-widow   | (11) Sharp-tailed Sparrow |
| (6) Ruby-crowned Kinglet | (12) Swamp Sparrow        |

Personal Lists (Rock Dove Included)

<u>Total</u>	<u>Observer</u>	<u>Species Missed (Nos. refer to above list)</u>
190	T. Ben Feltner	6,11,12
189	James A. Tucker	2,3,4,5
188	Charles Turner	1,2,4,7,8
187	Noel Pettingell	2,4,5,9,10,12
186	Philip H. Warren	2,4,5,6,7,10,11

Note: 181 species recorded by all 5 observers

Party Time/Distance Comparisons

	Time (CST)			Car Miles
	AM	PM	Hours	
First to Last Species (i.e., Barred To Barn Owls) -	4:50	7:45	15	166
From 7146 Ilex, Houston and Return-----	4:20	10:35	18 $\frac{1}{4}$	246
" " " " " " " , Excluding Detour				
to Bolivar Penn.	4:20	9:05*	16 $\frac{3}{4}$ *	230*

\* estimates

Total Miles on Foot: 83/4      Ferry Mileage: Lynchburg - 1/8 (one way)  
Bolivar---- 6.4 (round trip)

Maximum Extent of Party Route: 54 Air Miles  
(From Lockwood Rd. at N. Belt Dr., W. of Lake  
Houston, SE t Jamaica Beach, W. Galveston I.)

Weather	Houston (Airport)	Galveston
Minimum Temperatures:	71°F. (6:00 AM)	70°F.
Maximum " :	83°F. (1:00 PM)	77°F.
Sky: Overcast	Winds: Generally SE, 5 to 15 MPH.	

A SUMMARY OF NOTABLE TEXAS ONE-PARTY COUNTS by Noel Pettingell

Probably the first Texas counts to exceed 100 species in a single day were made by parties birding in the lower Rio Grande valley or the central and upper coastal areas during peak spring migration periods. The earliest count of over 100 species by a single observer in the Upper Texas Coast Area (i.e., Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris Counties) that this writer is aware of was made by Arlie K. McKay in NW Chambers County on April 23, 1936 when he recorded 103 species along a route about 16 air miles in maximum extent. Birding in the same area on April 21st of the following year, Mr. McKay found 105 species which was the same total recorded by Joe M. Heiser, Jr. of Houston on May 8, 1938 along a route extending from Kemah to west Galveston Island- about 25 air miles in extent. Later that same year Mr. McKay identified 120 species (excluding Rock Dove) on a Christmas Count which he conducted on Dec. 26, 1938 and during which he covered 19 miles on foot and 12 by car within a 10-air mile area in NW Chambers County. On April 30, 1939 Mr. Heiser, accompanied by George G. Williams and Fred Brown, identified 121 species - but since the Rock Dove was included their total did not actually exceed Mr. McKay's 1938 Christmas Count record. The 1939 party followed a 200-mile car route from Houston via Sheldon and Kemah to Galveston Island - an air-mile distance of some 49 miles - and thereby established the Standard Big Day Route for the Upper Texas Coast Area. A year later, on April 20th, the same three observers, plus Dr. A. C. Chandler, recorded 131 species (Rock Dove included, as in all subsequent UTC counts) along this route and then on April 26, 1941, with Dr. Chandler replaced by Dr. John Staub, the Heiser-led party found 136 species, a total which was not exceeded in the UTC Area until 8 years later.

In 1943 two new Texas one-party records were made south of the UTC Area. The first took place at Rockport and vicinity on April 18th when 139 species were identified by Connie (Mrs. Conger N.) Hagar, Ludlow Griscom, and George G. Williams. The other count was made on April 23rd in the lower Rio Grande valley where Ludlow Griscom, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Cottrell, and two other companions found 170 species (Rock Dove excluded/165 by Griscom) and covered over 325 miles by car. Reports of one-day counts of 200 or more species by single parties ("206" by 2 observers between Port Isabel, Boca Chica, and Mission and "around 200" by 4 observers in the same area) on different dates during the last week of April 1948 have never been verified so cannot be considered as valid records.

