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The Spoonbill

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Eleven Christmas Bird Counts on the Upper Texas Coast 1994-95

by P.D. Hulce

Between December 17, 1994 and January 2, 1995, P.D. Hulce participated in eleven CBCs. He plans on doing even more this year.

I want to share the highlights of the 11 Christmas Bird Counts I participated in on the Upper Texas Coast during the 1994-95 count period.

The Houston CBC was my first count and I again worked Area Five on the south side of Baytown. Fellow participant, Don Ryan, started the day by spotting two Wilson's Warblers at Bayland Park. Shortly thereafter we found ten Semi-palmated Plovers on the same small stretch of beach as last year. After lunch, we birded an exceptional piece of private property. Within an hour we found three count exclusives--a lovely Western Tanager, a Northern (Bullock's) Oriole and a Harris' Sparrow!

The next day on the Freeport CBC, we spotted the Masked Duck staked out at a Brazoria NWR pond. Photos were taken and we moved on to a large area of salt cedars where we found an extremely tame, immature Scissor-tailed Flycatcher--gorgeous in the sunshine. Thousands of Snow Geese started up. Mark Scheuerman yelled out, "Bald Eagle." A near-adult bird, with a slightly dusky head and tail, flew in through the mass of geese, giving me a new bird for the refuge! After the count dinner that night, I headed for Matagorda to spend the night and the Mad Island count on Monday.

Expectations were high that the count would exceed 200 species on this, the second Mad Island CBC. My first good birds of the day were a pair of Grasshopper Sparrows that literally posed for me and a pair of Ladder-backed Woodpeckers. Leaving the town of Matagorda, we headed for the property known as Old Gulf. We had excellent looks at Ash-

throated Flycatchers, Palm Warblers and count exclusives Tree Swallows and Sprague's Pipit. After all the numbers were in, the Mad Island count did break 200 species, hitting 205 species and beating Freeport CBC in the process!

The San Bernard CBC was the next day and as usual, I hit the beach in a refuge 4-wheel drive vehicle. The day was beautiful and I recorded my highest total ever of Piping Plover for this area--42 birds. On our way out, we had good looks at three Black Scoters that flew up from the surf very close to shore. In the late afternoon, some very light showers passed through, but I still managed to find a single Harris' Sparrow--in the same spot as last year. At 4:30 I passed the low water crossing on the main refuge road to check out the Scissortail Trail. Nothing was happening there, but as I drove back past the low water crossing, there was a single Greater Scaup on the small

(Hulce continues on page 4)

Calendar

Membership Meeting

"Hawks on Radar: An Update" Frank Peace

Date: Monday, March 6

Location: Harris County Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, just west of Hillcroft.

Time: 7:00 p.m. Pre-meeting Learning Corner to hear Karen Beekman discussion the identification of hawks in flight at 6:30 p.m.

A chance siting of thousands of Broad-winged Hawks at Smith Point in 1989 began Frank Peace's interest in hawks. In 1990, he sent data for seven day's counts to HMANA (Hawk Migration Association of North America) and in 1991, he chose a site, which is still in use, and found nine willing observers and a co-compiler. The Fall 1991 Hawk Count was a success, but the long daily drive for 20 days had dampened his enthusiasm. When Frank learned he would be permitted to photograph migrating birds on the radar screen at the new weather station in League City, he embraced the new opportunity. Frank will review radar observations of 1992, 1993 and 1994.

Frank Peace was raised in Ottawa, Illinois in a "nature oriented" family. He says his mother taught him the beauty in wildlife, but his father was more interested in putting names on things. At age eleven he was given his first pair of binoculars and at age twelve, a shotgun. He used both on birds. After he retired from Conoco in 1985, Frank started birding in earnest. Migration is a big interest of his and the development of radar tracking of migrating flocks has further stimulated his interest to include bird behavior and physiology. It will be interesting to hear what Frank has learned.

March

Saturday, March 4: Houston Audubon Work Day. 8:00 a.m. Boy Scout Woods. Lunch is provided. Bring gloves and mosquito repellent. *Winnie Burkett, 992-5640.*

Monday, March 6: OG Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Harris County Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet. OG member, Frank Peace, will talk about the annual Hawk Watch and radar tracking of migrating birds. Learning Corner begins at 6:30 p.m. Karen Beekman will discuss "How to Recognize Hawks in Flight."

Saturday, March 11: OG Field Trip to Little Thicket Nature Preserve Area. Aaron Stoley will lead this trip to find the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and to bird the area around the ONC sanctuary. Meet Aaron at 8:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 59 north from Houston to Cleveland. From the bypass around Cleveland, exit onto 2025, turn left and drive five miles to a flashing light. Turn left at the light onto Hwy. 945. Drive 2.5 miles. Aaron will be waiting along the roadside. Although this trip is scheduled in early March for the woodpeckers, it should be a good time for woodland birds, sparrows and perhaps some early neotropical migrants. *Aaron Stoley, 781-1372.*

Saturday, March 25: OG Field Trip to Sabine Woods. Mike Austin will lead this trip to several coastal birding sites in the Sabine Woods area. The itinerary includes Pleasure Island, Sabine Woods and Sea Rim State Park. Meet Mike at 7:30 a.m. at the rest area on I-10 just east of the Hankamer exit and plan for an all-day trip. Remember to bring sun, rain, wind and mosquito protection.

