THE SPOONBILL

Volume XXX, No. 6
October, 1981

PUBLISHED BY THE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP OF THE OUTDOOR NATURE CLUB
HOUSTON, TEXAS Randy Pinkston, Editor

COMING EVENTS

Saturday October 24	OG field trip to Northeast Harris County. Meet in the boat ramp area in Eisenhower Park at 7:30 a.m. Take I-59 north from downtown Houston to the Mt. Houston Rd. exit. Proceed east past Sheldon Reservoir. Eisenhower Park is off Mt. Houston Rd.
Sunday October 25	Deadline for THE SPOONBILL announcements, articles, etc.
Weekend October 30,31 November 1	Open House at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. There will be camping in the Cove Friday night through Saturday night--gates locked noon Sunday. Open House activities include birding for fall migrants, an introductory lesson on how to look for mushrooms with a Mushroom Walk conducted by Doug Troeger, and Halloween Jack-O-Lanterns and ghost stories around the campfire at night.
Tuesday November 3	Clearing House deadline for observations for October. Please send early.
Wednesday November 4	Photography Group regular meeting at Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 S. Braeswood Blvd., 7:30 p.m. For those of you for whom arctic, subarctic and pelagic birds are just little red or blue areas on range maps, come see Marilyn Crane's slides of her trip to Churchill, Canada.
Thursday November 5	OG regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Manor auditorium. Tony Gallucci will present a talk and slide show on raptor identification. Art prints 1)Jaguar by Doug Pratt and 2)Roadrunner by Nancy McGowan will be auctioned at this meeting.
Tuesday November 10	ONC regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Garden Center in Hermann Park. A program entitled "Flora of the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary" will be presented by Mr. Charles Peterson. Mr. Peterson has been working on a census of the flora found at the sanctuary and this should be a very informative program.
Wednesday through Sunday November 11-15	ONC field trip to Lost Maples State Natural Area. If you intend to camp at the park, reservations should be made. The fees are $2.00 per vehicle and $3.00 per night. Write Lost Maples State Natural Area, Station C Route, Vanderpool, Texas 78885 or call AC 512-966-3413. The maples are at the heighth of their colorful beauty, so if you wish to go make reservations. Aaron Stoley will lead a backpacking trip for those who are interested for Saturday night. There is a primitive camping area on a lake about one mile from the parking lot.
Thursday through Sunday November 26-29	Ann Nunes will lead a Photo Group trip to the Hill country. We will spend the first 3 days at 4,800 acre Pedernales State Park for Bird Watching, Nature

Walks and Geological field trips. On Sunday to Longhorn Caverns, the third largest cave in the world. Camping is available at the park. Johnson City has motels.

The Rice University Offices of Continuing Studies and Special Programs will be offering a second mini-course on Texas bird watching, Texas Bird Watching: Resident Winter Birds. Elaine Robinson Adams will focus this mini-course on resident winter birds in South Texas. Topics include: where to go birding, equipment necessary for bird watching, how to identify many birds, particular study of ducks, geese, eagles and wintering passerines to be observed on a field trip to West Harris County. Course dates: November 10 & 17, 7:30-9:00 p.m. Field trip: November 21 or 22. Course fee: $48. For more information call Rice University, Offices of Continuing Studies and Special Programs, 527-4803 or 520-6022.

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IMPORTANT: A GIFT WE CAN ALL SHARE

High Island is one of the finest migrant traps on the whole Texas coast and hence the nation. Over the past several years we birders have been singularly fortunate in being permitted access to the richest birding areas of that unique community. Smith Woods and Boy Scout Woods (Lamar Woods) have been traditionally held open to us through acts of kindness, but guaranteed access has never been forthcoming until now.

Through the dedicated hard work of three young men, Fred Collins, Ted Eubanks and Pete Peltier, the Houston Audubon Society has negotiated the purchase of the Louis Smith property, the fenced land immediately adjacent to and biologically part of Boy Scout Woods. This is of course a marvellous opportunity for us to insure that we and future generations will have a migrant trap to visit. It is my understanding that the Smith Purchase will also act as a core from which it is hoped that the H.A.S. will add future acquisitions.

To those of you who have birded this area there is no need to stress it's value, it is unique. Annually High Island is the target of thousands of tired migrants and hundreds of enthusiastic birders. Thanks to the H.A.S. it is now a permanent sanctuary and birders haven.

Now they need help. Payment for the Smith Purchase has been projected over three years with the first one due in a few weeks. This is our opportunity to share in the stewardship by donating whatever we can to the fund. The first note is 19,000.00; so think back to all the good birds you have seen here and all the good times shared.