A new Upper Texas Coast record of 150 species was set by Joe Heiser, Edna W. Miner, Mable Kaiser, and Carrie Wilcox on April 21, 1949 which was followed by another new high of 165 species exactly one year later - April 21, 1950 - when a one-car party consisting of Mr. Heiser, George and Stephen Williams, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Hamilton following the Standard Houston/Galveston Route covered a total of 195 miles. Another 10 years would elapse before a two-car party broke the 1950 UTC record and 12 years before it was surpassed by a one-car group.

On April 19, 1953 - 10 years after the Griscom group's record-breaking 170 species in the Valley- a party composed of Robert P. Fox, Luther C. Goldman, C. E. (Ned) Hudson, and Bill Jennings set a new Texas record of 189 species (excluding Rock Dove) in the same area. The route included San Benito, Rio Hondo, and Laguna Atascosa Refuge (all in Cameron County) and was only 27 air miles in maximum extent. Bob Fox personally identified 187 species, with the Rock Dove excluded. A few days later, on April 25th, one of three

Parties birding in the Rockport area nearly equalled the Valley record, a total of 187 species - excluding Rock Dove - being found by 4 observers within a 50 air-mile maximum-route distance. Again, as on April 19th, it was Bob Fox who had the highest personal total - 186 species. All in the party were from out-of-state, Clarence D. Brown, who led the group, having come from N. J., Fox from Mass., B. Neil Dickinson from Calif., and Miss Mary Donald from Wisc. The other two parties consisted of Connie (Mrs. Jack A.) Hagar and Katherine (Mrs. T. J.) Richmond of Rockport and Fred S. Webster, Jr. and his wife Ada Marie from Austin. Although all three groups covered the same area for the most part, they were not together throughout the day and therefore the 204 species mentioned by Peterson in his Field Guide to the Birds of Texas (1960, pp. xvii and xviii) as the largest list of birds ever made in one day by one party was actually a "roundup", i.e., a combined one-day list of two or more parties within a given area. Hence the 3-party roundup total of 204 species was based on the 187 listed by the Brown team, plus 13 added by Mmes. Hagar and Richmond, plus 4 by the Websters. On the following day - April 26, 1953 - a similar roundup effort generally confined to the Houston/Galveston Standard Big Day Route produced 206 species (Rock Dove excluded) within an area about the same size as that covered by the Rockport parties. But whereas there were only 8 observer in the Rockport Roundup, a total of 37 - over 4 times as many - participated in the upper coastal count and the highest single-party list consisted of but 161 species.

A report of an incredible 236 species recorded on May 6, 1957 by 5 birders in the lower Rio Grande valley has never been verified so unfortunately cannot be considered a valid one-party record. Starting point of the unofficial all-time high U. S. record run was Bentsen State Park, thence Sanata Ana Refuge, Port Isabel, Padre Island and Laguna Atascosa Refuge - maximum extent about 80 air miles. The writer would very much like to obtain substantiating details on this biggest of all North American single-party Big Days (or any other similar efforts) and urges anyone who can supply such information, or who might know of others who could, to contact the writer at 7146 Ilex, Houston, Texas 77017

A new Upper Texas Coast Area record of 181 species (including Rock Dove) was set on May 1, 1960 by a two-car party consisting of T. Ben Feltner, Victor L. Emanuel, Dudley Deaver, Paul Corneil, and James Ambrose in one vehicle and Norma Oates accompanied by Mable Deshayes in the other. (See The Spoonbill, June 1960, pp. 6 & 7.) 236 miles were covered via the Standart Big Day Route, with the addition of San Luis Pass at the western tip of Galveston I. Ben Feltner's personal list was 169 - 4 more than the previous UTC record set by the party of 5 in 1950.