April

Saturday, April 1: ONC Adopt-A-Road Cleanup. Previously scheduled for March 11, the outing to clear trash from our stretch of highway has been rescheduled for April 1 to coincide with the 10th Annual Great Texas Trash-Off. *Aaron Stoley, 781-1372.*

Monday, April 3: OG Membership Meeting. 7:00 p.m. Bayland Community Center. Dwight Peake will discuss pelagic birding. At 6:30 p.m., Bob Honig will discuss "Tips on Tropical Birding" for Learning Corner. If anyone has a particular aspect of tropical birding they would have discussed, call Bob Honig before the meeting. *665-6963.*

Saturday, April 8: OG Field Trip to Smith Point and High Island. P.D. Hulce has graciously volunteered to lead this trip. Further details in next month's newsletter.

Saturday, April 15: OG Field Trip to Brazoria County. Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux's recent radar studies have shown that the bottomland hardwoods in Brazoria County are an extremely important stopover site for neotropical migrants. Further details regarding this trip will be in next month's *Spoonbill*.

Thursday, April 20: Pre-TOS Convention Pelagic Trip from Port O'Connor. This trip will precede the TOS Convention April 21 & 22 in Port Lavaca. Recent research indicates that late April is a good time for Band-rumped, Leach's and Wilson's Storm Petrels in the northwestern Gulf and rarities such as Greater and Manx Shearwaters may be most likely during this time period. The cost is \$90.00 per person. *Dwight Peake, (409) 740-4621.*

Notice to Members

Please check your mailing label. If the number in the upper right hand corner is "94," your membership has expired.

In order to ensure that you receive the ONC Yearbook for the coming year and to ensure your listing in the 95-96 directory, please mail your dues check by April 30 to Pat Wight, ONC Treasurer, 7422 Foxton Place, Houston, TX 77095.

Texas Hummingbird Roundup

The Texas Hummingbird Roundup, conducted by the department's nongame and urban program, is designed to collect information from Texans on their backyard observations. The survey is being used to learn more about hummingbirds, such as range and distribution, favored sites, feeding plants and other habits. This is the second year of the five-year survey. The department has received several interesting reports. Many people report feeding up to 100 hummingbirds at one time. A participant from Redford reported that he believes the birds may be attracted to flowers with the most nectar regardless of color. The man has roses growing on his property and reports that the birds preferred the Texas yellow rose over the red roses. About 925 participants have signed up for the 1995 Roundup so far. The department is aiming for 2,000 participants.

Anyone interested in the 1995 Roundup can sign up by mailing their name, address and county (and an optional \$6 donation) to: Texas Hummingbird Roundup, Nongame and Urban Program, TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744. The participation packet includes a garden see packet, decal, survey form and newsletter with survey results. The voluntary donation will help cover costs of running the survey.

High Island Work Days

Houston Audubon's Director of Sanctuaries, Winnie Burkett, will be spending two or three days each week in March working at the High Island sanctuaries. If you love your chain saw, hate tall trees, like to work by yourself and can't get to the weekend work days (Saturday, March 4), call Winnie and volunteer. She needs your help! *Winnie Burkett, 992-5640.*

Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge Hours

The refuge is open to the public the third full weekend each month through April 1995. This is in addition to the first full weekend each month. As usual, the gate *may* be open occasionally on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., when refuge crews are working there. Check with the refuge office (409) 849-6062.

Nominating Committee Accepting Nominations

The Nominating Committee is accepting nominations from the membership for the 1995-96 slate of officers: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

If you want to serve in one of these positions or want to nominate someone, please contact Dave Bradford (855-2615), Bob Honig (665-6963) or Judy Boyce (668-5359).

All nominations will be announced at the March 6 membership meeting and published in the March issue of *The Spoonbill*. Voting by the membership will be held at the April 3 membership meeting.

Throw your hat into the ring. Get involved. Working for the OG is a wonderful way to make new friends and really be a part of this club.

Minutes of the February 6, 1995 OG meeting...

For the Learning Corner, Karen Beckman discussed "Birds of the Lake Tawokoni Area."

Chairman David Bradford opened the meeting with a reminder to please pay your dues. He noted that we need to vote on officers for next year; the Nominating Committee (David

Bradford, Judy Boyce, Bob Honig) are now taking nominations. The ONC is also going to be voting on next year's officers, so if you have any suggestions, please call Irene Leslie (669-9994).

Field Trip Coordinator Dwight Peake announced the upcoming field trips and gave a correction to the directions to the Waller County trip. The road number should read 2855, *not* 2588.

David Veselka announced youth field trips and asked for people to call him (692-1384) if they know of youth who would like to attend these trips.

Rob Thacker contributed the trivia question (and answer) for the evening: at a recent field trip, the question arose as to whether the Savannah Sparrow was named after the type of habitat it frequents, or for Savannah, GA. Those who guessed Savannah, GA are right!

Bob Honig announced that there will be a pre-trip meeting at 6:00 p.m. on March 6th (same date and room as the March OG meeting) for those who are currently signed up to go on the Trinidad trip. (Please note - this trip is full!). The meeting will primarily cover logistics for the trip.

Steve Bennett then introduced the evening's speaker Larry Lof, who gave a wonderful and informative slide/film presentation on Rancho del Cielo. *Maggie Honig, Secretary*

Hulce (Continued from page 1)
pond. As I watched, he preened and then lay his head on his back and closed his eyes for the night. I drove out to Moccasin Pond for one last look. A lone Plegadis ibis flew in and landed about 40 feet from my truck. I put my scope on it and for 15 minutes carefully noted the field marks identifying it as a Glossy Ibis! A great way to end the day! Ron Bisbee's famous gumbo was waiting at refuge headquarters.