Send your donations to:

Smith Purchase Fund
c/oHouston Audubon Society
440 Wilchester Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77079

Don't forget to stipulate Smith Purchase Fund on your check.

With Thanks,

Ben Feltner

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FOLLOWUP ON SHELDON RESERVOIR STATUS by Margaret Jones

Sheldon Reservoir, part of the Sheldon Wildlife Management Area, used to be a prime birding spot for OG'ers. It has been with a great deal of dismay we have watched the deterioration of this area during the past few years. The Editor, in THE SPOONBILL (March 1980, p.6) addressed the problem and promised an inquiry to TP&W. A response from Charles Travis, Executive Director of TP&W, was printed in THE SPOONBILL (May 1980, p.3), in which he outlined a brief history of Sheldon WMA and the reservoir, and said that until feasibility and cost stud-

ies could be completed, no plans could be made for the area. I recently wrote Mr. Travis again to see if those studies had been completed. It is with great delight I share with you the following letter.

Dear Ms. Jones:

This is in response to your letter of August 16, 1981 regarding the status of the Sheldon Reservoir.

The staff is currently in the process of negotiating for the preparation of engineering plans necessary to request bids for repairing the levee, dam, and spillway as authorized by an appropriation by the 67th Texas Legislature. These structures will be renovated, thus making it possible for the reservoir to be returned to its former status. The exact date of completion of these repairs is unknown at this time; however, I feel they should be fully completed within 12-18 months.

If I can provide additional information regarding this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Ted L. Clark, Director, Wildlife Division
for Charles D. Travis, Executive Director

Thanks are due Mr. Clark for taking the time to bring us up-to-date on the status of Sheldon Reservoir, they are certainly due the TP&W for their decision to rejuvenate the area, and also are due the 67th Texas Legislature for making this rejuvenation possible by their appropriation. As our greenspace and birding spots are rapidly disappearing it is cheering to know that once again we shall be able to enjoy a long-time favorite birding spot.

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OG FIELD TRIP TO FREEPORT by David O. Matson

The October 3 field trip was the Freeport marshes. Approximately 25 birders showed and there was a nice balance between new and seasoned observers. The early part of the morning was spent on the Army Corps of Engineers road just west of the Brazos off Highway 36. Here we saw several warbler species, an assortment of flycatchers, grosbeaks, an oriole, and many Indigo Buntings. A female Black-headed Grosbeak was identified and a Peregrine Falcon was seen well by all in the party. When rain hit we moved to the dike road on the way to the Quintana Jetty where we had several good looks at Clapper/King ("Cling") Rails, spoonbills, and an assortment of other stuff, including four American Bitterns. Lunch was taken at the Big Slough Cemetary with a Pileated Woodpecker calling and a group of warblers moving through the trees. Some 90 species were identified for the half-day trip.

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MINUTES OF THE OG MEETING, OCT. 1, 1981

Ron Braun began the meeting. Linda Walsh reported a balance in the treasury of $2,714.00. $46.00 had been received from the sale of aluminum. Ron announced the following:

Emory Froelich has offered to compile a checklist for the new park at Lake Houston.

The ONC Board is considering establishing a permanent endowment fund for the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. They also are thinking of expanding the property there and making various improvements. Your suggestions and opinions would be welcome.

The Rare Bird Alert list is to be updated this month, adding more people. The Jabiru Stork was last seen in Corpus on Sept. 18. There was a Townsend's Warbler at Johnson's Woods.

Ben Feltner: The Christmas Counts in Mexico will be Dec. 30- El Naranjo and Jan. 3- Tezuitlan.

Ted Eubanks: The Houston Audubon Society is negotiating to purchase

Boy Scout Woods at High Island. It is hoped that donations for this purchase will come from bird clubs and organizations in other areas as well as from our own members.

Jack Gillette: It is very important to vote in the November election against Proposition 4. It would give surplus funds forever to the legislature and the Water Board to do with as they will. Vote NO to Proposition 4.

There was an auction of a Ray Harm print (donated by Jim Beatty). It was bought by Doug and Barbara Hortvet for $30.00.

Emory introduced Tom Stehn of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who gave a very interesting program on the McFaddin Ranch and other marshland areas of the United States.

Ellen Red, Secretary

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THE SILENT KILLERS: DISEASES OF BIRDS by B. C. Robison, D.V.M.