On April 14, 1962 the UTC Area one-car record of 165 species set on April 21, 1950 by Joe Heiser, et al was finally broken by Ben Feltner, Steve Williams and Dudley Deaver who found 167 species (Rock Dove included/1962 & 1950) along the Standard Route. The one-car record was again broken on May 1, 1965 when 171 species were recorded by Nancy and Jerry Strickling, Harvey Patten, and the writer. (See The Spoonbill, May 1965, pp 4-8) The Standard Route was followed except for the last hour and a half of daylight during which 3 species were added to the day's list enroute to and on Bolivar Peninsula.

Between 1966 and 1970 several attempts were made to improve on the Upper Texas Coast Standard Big Day Route by approaching Galveston Island from the east (via Bolivar Peninsula) instead of from the north (via Texas City). The Sheldon Reservoir/Lake Houston areas were birded in the traditional manner but thereafter the eastward extension of the route essentially substituted Compton's Woods north of Seabrook with Bramon's Woods at High Island and Galveston I. with Anahuac Refuge and Bolivar Peninsula. On April 19, 1969 a new UTC one-car record of 174 species was made via the Bolivar route by a party of four - Steve Williams, Joe Farrell, the writer and his son Mark. Steve's personal total of 173 species exceeded the previous UTC record of 169 set by Ben Feltner on May 1, 1960. (See The Spoonbill, May 1969, pp. 5 & 6; party total 176 on p. 5 subsequently reduced to 174 due to erroneous inclusion of non-feral Canada Goose and Mallard in Sheldon Wildlife Management Area.) The one-car record was tied when 174 species were again recorded along the Anahuac/Bolivar route on April 23, 1970 by Ben Feltner, Vic Emanuel (whose 168 was the highest personal list), Joe Farrell, and the writer. Since the Bolivar run did not yield a substantial increase in one-day party lists and was some 45 miles longer than the Standard Route which resulted in less time being spent at good birding spots, it was obvious that the traditional course was still the preferable one to follow - as was conclusively proved in the spring of 1971. However, continued destruction and pollution of key habitats along the Standard Route may force eventual return to the Anahuac/High Island/Boliva# approach or perhaps a new alternat route via east Galveston I./Bolivar/High Island.

In 1971 two experimental one-car counts were made in SE Texas prior to the Biggest of the Big Days along the Standart UTC Route on April 22nd (See separate report "193 Species

by One Party on April 22 Establishes New Texas Record"). Both were conducted on April 17 and one resulted in a new UTC one-car record, for a brief 5-day period, with the party starting its count in the Sheldon Reservoir-Lake Houston area, as usual. But instead of birding along the west side of Galveston Bay, the group headed directly for Galveston via Houston freeways, making only one detour before reaching the Island (viz., a half-hour search for nesting white-tailed Kites near Hitchcock, which was unsuccessful) at 11:45 AM with 120 species on the list. An additional 59 were added by nightfall, bringing the day's total to 179 species--5 more than the previous one-car record. The party consisted of only three observers, Ben Feltner, Dennis Shepler, and the writer, and Ben's personal total of 173 equalled Steve Williams' UTC high of April 19, 1969. Although more species were added on Galveston as a result of the early arrival, the listing of 193 species on April 22 along the Standard Route indicates that had the April 17 party birded along Galveston Bay instead of using up some 2 hours of non-essential birding time to travel from Lake Houston to Galveston, a list of well over 180 species probably would have been accumulated.

168 species were found on both April 17 and April 22, another 35 on either the 17th or 22nd for a combined total of 203 on the two Houston-Galveston runs. 20 Warbler species were found on April 17, 26 on the 22nd, and a total of 27 on both days.

The other experimental party count on April 17 was made by Vic Emanuel and Austin birder John I. Rowlett. They began their day at Austin where they birded from about 5 to 10:30 AM, then drove directly to the coast. They arrived on Galveston Island at about 3 PM with some 4 hours of daylight remaining, which enabled them to cover most of the essential areas from South Jetty to Jamaica Beach. Total for the day was 180 species, including Rock Dove and 22 warblers. At least 20 of the species found in the Austin area are not normally recorded on Upper Texas Coast Area Big Days, and Vic felt that it was possible to exceed 200 species on such a run with better scheduling, even though some 200 miles must be driven virtually non-stop between Austin and Galveston.