The weather was beautiful Wednesday for the Attwater CBC, a welcome change from the past few years of miserable conditions. Birding was very good in the morning. We spotted Harris' and Fox Sparrows at the first of our two usual places, and a Ladder-backed Woodpecker. By ten a.m., we were doing the "long walk" on the Fitzgerald Ranch. We birded their best area, the overgrown gravel pits, finding more Harris' Sparrows and two Ferruginous Hawks. A brilliant spot of lemon yellow turned out to be a Couch's/Tropical Kingbird, and while watching it, an Ash-throated Flycatcher popped up! This area has never failed to provide us with the best birding in all of Area Seven. Today was no exception. Three Lark Sparrows and White-tailed Hawk finished off the day. At the count dinner, we were amazed to learn that no other Harris' Sparrow was seen on the entire count.

The Bolivar CBC started clear and cold--another beautiful morning. Tree Swallows and a lone Field Sparrow were good birds, but at a deserted farm, a cooperative Least Flycatcher was even better. After lunch, we entered the eastern section of Anahuac NWR, usually reserved for hunters. At a reservoir, the equal of Shoveler Pond, we saw an American Avocet and two Green Herons walking out in the open. The best bird of the day for me, however, was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker--the 200th species I had ever seen on the Anahuac refuge.

The rains and foul weather of December arrived for the Galveston CBC, but we spotted the four Harris' Hawks on the levee road at the Texas

City dike and several Redheads and other ducks. This was to be the day that I was to see my first Monk Parakeets on a Christmas count.

Clear weather returned for the Old River count. This is a wonderful area to bird. We spotted 18 count exclusives, including Reddish Egrets and a number of shorebirds. We added a new bird to the count's cumulative list--the Gull-billed Tern. While walking a wet field at five o'clock, within a short distance of the count dinner site, we found a LeConte's Sparrow. This bird has not been seen on this count for many, many years.

The rains returned on the 31st for the Brazos Bend count. The birding at the Smithers Lake Power Plant, normally a wonderful place, was dismal. We did spot count exclusives Laughing and Bonaparte's Gulls and two Gray Catbirds, where were new for the plant environmental personnel who accompanied us. Otherwise, over one hundred Chipping Sparrows and two talking Barred Owls were our highlights for the day.

My first bird of the new year was a Barn Owl that quickly flew away. My second bird was a magnificent Great Horned Owl, sitting 30 feet away on a fence post in the spotlight beam. The Cypress Creek CBC, traditionally held on January first, is a great way to start the new year. The sight of more than 30,000 Snow Geese on Warren Lake at seven a.m. was just amazing. Although quite windy, we still managed to find some Harris' Sparrows, a Ferruginous Hawk and an adult Bald Eagle. One of our best birds of the day, however, was a lone American Avocet seen late in the afternoon.

January second was another cold day for the Buffalo Bayou CBC. We spent the entire day walking inside the Barker-Cullen Reservoir Park. The new wetlands restoration area is doing exceptionally well and many species of ducks and shorebirds were spotted this year. Nothing was seen here last year. We found some more Harris' Sparrows and a number of Least Sandpipers, which allowed us an extremely good

look at the marks that distinguish them from other peeps.

My cumulative list after eleven Christmas counts was 178 species, plus another four species seen on off days. I drove a total of 1270 miles, had a great time and intend to do it again next year. With luck, I'll do twelve or even thirteen counts. Stay tuned!

F.Y.I.

LETTER FROM MIKE AUSTIN

"I read with great interest John Whittle's report of a Black-billed Cuckoo on October 9, 1994 published in the Clearing House. Having extensive experience with Black-billed Cuckoos in southern Ontario, I was especially perplexed to note the bird was noted to have a gray orbital ring. They have permanent scarlet orbital rings. Fearing this might have been an immature with which I have no experience, I deferred to Oberholser's *Bird Life of Texas*. Oberholser states immatures of this species have rufous wing patches, yellowish lower mandible and yellow orbital rings, all of which this bird apparently lacked.

Complicating matters further is a recent conversation I had with Greg Lasley, Secretary of the Texas Bird Records Committee. Apparently a bird rehabilitator in the Rio Grande Valley sends birds which have expired in his care to Louisiana State University for examination at a later date. A winter specimen of a "Black-billed Cuckoo" has turned out to be a Dark-billed Cuckoo, a highly migratory South American species which apparently underwent reverse migration and ended up in "the Valley." This species is apparently very tawny on the underparts and resembles the Mexican race of Mangrove Cuckoo more closely in plumage than the Yellow-billed or Black-billed.

Therefore, any fall or winter Dark-billed Cuckoo should be viewed with extreme caution in Texas and carefully documented."

Clearing House

JANUARY 1995

EDITORS: PHYLLIS AND TONY FRANK

Have you seen a Harris' Hawk on the UTC this winter? Reports have been received of Harris Hawk from many locations on the UTC. A total of 182 species were reported for the month. Glossy Ibis, Masked Duck, Harris' Hawk, and Least Flycatcher are all unusual species for the UTC in winter, although Masked Duck has been a regular the past two years. A Least Flycatcher has been reported from the same location for at least the past three winters (see J. Morgan notes). I saw a Least Flycatcher at that location in January 1993. Same bird? And finally, five species of hummingbirds were reported in January. The mild winter has been good for the wintering hummingbirds. Believe it or not, migration will be in full swing in March. Good birding.

Reports for next month are due by March 3rd, but early reports are welcomed. 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.