Part 9: Intranuclear Inclusion Body Hepatitus of Psittacines(Pacheco's Disease)

Will Rogers once said: "I think the best doctor in the world is the veterinarian. He can't ask his patients what is wrong; he just has to know." Well, as much as I would like to think that sentiment is true, often in the majority of medical cases a specific diagnosis simply cannot be made (and, dear reader, the same is true of human medicine). Dogs and cats are difficult enough; but imagine the case with pet birds.

Throughout the Silent Killers series, the same theme has appeared again and again: avian diagnostics are based on a post-mortem, flock approach. Pet birds, obviously, offer a distinct departure from this concept. There are fewer challenges to the profession of veterinary medicine than the solitary, sick bird in a cage.

Pacheco's Disease (PD) goes even further. Remember avian cholera, where "death is often the first sign of disease"? PD is the caged bird version of that destructive wild bird problem. A bird is healthy one day, and dead the next. And to make matters worse, the disease leaves practically no gross (visible) lesions.

PD is a highly fatal, rapidly acute, clinically non-specific affliction of psittacine birds. If you find, as I do, eponyms to be useless in describing a disease, Pacheco's Disease is also known as intranuclear inclusion body hepatitus, which probably doesn't tell you a whole hell of a lot, either. (Pacheco was the Brazilian researcher whose initial studies led to the isolation of the causative agent.) It is worldwide in distribution, is of considerable potential importance to the commercial bird industry, and has been reported in several major commercial regions, Houston among them.

The etiologic agent of PD is a herpesvirus. This virus has an affinity for liver tissue, and in the course of infection produces distinct aggregates of viral particles within the nucleus of the hepatocyte (liver cell). These inclusion bodies, as they are called, are visible only by microscopic examination of infected tissue, and are pathognomonic for PD. It is unrelated to psittacosis.

PD strikes with very little warning. Occasionally there might be two days or less of watery, yellow diarrhea, but frequently even that inconclusive symptom is absent. Sometimes a period of depression, as short as two to four hours, can be noted before death, but even that can easily be overlooked. Lethargy, ruffled feathers, and poor appetite characterize the depression stage.

At necropsy there are no outstanding lesions; only a slightly discolored liver that has undergone pin-point necrosis. The tell-tale inclusion bodies are seen by microscopic analysis.

PD virus is shed in the feces of infested birds, and susceptible birds contract it by ingestion of contaminated feed and water. There is no airborne transmission, so sick caged birds will not give it to nearby healthy birds, unless their food and water bowls are switched.

Treatment: there is none. Symptomatic PD is invariably fatal. Medical research, unfortunately, suggests the possiblity of non-symptomatic carrier states. Prevention, therefore, becomes the paramount means of controlling this potentially serious problem. Strict quarantine periods, sanitation, and good caged bird husbandry are all important.

Overall, Pacheco's Disease is poorly understood, dangerous, and probably severly underdiagnosed. Let's hope we don't ever hear too much about it.

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AROUND AND ABOUT

Armand Bayou Nature Center is sponsoring a bird seed sale in November. They will be offering Black Oil Sunflower Seed, regular stripped sunflower seed, three different bird seed mixes (one of which is 30% sunflower seed), Thistle and Safflower seed. The black oil seed will cost 35¢ per pound (in 25# bags), and the best mix is 34¢ per pound, just to give an idea of the prices. They will also be selling feeders. Customers' orders and money are needed by October 25th. The pickup date is November 14th. Everyone must pick up their seed the weekend of November 14th and 15th. For more information, call 474-2551.

The Planning Department of TP&W has on its agenda expansion of trailer sites in Bentsen State Park. It is seventh on the priority list. The proposal is to create another trailer area of some fifty spaces with full hookups on the back loop outside the present trailer area. This would necessitate taking out a great deal of thick native brush and ruin an area that is enjoyed by birdwatchers, botanists, hikers, strollers, bicyclists, and joggers. Such an expansion is not necessary, as the present trailer sites are rarely used nine months of the year; and, during the three months of heavy use, most of the users are not interested in the unique environment. They are there for a cheap place to park for the winter. Please help save this area by writing letters or circulating petitions. Communications should be addressed to Bentsen State Park, P.O. Box 988, Mission, TX 78572, or to TP&W, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744.

The September issue of Natural History has an interesting article entitled "A Matter of Lights and Death", by John C. Avise. It presents data on dead birds collected at a T.V. tower in Leon Co., Florida, since 1955.