The foregoing summary suggests that 200 or more species could be found in one day by a single party of experienced and vigorous birders following carefully planned routes in these areas:

- Lower Rio Grande Valley: Via Rio Grande City/Bentsen State Park/Santa Ana Refuge/Laguna Atascosa Refuge/Padre Island--about 105 air miles in maximum extent, although on a good migration day it might well be possible for a party to record over 200 species within an area half this size.
- Rockport and Vicinity: Within an area roughly bounded by Aransas Pass, Refugio, Port Lavaca and the coast--a maximum extent of about 50 air miles.
- Houston to Galveston: Via Texas City/Standard Route--maximum extent of 54 air miles or via Bolivar Peninsula--maximum extent of about 56 air miles, but about 45 car miles longer than Standard.
- Austin to Galveston: About 195 air miles in maximum extent.

With reference to the Houston-Galveston area, the April 22, 1971 run and numerous preceding Big Days provide convincing proof that any party of energetic birders following established routes and schedules should be able to list over 160 species on any given day between April 10 and May 5, regardless of the weather (it rained just before the start of the April 17, 1971 UTC Big Day yet none preceded the record-breaking April 22 count).

To the writer's knowledge there are only 3 regions in North America where valid one-party counts of 190 or more species have been made. Details of record runs in these areas are as follows:

Total Species, Excluding Rock Dove

<u>All-time high</u>	<u>Highest</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Observers</u>
<u>Party Total</u>	<u>Personal List</u>			
208 (2 cars)	178	SE Pa./Del./Md.) DVOC*	May 11, 1952	7
201 (1 car)	197	Delaware & Md. ) "	May 10, 1970	5
205 (1 car)	203	SW California	May 2, 1959	4
192 (1 car)	189	SE Texas	Apr. 22, 1971	5

\* Delaware Valley Ornithological Club

INFORMATION FROM DR. PAT SULLIVAN, LIBRARIAN

Through the thoughtfulness and generosity of Marilyn Crane an Ornithology Group Slide Collection has been established. Additional contributions to this collection will be most welcome. As this is to be a scientific collection it is requested that the contributed slides be properly exposed and in good focus. Furthermore field marks of the bird should be recognizable so that the bird is identifiable. For ease of filing and usage identification of the bird should be written on the slide mount. At the present time non-bird slides cannot be classified or catalogued, and such slides are not solicited.

Following is a list of books presently in the OG library and available for use by members:

The Audubon Illustrated Handbook of American Birds, by Edgar M. Reilly, Jr., edited by Olin Sewall Pettingill (1968)

Birds of America, edited by T. Gilbert Pearson (1936)

Map Showing Landforms and Sedimentary Deposits of the Padre Island Portion of the South Bird Island 7.5-minute Quadrangle, Texas. Department of the Interior Geological Survey by Ralph E. Hunter and Kendall A. Dickinson (1970)

A Field Guide to the Birds, Giving Field Marks of all Species Found East of the Rockies, by Roger Tory Peterson (2nd Revised and Enlarged Edition, 1964)

The Birds, by Roger Tory Peterson (1963)

Birds, Birds, Birds, by Paul Hamlyn (1965)

The Birds of America, by John James Audubon (1965)

AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION

An organization which may be of interest to some readers is the American Birding Association, which exists for the sole purpose of promoting birding as a hobby and a sport, and to assist its members in their pursuit of this popular activity. There is a bi-monthly publication which includes articles of interest to birders, maps of locations where rare birds may be found, etc. Dues are \$5.00 per year. Address of the Association is P. O. Box 4335, Austin, Texas 78751.

ANOTHER DUES REMINDER

This is the last issue of The Spoonbill to be received by all you laggards who have failed to renew your membership or subscription. Don't delay--send your payment now to Miss Melba Drake, 1746 Wroxtton Court, Houston 77005--\$2.00 for those ONC members who want to be OG members and \$3.00 for Spoonbill subscription only.