Grebe, Least	26-26 1/1 CO-AT(1)26,X	Teal, Green-wing	1-28 14/17687 U-7/3380 BR-1/2
Grebe, Pied-bill	1-28 14/125 U-1/12 CH-7/81 CO-1/4		CH-3/3200 CO-1/100 HA-1/11000 JE-1/5
	FB-1/6 GA-2/17 HA-2/7 JE-1/2	Duck, Mottled	1-28 13/165 U-6/72 BR-1/8 CH-3/47
Grebe, Horned	10-10 1/1 U-(1)10,X		CO-1/12 HA-1/6 JE-1/20
Grebe, Eared	7-7 2/13 BR-BW(8)7,BH; CH-AW(5)7,PH	Mallard	8-16 5/26 U-3/21 CH-1/2 JE-1/3
Pelican, Amer Wht	6-28 8/2543 U-3/708 CH-2/408 GA-3/1427	Pintail, Northern	1-28 11/13311 U-5/6206 BR-1/50
Pelican, Brown	6-28 6/237 U-2/70 GA-4/167		CH-3/30 CO-1/25 HA-1/7000
Corm, Dbl-crested	1-28 16/1089 U-8/523 CH-2/41	Teal, Blue-winged	6-28 11/119 U-5/58 BR-1/4 CH-3/35
	CO-1/85 GA-3/139 HA-1/300 JE-1/1		CO-1/18 JE-1/4
Corm, Neotropic	6-28 8/65 U-2/4 GA-4/54 JE-2/7	Teal, Cinnamon	26-26 1/15 CO-AT(15)26,X
cormorant, sp.	21-21 1/2 HA-1/2	Shoveler, Northrn	1-28 15/5624 U-7/1740 BR-1/200
Anhinga	7-16 3/5 U-1/2 BR-1/2 CH-1/1		CH-3/375 CO-1/300 GA-2/9 HA-1/3000
Bittern, American	28-28 1/1 CH-AW(1)28,X	Gadwall	1-28 15/845 U-7/149 BR-1/30 CH-3/127
Heron, Great Blue	1-28 18/191 U-9/144 CH-2/13 CO-1/5		CO-1/312 FB-1/200 GA-1/2 HA-1/25
	GA-2/19 HA-1/6 JE-3/4	Wigeon, American	1-28 12/139 U-5/63 BR-1/10 CH-3/54
Egret, Great	1-28 19/237 U-9/133 CH-2/17 CO-1/30		CO-1/6 GA-2/6
	GA-1/6 HA-1/6 JE-4/33 WA-1/12	Canvasback	7-28 5/70 CH-3/37 FB-1/30 GA-1/3
Egret, Snowy	1-28 21/317 U-8/64 CH-2/10 CO-1/18	Redhead	6-28 8/40 U-1/5 BR-1/1 CH-4/14 GA-2/20
	GA-2/147 HA-5/8 JE-2/50 WA-1/20	Duck, Ring-necked	7-28 8/142 U-4/56 CH-3/70 CO-1/16
Heron, Little Blu	6-28 12/36 U-7/20 CH-2/5 CO-1/8	Scaup, Greater	6-28 10/79 U-3/42 CH-5/31 CO-1/1 GA-1/5
	GA-1/1 JE-1/2	Scaup, Lesser	6-28 11/452 U-5/126 CH-3/180
Heron, Tricolored	7-26 6/6 U-2/2 BR-1/1 CO-1/1 GA-2/2		CO-1/30 GA-2/116
Egret, Reddish	6-28 4/8 U-1/3 GA-3/5	Goldeneye, Common	6-28 7/23 U-2/6 CH-5/17
Egret, Cattle	1-28 10/85 U-3/30 CH-1/20 CO-1/20	Bufflehead	7-28 6/29 U-1/1 CH-4/25 CO-1/3
	GA-1/4 HA-2/6 JE-2/5	Merganser, Red-br	7-28 4/109 U-1/25 CH-1/15 GA-2/69
Nt-Heron, Blk-crn	6-28 14/574 U-4/110 BR-1/6 CH-4/267	Duck, Ruddy	1-28 12/480 U-7/290 BR-1/20 CH-2/70
	CO-1/2 GA-2/42 HA-2/147		CO-1/50 JE-1/50
Nt-Heron, Yel-crn	6-16 6/12 U-1/1 BR-1/4 CH-3/4 GA-1/3	<u>Duck, Masked</u>	16-16 1/4 FB-(4)16,X
Ibis, White	6-28 15/797 U-5/75 BR-1/300 CH-3/52	Vulture, Black	1-28 12/166 U-7/48 BR-1/100 CH-2/4
	CO-1/15 GA-1/30 JE-3/125 WA-1/200		HA-1/2 WA-1/12
Ibis, Glossy	16-16 1/1 FB-(1)16,X	Vulture, Turkey	1-28 19/477 U-7/370 BR-1/15 CH-3/40
Ibis, White-faced	1-28 17/2303 U-6/692 BR-1/100		GA-2/7 HA-1/6 JE-4/19 WA-1/20
	CH-3/149 GA-2/60 HA-1/1200 JE-4/102	Osprey	7-28 7/7 U-(1)10,X; BR-(1)7,BH;
plegadis, sp.	7-7 2/160 HA-1/40 WA-1/120		CH-(1)28,X; GA-(1)7,JW; HA-(1)16,PM;
Spoonbill, Roseat	6-28 10/50 U-4/20 BR-1/3 CH-2/17		HA-SJ(1)28,JBH; JE-(1)16,JW
	GA-2/4 JE-1/6	Kite, White-taild	1-28 18/71 U-7/46 CH-2/6 GA-3/12
Whsl-Duck, Blk-bd	7-26 3/701 U-1/300 CO-1/1 HA-1/400		HA-1/1 JE-4/5 WA-1/1
Goose, Gr Wht-frn	1-28 14/4640 U-5/3400 BR-1/250	Eagle, Bald	1-22 8/19 U-(1)1,PF; U-(2)8,BP;
	CH-4/465 CO-1/100 GA-1/25 HA-1/200 WA-1/200		BR-(1)14,JBH; FB-DE(1)14,JBH; HA-(2)7,M;
Goose, Snow	1-28 18/106116 U-6/63300 BR-1/500		HA-WHC(8)20,JBH; HA-WHC(3)22,JBH;
	CH-5/37025 CO-1/1000 GA-1/22 HA-1/13	Harrier, Northern	1-28 19/249 U-8/119 CH-3/46 CO-1/6
	JE-3/4256		GA-2/6 HA-1/20 JE-3/18 WA-1/34
Goose, Ross'	1-11 6/26 U-(1)1,PF; U-(6)10,X;	Hawk, Sharp-shin	7-13 2/2 HA-(1)7,M; JE-(1)13,JW
	U-(6)11,X; CH-(2)6,X; CH-(1)7,PH;	Hawk, Cooper's	1-24 7/10 U-2/4 HA-3/3 WA-2/3
	CH-(1)7,JW	<u>Hawk, Harris'</u>	8-30 3/3 CO-(1)26,X; FB-(1)30,CR;
Goose, Canada	1-16 8/628 U-3/506 CH-3/81 GA-1/1 HA-1/40		WA-(1)8,JBH
	1/40		
Duck, Wood	8-8 1/1 JE-(1)8,JW		

Hawk, Red-shouldr 1-21 12/22 U-5/10 BR-1/5 GA-2/2
 HA-1/1 JE-3/4
 Hawk, White-tailed 7-7 1/1 CH-(1)7,JW
 Hawk, Red-tailed 1-28 20/677 U-8/315 CH-3/107
 CO-1/6 GA-2/47 HA-1/85 JE-4/49 WA-1/68
 Hawk, Ferruginous 1-7 2/4 WA-(1)1,PF; WA-(3)7,M
 Caracara, Crested 1-26 7/19 U-1/2 BR-1/4 CO-1/1
 HA-2/8 WA-2/4
 Kestrel, American 1-28 22/475 U-8/203 CH-3/65 CO-1/4
 GA-2/32 HA-2/21 JE-5/122 WA-1/28
 Merlin 7-10 2/2 CH-(1)7,JW; CH-AW(1)10,X
 Falcon, Peregrine 2-28 4/6 U-(3)28,X; CH-(1)10,X;
 GA-(1)2,PTF; GA-EB(1)28,JBH
 Rail, Clapper 6-11 2/3 U-(2)6,X; U-(1)11,X
 Rail, Virginia 7-7 1/1 CH-AW(1)7,PH
 Moorhen, Common 6-28 11/590 U-6/300 BR-1/25 CH-2/249
 JE-2/16
 Coot, American 1-28 16/4410 U-8/2049 BR-1/300 CH-
 2/1500
 CO-1/100 GA-2/400 HA-1/40 JE-1/21
 Crane, Sandhill 7-16 6/233 U-2/60 BR-2/170 HA-1/1 WA-
 1/2
 Plover, Blk-belli 6-28 5/516 U-2/41 GA-3/475
 Plover, Snowy 7-28 2/16 GA-BF(15)7,JW; GA-(1)28,X
 Plover, Semipalm 6-28 3/77 U-1/15 GA-2/62
 Plover, Piping 6-28 4/133 U-2/6 GA-2/127
 Killdeer 1-28 19/764 U-8/390 CH-2/10 GA-2/86
 HA-1/40 JE-4/118 WA-2/120
 Oystercatcher, Am 7-28 4/11 U-1/1 GA-3/10
 Stilt, Black-neck 7-28 5/35 U-1/6 BR-1/10 CH-1/5 GA-2/14
 Avocet, American 6-28 6/2211 U-3/950 GA-3/1261
 Yellowlegs, Great 6-28 9/43 U-3/18 BR-1/1 GA-1/2
 HA-1/3 JE-2/13 WA-1/6
 Yellowlegs, Less 6-28 12/117 U-5/39 GA-1/10 HA-2/7
 JE-3/55 WA-1/6
 Willet 6-28 6/282 U-3/57 GA-3/225
 Curlew, Long-bill 1-28 11/486 U-4/17 CH-2/119 GA-3/52
 WA-2/298
 Godwit, Marbled 6-28 5/146 U-2/55 GA-3/91
 Turnstone, Ruddy 6-28 3/68 U-2/58 GA-1/10
 Knot, Red 7-7 2/34 GA-BF(9)7,BH; GA-BF(25)7,JW
 Sanderling 6-28 6/470 U-2/125 GA-4/345
 Sandprr, Western 6-28 8/867 U-3/497 GA-2/250 JE-3/120
 Sandprr, Least 7-28 3/70 GA-1/12 JE-2/58
 Dunlin 6-28 8/390 U-3/60 GA-2/150 JE-2/60
 WA-1/120
 Sandprr, Stilt 16-16 1/5 JE-(5)16,JW
 Dowitcher, S-bill 6-28 5/985 U-1/15 GA-3/820 JE-1/150
 Dowitcher, L-bill 1-16 7/2210 U-2/650 CH-1/10 HA-1/500
 JE-2/550 WA-1/500
 Snipe, Common 7-11 2/9 U-(6)11,X; WA-(3)7,M
 Jaeger, Parasitic 2-2 1/1 GA-EB(1)2,PTF
 Gull, Laughing 6-28 7/6006 U-3/3750 GA-3/2255 JE-1/1
 Gull, Bonaparte's 6-28 6/196 U-1/1 GA-5/195
 Gull, Ring-billed 1-28 15/4478 U-7/663 CH-1/6 CO-1/4
 GA-3/805 JE-3/3000
 Gull, Herring 6-28 4/116 U-2/37 GA-2/79
 Gull, Lsr Blk-bck 6-6 1/1 GA-(1)6,X
 Tern, Gull-billed 6-11 3/4 U-3/4
 Tern, Caspian 6-28 4/13 U-2/8 GA-2/5
 Tern, Royal 6-28 5/108 U-2/45 GA-3/63
 Tern, Forster's 6-28 8/594 U-3/411 CO-1/8 GA-4/175
 Skimmer, Black 6-28 6/1105 U-2/260 GA-4/845
 Dove, Rock 1-28 15/492 U-7/250 CO-1/25 GA-2/55
 HA-3/146 JE-2/16
 Dove, Mourning 1-28 21/407 U-9/196 CH-2/31 CO-1/10
 GA-1/6 HA-3/80 JE-4/44 WA-1/40
 Dove, Inca 1-28 4/44 U-2/9 JE-2/35
 Parakeet, Monk 1-22 4/36 HA-4/36
 parrot, sp. 21-21 1/1 HA-(1)21,PM
 Owl, Barn 1-8 2/4 U-(1)1,PF; U-(3)8,BP
 Screech-Owl, East 11-11 1/1 HA-(1)11,X
 Owl, Great Horned 1-8 4/6 U-2/3 GA-1/1 WA-1/2