BIRDING ALONG THE RIO GRANDE IN TEXAS

Jim Lane's book - A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas - can now be obtained by sending \$2.00 plus postage to L & P Photography, Box 1855, Sacramento, Cal., 95809.

CLEARING HOUSE, JUNE, 1971

Cormorant, Olivaceous: (7)13, 27, Warren Ranch Lake, OG & DHH.

Frigatebird, Magnificent: (2)17, West Galveston I. (Pirate's Beach) DL.

Heron, Great Blue: (13)13, Warren Lake, DHH.

Little Blue: (300+)13, Warren Lake, DHH.

Egret, Cattle: (3,000+)13, Warren Lake, DHH.

Nightheron, Black-crowned: (10)27; Warren Lake, DEH & OG

Bittern, Least: (1)17, Cove, AKM.

Stork, Wood: (3)17, Cove, AKM.

Tibis, white-faced: (7)5, (40+)11, (4)13, Cove, AKM; (NC)8, Cove, Petings; (33)13, Warren Lake, DHH.

White: (1)13, Warren Lake, DHH.

Spoonbill, Roseate: (NC)8, Cove, Petings; (1)17, (21)26, Cove, AKM.

Ducks, MALLARD: (1)8, Cove, Petings, (imperfect flight)

Mottled: (1 to 8)9 days, (14)16, 17, Cove, AKM; (NC)8, Cove, Petings.

GADWALL: (2)8, Cove, Petings, (appeared well).

Ducks, Scamp, Lesser: (2)6, Cove, Petings.

MERGANSEER, RED-BREASTED: (1)11, Baytown, D&DL.

Vulture, Black: (1)27, Cove, AKM.

KITE, SWALLOW-TAILED: (1)7, Cove, Dennis Peting.

Rail, King: (1)26,28,29, Cove, AKM; (3)11, Baytown, D&DL, (2 adults, one newly hatched chick).

Gallinule, Common: (1)5, Cove, AKM; (NC)8, Cove, Petings.

Skimmer, Black: (1)26, Cove, AKM.

Owl, Screech: (1)23, Cove, AKM.

Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: (1)23,26, Baytown, D&DL.

Flicker, Yellow-shafted: ( a pair feeding young, north of Baytown, by Walter Green) re-Ported by AKM.

Woodpecker, Red-bellied: (1)1, Cove, AKM.

Red-headed: (1)15,29, Cove, AKM.

Kingbird, Eastern: (1)1,22, Cove, AKM.

Flycatcher, Great-crested: (1)28, Baytown, D&DL.

CATBIRD: (1)7, Baytown, DL.

Thrasher, Brown: (1)22, Cove, AKM. (his second summer record).

ROBIN: (2)24, (1)25, Glenbrook Golf Course, SE Houston, NP; (2)3,4, (adult and young) 10215 Chatterton, DHH.

VIREO, RED-EYED: (1)6, South Mayde Creek at 1960, DHH.

Warbler, Parula: (2)6, Bear Creek at Patterson Rd., DHH.

Yellowthroat: (1)25, Drive-in Theater, 11,022 Telephone Rd, SE Houston, NP.

Tanager, Summer: (1)16, Cove, AKM.

Dickcissel: (1)16,28, Cove, AKM.

#### CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS:

AKM	Archie McKay
NP	Noel Pettingell
DHH	Dan H. Hardy
CG	Orlyn Gaddis
DL	Dorothy Lefkovits
D&DL	David and Dorothy Lefkovits

#### CLEARING HOUSE NOTES:

FROM NOEL PETTINGELL: I reported Yellowthroat because doubt has been expressed about its status as a breeding species in Texas.

I was most interested in reading about Dan Hardy's late migrant "wave" on May 25. Regarding the Bay-breasted warbler, I'm quite sure I heard at least one individual of this species calling near my yard on May 26 but was never able to see the bird(s) so can't be positive.