Owl, Short-eared 2-11 4/6 CH-AW(2)11,X; GA-(1)2,PTF;
 GA-BF(3)6,X; GA-BF(3)7,BH
 Hummer, Ruf-belly 6-13 5/2 GA-(1)6,X; GA-HI(1)7,PH;
 GA-(1)10,X; JE-(1)8,JW; JE-(1)13,JW
 Hummer, Blk-chind 10-10 1/1 HA-(1)10,X
 Hummer, Caliope 7-7 1/1 GA-HI(1)7,PH
 Hummer, Brd-tailed 6-16 4/1 GA-(1)6,X; GA-HI(1)7,PH;
 GA-(1)10,X; GA-HI(1)16,JW
 Hummer, Rufous 6-26 4/1 HA-(1)6,X; HA-(1)10,X;
 HA-(1)11,X; HA-(1)26,X
 Kingfisher, Beltd 1-28 18/82 U-8/32 CH-2/18 GA-2/8
 HA-1/1 JE-4/19 WA-1/4
 Wdpeckr, Red-bell 1-26 11/23 U-5/11 BR-1/3 CO-1/1
 HA-1/2 JE-2/2 WA-1/4
 Sapsuck, Yel-bell 1-29 8/19 U-4/12 CO-1/1 HA-1/1
 JE-1/1 WA-1/4
 Wdpeckr, Downy 7-28 8/14 U-4/6 BR-1/3 JE-2/2 WA-1/3
 Flicker, Northern 1-28 7/28 U-5/16 CO-1/4 WA-1/8
 Wdpeckr, Pileated 7-28 5/8 U-3/5 BR-1/2 CO-1/1
 Flycatch, Least 7-7 1/1 HA-(1)7,M
 Phoebe, Eastern 1-28 19/148 U-8/79 BR-1/5 CH-2/9
 CO-1/3 GA-1/2 HA-1/12 JE-4/18 WA-1/20
 Flycatch, Vermiln 7-13 3/4 U-(2)8,BP; JE-(1)13,JW;
 WA-(1)7,M
 Lark, Horned 6-7 2/24 U-(8)6,X; GA-BF(16)7,JW
 Swallow, Tree 7-16 4/415 GA-2/203 JE-2/212
 Jay, Blue 1-31 18/89 U-8/48 BR-1/2 CO-1/6
 GA-1/4 HA-2/7 JE-4/6 WA-1/16
 Crow, American 1-28 14/201 U-8/102 BR-1/25 HA-2/11
 JE-2/43 WA-1/20
 Chickadee, Carol 1-28 9/64 U-6/49 BR-1/6 JE-1/3 WA-1/6
 Titmouse, Tufted 7-16 2/14 U-(8)16,X; BR-(6)7,BH
 Wren, Carolina 1-31 12/37 U-7/23 BR-1/6 CO-1/1
 GA-1/1 HA-1/2 WA-1/4
 Wren, Bewick's 7-8 3/6 U-(1)8,BP; HA-(2)7,M;
 WA-(3)7,M
 Wren, House 1-28 7/36 U-3/10 GA-1/1 HA-1/8
 JE-1/1 WA-1/16
 Wren, Sedge 6-28 4/63 U-3/51 BR-1/12
 Wren, Marsh 7-28 3/16 U-1/12 BR-1/2 CO-1/2
 Kinglet, Ruby-crn 1-28 14/170 U-8/108 BR-1/1 GA-2/9
 HA-1/15 JE-1/2 WA-1/35
 Gnatcatch, Blu-gra 1-28 10/61 U-6/51 BR-1/3 GA-1/2
 JE-1/1 WA-1/4
 Bluebird, Eastern 1-26 7/73 U-2/20 CO-1/1 HA-1/3
 JE-2/19 WA-1/30
 Thrush, Hermit 1-10 5/8 U-3/5 GA-1/1 WA-1/2
 Robin, American 1-28 14/6569 U-5/6200 BR-1/25 CO-1/2
 GA-1/30 HA-3/37 JE-2/75 WA-1/200
 Catbird, Gray 6-7 3/8 U-(1)6,X; U-(6)7,PH; WA-(1)7,M
 Mockingbird, N 1-31 20/204 U-7/104 BR-1/10 CH-1/8
 CO-1/6 GA-2/7 HA-2/14 JE-5/40 WA-1/15
 Thrasher, Brown 1-16 11/51 U-6/26 BR-1/1 GA-2/6
 HA-1/6 WA-1/12
 Pipit, American 1-16 8/65 U-4/49 BR-1/6 JE-2/6 WA-1/4
 Pipit, Sprague's 8-8 1/1 U-(1)8,BP
 Waxwing, Cedar 1-28 10/626 U-4/512 BR-1/1 CH-1/35
 HA-1/16 JE-2/50 WA-1/12
 Shrike, Loggerhed 1-28 22/448 U-9/144 CH-2/52 CO-1/6
 GA-2/18 HA-2/11 JE-5/197 WA-1/20
 Starling, Euro 1-28 22/1822 U-9/1000 CH-1/12 CO-1/50
 GA-2/292 HA-3/180 JE-5/168 WA-1/120
 Vireo, White-eyed 7-16 3/3 U-(1)8,BP; GA-HI(1)7,JW;
 GA-HI(1)16,JW
 Vireo, Solitary 1-7 4/6 U-(2)1,PF; U-(1)6,X;
 U-(2)7,PH; WA-(1)7,M
 Warb, Orange-crn 1-16 10/36 U-5/20 BR-1/3 GA-1/1
 HA-1/3 JE-1/1 WA-1/8
 Warb, Yellow-rump 1-28 19/1247 U-8/500 BR-1/10
 CH-2/5 CO-1/40 GA-2/550 HA-2/32
 JE-2/35 WA-1/75
 Warb, Pine 7-11 3/8 U-1/6 GA-1/1 WA-1/1
 Yellowthroat, Com 7-28 4/40 U-1/6 BR-1/30 CO-1/3 HA-1/1

Warb, Wilson's 16-16 1/1 CH-(1)16, JW
 Cardinal, Northrn 1-28 16/242 U-8/138 BR-1/20 CO-1/12
 GA-2/6 HA-2/22 JE-1/4 WA-1/40
 Towhee, Rfus-side 7-7 1/1 WA-(1)7, M
 Sparrow, Chipping 7-8 2/50 U-(6)8, BP; WA-(44)7, M
 Sparrow, Field 6-8 4/18 U-2/6 CH-1/1 WA-1/11
 Sparrow, Vesper 1-16 6/79 U-5/49 HA-1/30
 Sparrow, Savannah 1-28 19/495 U-8/262 BR-1/50 CH-2/11
 CO-1/40 GA-1/30 HA-1/40 JE-4/18 WA-1/44
 Sparrow, Le Conte 7-28 3/10 U-(6)8, BP; U-(1)28, X;
 GA-(3)7, JW
 Sparrow, Shp-tail 7-7 2/8 GA-(2)7, JW; WA-(6)7, M
 Sparrow, Seaside 6-7 2/7 U-(6)6, X; U-(1)7, PH
 Sparrow, Fox 7-7 2/5 HA-(1)7, M; WA-(4)7, M
 Sparrow, Song 1-26 6/32 U-2/9 BR-1/1 CO-1/2
 HA-1/8 WA-1/12
 Sparrow, Lincoln 7-7 2/8 HA-(2)7, M; WA-(6)7, M
 Sparrow, Swamp 1-28 10/73 U-6/51 BR-1/4 CO-1/12
 HA-1/4 WA-1/2
 Sparrow, Wht-thrt 1-16 8/266 U-5/184 BR-1/5 HA-1/27 WA-1/50
 Sparrow, Wht-crn 1-8 5/45 U-3/23 HA-1/20 WA-1/2
 Sparrow, Harris' 1-8 3/17 U-2/11 HA-1/6
 Blackbird, Red-wg 1-28 17/33845 U-10/31650 CH-1/500
 CO-1/1500 GA-2/70 JE-3/125
 Meadowlark, East 1-28 19/430 U-8/295 BR-1/50 CH-2/31
 CO-1/20 GA-1/8 HA-1/2 JE-4/20 WA-1/4
 meadowlark, sp. 7-7 2/50 HA-1/20 WA-1/30
 Blackbird, Brewer 1-7 4/77 U-1/50 BR-1/20 HA-1/1 WA-1/6
 Grackle, Gr-tail 1-28 17/890 U-7/522 CH-1/25 CO-1/25
 GA-2/60 HA-2/27 JE-4/231
 Grackle, Bt-tail 6-28 9/1118 U-5/1060 BR-1/2 CH-1/20
 GA-2/36
 Grackle, Common 1-28 17/5269 U-8/4200 CO-1/500
 HA-5/215 JE-3/354
 Cowbird, Brn-head 1-28 12/15677 U-7/15410 BR-1/20
 CH-1/20 JE-3/227
 Goldfinch, Amer 7-26 8/153 U-2/35 BR-1/5 CO-1/60
 GA-1/1 HA-1/10 JE-1/2 WA-1/40
 Sparrow, House 6-28 9/144 U-7/94 CO-1/20 GA-1/30

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 263159; One specie was submitted with no notes: Franklin's Gull

LIST OF OBSERVER CODES: Bob Honig (BH); P. D. Hulce, David Bradford, OG F.T. (BP); Charles Ridgaway (CR); Jean & Bill Harwell (JBH); John Whittle (JW); Jim Morgan (M); P. D. Hulce, Don Francis (PF); P. D. Hulce, HAS F. T. (PH); Peggy Milstead (PM); Phyllis & Tony Frank (PTF); P. D. Hulce (X)

LIST OF LOCATION CODES: Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR (AT); Anahauc NWR (AW); Bolivar Flats (BF); Brazoria NWR (BW); Davis Estates Road (DE); East Beach (EB); High Island (HI); San Jacinto Monument St. Park (SJ); Texas City Dike (TCD); West Harris County (WHC)

LIST OF COUNTY CODES: Brazoria (BR); Chambers (CH); Colorado (CO); Fort Bend (FB); Galveston (GA); Harris (HA); Jefferson (JE); Upper Texas Coast (U); Waller (WA)

Glossy Ibis - P. D. Hulce January 16, 1995

Typical Plegadis. White streaked head. Brown eye. Gray facial skin, with delineated gray line at top and bottom. Top line started at front of eye, widened slightly, then narrowed and went over base of bill. Bottom line started at bottom front of eye

and curved down to base of bill. These lines were gray unfeathered skin. They did not encircle the eye.