FROM BAYTOWN: Mrs. E. J. Offer has reported that she and her family saw male Ruby-throated hummingbirds every day during the month of June and the female hummingbird almost every day. She has three feeders out and they were emptied with regularity.

There is a pair of Eared Grebes spending the summer at Thompson's Fish Camp on Tricity beach road. They spend a great deal of their time under the piers feeding on something on the pilings.

David and Dorothy Lefkovits, Bert and Lily Manuel saw a female Red-breasted Merganser on the Barge Canal between the spoil banks off Morgan's point. At the time Lily first saw her she was sitting on the bank, when the boat slowed she flew a short ways and started diving.

ADDITIONS TO MAY CLEARING HOUSE: by Noel Pettingell

I received a report of 4 unusual species seen on May 12 but unfortunately full details were not submitted for publication in The Spoonbill May Clearing House report "For the record" here are the few details that I have on them:

Caracara: (1)12, Tomball, No. Harris Co., DS.

KINGBIRD, TRIPICAL: (1)12, Galveston I. (8½-Mi. Rd.), FC & BG.

WARBLER, MACGILLIVRAY'S: (1)12, near Seabrook (Compton's woods) DS.

Tanager, western: (1)12, Galveston I. (Hutchings Estate Adjacent to "empner Park), FC & BG.

Page 9.

One More Addition to May Clearing House:

KINGLET, RUBY-CROWNED: (1)2, High Island, VE, BF & DS.

Contributors:

FC Fred Collins  
BG Bill Goloby  
DS Dennis Shepler  
VE Vic Emanuel  
BF Ben Feltner

CORRECTIONS FOR JUNE 1971 SPOONBILL by Noel Pettingell

Big Day Run, May 2, 1971

Page 3: Party 10 count was made on April 24  
" " " 11 " " " " " 22  
" 5 Delete Yellow-shafted Flicker from Party 11 list  
" " Add Western Kingbird to Party 11 list.  
" " " Barn Swallow to Party 11 list.  
" 6 Delete Yellow-headed Blackbird from Party 11 list.

CONSERVATION NOTES

Noel Pettingell sent a bulletin announcing the issuance of four new 8-cent commemorative stamps in the Wildlife Conservation series. These stamps, issued June 12 at Avery Island, Louisiana, picture a polar bear with young, a soaring California Condor, an alligator and a trout. The bulletin, issued by the Post Office, mentions that all of these but the trout are threatened with extinction and that increased water pollution endangers some of the trout.

Archie McKay wrote that Joe Mathews of Cove told him of an extended and prolonged fish kill that Mr. Mathews suspects to be the result of diverting water directly from the ship channel to east Trinity Bay through the new Houston Lighting and Power Plant on Cedar Bayou. On June 26 Mr. McKay observed the area of the kill and saw bones, rotting fish and some still fresh. Most were shad and mullet, but some were speckled trout, sheepshead, blue cat and others.

An article in the Houston Post July 11 gave further information on the death of the Bald and Golden Eagles in Wyoming as mentioned in the May issue of The Spoonbill. It has been determined that some were shot, some flew into power lines but most died of thallium sulfate poisoning. Criminal charges have been filed against five men.

NOTES FROM TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE BULLETINS

James U. Cross, executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, reports that more of both Golden and Bald Eagles have been seen in West Texas this year than for a long time previously.

Biologists for the TP&WD say the Chukar transplant may be a success. Chukars were wild-trapped in California, airlifted to Texas and released on several ranches in the rough, dry area near Marfa, Alpine and Fort Davis. Baby Chukars were seen last year, and adults paired off for nesting this year.

Much response was received after an article concerning the prairie dog appeared in the May issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. Almost all correspondents wrote concerning a family or colony of prairie dogs and made it clear they did not want their animals molested. One rancher said his prairie dog town was home for more than 2,000, and as far as he was concerned it could double in size and he would still protect them.

White-winged Dove hunters will be required to buy a special \$3.00 stamp as a result of a recently passed law. Money from this source will be deposited in a special fund. Half will be spent on research and management for the protection of White-winged Doves, and the other half will be spent on the acquisition of habitat in the state.

Spring counts of Lesser Prairie Chickens by biologists of the TP&WD show a decline in the breeding population from last year. A decline of 19% in Hemphill County and 28% in Wheeler County was found. It is thought the drought and a 1971 blizzard account for this.

BIRDING AT RANCHO DEL CIELO, MEXICO by David Lefkovits

During the early part of June another group of avic birders made the trip to Rancho del Cielo in the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. As most of you know this is in the midst of the northernmost cloud forest in this hemisphere.

This is a fascinating place, and I believe I speak for all who made the trip when I recommend it highly to all those nature lovers who would like to see birds, plants and terrain entirely different from our own area.

The 18 adventurers on the June trip included three who had been before. Our group included "furriners" besides those from the Houston area. We had Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Chenery, an English couple now retired in Portugal. Dr. Chenery is a botanist who has worked on tea plantations in Uganda, Trinidad and Ceylon and is quite a knowledgeable birder. We also had two young college instructors from Oklahoma, one a zoologist and one a musician, who had studied specimens before the trip and were very sharp-eyed and excellent at identification. Of course there were some of our very good birders from the Houston area whom we do not intend to slight.

Conditions were quite different in the birding areas this year due to a very extensive forest fire in latter 1970 and early 1971, and there were several additions to the area check list (8 or 9, according to my messy records). The change shows in the experience of Irving Greenbaum, who had made the trip last year and didn't expect to see a large number of new birds. However, he added about 20 lifers this year as compared with 39 last year. Highest number of lifers added during the stay at the Rancho was 64 by Warren Harden, the musician from Norman, Oklahoma. Jean Pettit of Houston and Dr. Chenery each had 60. A total of 90 species was seen in the Rancho birding area, according to a list I kept, although I seem to remember a figure of 92 announced after the final count.

Among birds common in the close vicinity of the Rancho clearing were the Blue Mockingbird, Clay-colored Robin, Flame-colored Tanager, Hooded Grosbeak, Rufous-capped Brush-finch, Crescent-chested and Tropical Parula warblers, Melodious Blackbird, Vaux swift and Black-headed Oriole. The Mountain Trogon was amazingly plentiful, in the rocky areas skirting the clearing we found many Black-headed Nightingale-thrushes, Spot-breasted Wrens and some Singing Quail, a large and beautiful ground dweller.

The Blue-crowned Mot-mot was seen by almost everyone but were not plentiful. An interesting thing about this bird is that it nests in tunnels it digs many in the sides of sink holes that are prevalent in the area.

On some of our longer trips to the outlying areas of Alta Cima and Barbara's Patch some of the birds of interest found were the Fan-tailed Warbler (seen only by Warren Harden), Gray-silky Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Bell's Warbler, Blue-hooded Euphonia, white-winged Tanager, Crimson-collared Grosbeak, Mexican Jay, Barred Ant-shrike and Yellow-faced and Blue-black Grassquits.