Least Grebe - P. D. Hulce January 26, 1995

Small gray grebe, dark crown, yellow eye, thin black bill, white undertail coverts.

Masked Duck - P. D. Hulce January 16, 1995

Male with black-tipped, electric blue bill. Mostly black head. Light blue eyering. Hindneck and throat rich rufous. Remainder of body slightly lighter rufous, heavily edged with black. Stiff, black tail feathers. Female/immatures buffy gold, heavily edged with black. Dark crown, dark eye stripe, one more dark stripe on cheek. White speculum.

Harris' Hawk - P.D. Hulce January 26, 1995

Buteo-like hawk, gray head and body, rusty shoulders, thighs, and underwing coverts. Long tail with white tip, dark subterminal band and white undertail coverts. Yellow cere and legs.

Harris' Hawk - M. Ridgaway January 30 and 31, 1995

On Burney Rd. in Sugarland. The hawk had a black body and head, red shoulders, white at the base on the tail and yellow legs. Entire body was black (no white breast).

Harris' Hawk - J. & B. Harwell January 8, 1995

Overall chocolate brown buteo. Rusty shoulders. White base on tail and undertail coverts.

Stilt Sandpiper - J. Whittle January 16, 1995

The birds were typical *Calidris* in shape, with longish legs. They appeared to be slightly smaller in body than the Lesser Yellowlegs, with slightly shorter legs and slightly longer bills. On standing birds, the wing tips reached approximately to the tip of the tail. They were brownish gray above and basically white below. There was a straight white supercilium through the upper half of the eye. The throat and upper breast were finely streaked with a fairly neat demarcation with the white lower breast and belly. There were fairly coarse darker streaks along the flanks, somewhat variable bird to bird. In flight, no obvious wing stripe. The rump was whitish but did not contrast as much as the Lesser Yellowlegs. The bills were dark, somewhat stouter and longer. Legs a dull greenish yellow color.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - P.D. Hulce January 6, 1995

Adult bird, larger than Ring-billed, smaller than Herring Gull. Wings and mantle darker slate gray than Laughing Gull. Yellow bill, with red spot on lower mandible. Bill slimmer than bill of Herring Gull. Yellow legs. Primary wing feathers very dark, almost black with only one or two white spots. Tail white. Head white with some dusky streaking on forehead and crown.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird - P.D. Hulce January 7, 1995

Large metallic green hummingbird. Buffy belly, rufous-chestnut tail, green breast. Red bill with blackish tip. Rump and lower back rufous shading to green on upper back.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - P.D. Hulce January 7, 1995

Large hummingbird. All upperparts, crown, back, and tail metallic green. Medium length black bill. Throat with small, light spots. Underparts white, with light buffy sides and flanks. Two central tail feathers very long and emerald green. Spread tail in flight very large with large white spots on corners of outer tail feathers, noticeable rufous patch at base of outer tail feathers.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird - J. Whittle January 8, 1995

Large hummingbird. Green back and head with bright green throat, buff belly. Brown tail. Pinkish bill for most of the length with a dark tip. Observed at Garden Center, Tyrrell Park in Beaumont.

Calliope Hummingbird - P.D. Hulce January 7, 1995

About 3/4 inch smaller than Broad-tailed Hummingbird, with which it was seen, several times. Many very small dots on gorget, one small area of rose red. Very short, slim bill, straight like a small pin. Wings were noticeably longer than tail on perched bird. In flight, spread tail was very slightly forked or notched with white coverts, no apparent rufous at base. Dusky gray-green flanks. Very small bird!

Least Flycatcher - J. Morgan January 7, 1995

Between Porter and Katy Hockley Cut-off Rd on south side on Hwy 529 at same location one was found on Cypress Creek CBC two years ago. Small empidonax with very short primary extension; olive back; mouse brown head; prominent elliptical eyering; whitish underparts; washed yellow on flanks and lower belly. Two whit wing bars. Repeated "whit" vocalization in response to owl tape. Seen for 1-2 minutes at distances of 6-10 meters with 10X binoculars in excellent light.

NOEL'S NICHE

BY NOEL PETTINGELL

30 YEARS AGO/FROM FEBRUARY 1965 SPOONBILL

Field Trip to Chambers County, January 17, 1965: The Barrow Ranch, Chambers County. We were greeted by the ranch manager, Mr. Joe Lagow, who displays a great interest in conservation and nature study. Mr. Lagow's home is at the edge of the most beautiful grove of Live Oaks to be found (to the best of my knowledge) in Texas. Walking in is comparable to entering a great cathedral.

Mr. Lagow retrieves crippled ducks and geese during the hunting season, so has quite a considerable population in a small pond near his home. ...Quite a number recover their ability to fly, but cannot bring themselves to leave a good home.

The day was waning, but we took off for the Anahuac Wildlife Refuge. There is a limited area that can be covered by car, but it is becoming a fine location for the observation of shore and wading birds, geese, ducks, sparrows and, of all things, owls. No less than four species of owls were seen, so no one can readily understand that it was well after dark before the most persistent of birders called it a day and wended their weary way homeward. *Clayton Gilman*

[This is the final "Niche." Noel Pettingell has announced his decision to discontinue this column. He and his wife will be moving to Austin in the next few months. We want to thank Noel for the many years he contributed to The Spoonbill. We will miss you, Noel, and hope to hear from you in the future.]

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