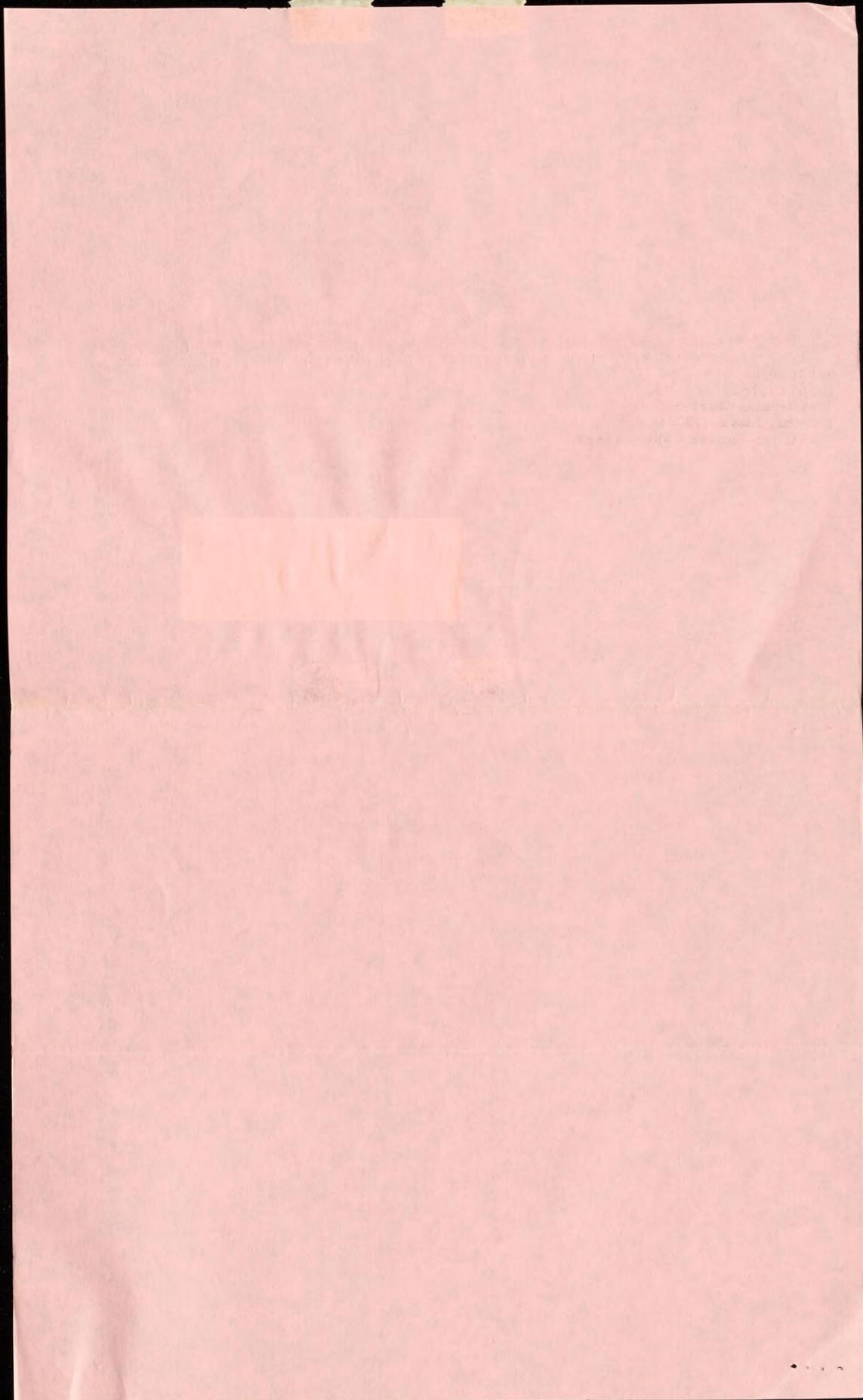
Among scarcer birds at the Rancho were the white-crowned and Red-ored Parrots, a Ferruginous ~~rygny~~ Owl, Smoky-brown and Pale-billed Woodpeckers, Scrub and Yellow-throated Euphonias, Rufous-browed Pepper-shrike and a Red-crowned Ant-tanager.

There were five species of hummingbirds, including the tin Bumblebee, three species of woodcreepers, Gray-collared Becard and many others just as thrilling, but too numerous to mention.

Of course the trip each way in both Texas and Mexico was also quite rewarding in the way of both bird and plant life, and all the returnees felt they had had a successful vacation.

COMING EVENTS

Aug. 5           OG meeting at the usual place and time. Program: "Gaze on the Galapagos" Thursday as Frank and Grace Hsu show us the marvels of those islands with slides Frank took several years ago. While on this tour, one day they saw a volcano erupt, and another day their leader, Roger Tory Peterson, fell off his horse, so you might say they had their "up and down" while photographing the birds that Darwin saw.





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