The October issue of the Western Tanager (newsletter of the Los Angeles Audubon Society) brings news of a study by Stephen R. Kellert of Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies on how people relate to wildlife. Twenty-two groups of people with various special interests in wildlife were questioned. He found that birdwatchers have a mean age of 42 years and he found that they tend to live in small communities rather than areas of population over 17,000. Kellert also found that birdwatchers enjoy the highest incomes of the groups he studied. In measuring people's attitudes and knowledge, he rated birdwatchers as being the most knowledgeable about wildlife. But he found that they scored low on their concern for ecology (the inter-relationships between wildlife and their natural habitats).

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BIRDING IN PANAMA by David O. Matson

I left for Panama on April 11, 1981. I was met by two friends, Norm and Marsha Wilkinson. Norm is chief of the Primitive Medicine section for the Army Medical Corps in Panama and has a Ph.D. in entomology. The ride to their house was full of news-sharing and exciting talk of caciques, oropendolas, hummers, flycatchers, nightjars, and potoos in their yard.

The first day we went up to the Cerro Azul area, an area of primal

forest into which new roads are being built. The forest is gorgeous. Especially interesting is the cloud forest on the top of Cerro Jefe which is dominated by palms, amost unusual forest structure. The wind was blowing hard, it was misting, and the birds weren't moving, but I did see Black-and-yellow Tanager, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, and Swallow-tailed Kite for lifers. The same afternoon we went to the Tocumen marsh, which was very dry. This was an area my wife Chris and I had visited before and we saw nothing new this round. We did get good photographs of the Pale-breasted Spinetail, Great Black Hawk, and Pied Water-Tyrant.

Sunday, April 12, we went up Chiva-Chiva road which was full of hunters, who would never have been seen when this area was part of the Canal Zone. The bird activity was greatest at the end of the road, but far less than I had expected. All-in-all the bird activity in the dry season seemed much less than in the wet to me.

In the evening we went out Palo Seco road and picniced. At dusk a Tropical Screech-Owl started calling and a tape-recording brought him in for a very good look with the Q-beam. Moving down the road we heard Great and Common Potoos. We called out a Rufous Nightjar using a tape recording and followed it in flight above the car. Further along, we found a Short-tailed Nighthawk perched about 3 feet off the road.

The next morning we went to the canal Hydrology Section headquarters and met Frank Robinson, chief hydrologist for the canal. We spent several hours learning about the canal management. Frank gave us a send-off at Madden Lake. With four Panamanian workers, a hydrology work crew, we went as guests of the Panama Canal company to its Chico field station. To get there, we rode a 35 foot "cayuco" up the Chagres River, wading over rapids and pulling the boat along, helping the outboard "jet" engine. The Chagres was dammed at two places, forming Gatun and Madden Lakes.

The Chico station is in fully mature, secondary tropical rain forest. It is on a high slope (approx. 90 ft.) above the river. Like all other field stations it has an equipment room, a sleeping room, a kitchen, a water closet, a storage shed, a radio antenna, and a helicopter pad. Our first night at the station it rained. The next morning the river had risen 16 feet. By evening the river was only 6 feet above flood. The next morning 18 feet, the morning after that 23 feet. During the day rain was minimal so we were able to get into the forest. We spent part of each day on a trail leading uphill from the station. On this trail we saw some very shy birds, including Great Tinamou, Little Tinamou, Grey Elaenia, Tody Motmot, Red-capped Manakin, and Marbled Wood-Quail. The rest of the day was spent watching the birds move around the station. Our first day an army ant flock moved through the compound bringing all types of birds along, including antbirds, flycatchers, honeycreepers, tanagers, warblers, and woodpeckers.

Our first morning there we were eating breakfast when a shout went out from across the river. Some Choco Indians were escorting two white guys down the hillside. We could see through our binocs that the two guys had life preservers on, so we assumed that they had had a river accident. As it turned out they had been sleeping on a sand bank in the river the night before when it started to rain. They threw their gear in the canoe and tried climbing up the hillside to get away from the rising water. Either the brush was too thick, the water rose too fast, or the hillside was too steep, so they decided to make a run for it and canoe out (the river was 16 feet higher remember!). In any case, they got turned over in a rapids and lost contact with their canoe. They found some Indians who knew of our station and were being escorted there. As our party was preparing to ride the cable across the river to pick them up, their canoe slid by in the river. Immediately, three of our party raced down the hill, jumped in the cayuco, and gave chase! An hour later they returned with canoe and all. We were amazed at their confidence in the raging water. In fact, they didn't hesitate to take us out two days later when the river was 23 feet above normal.

Among the other super things seen up in the Chico area was the King Vulture, a flannel-moth caterpillar (which is poisonous), Sabbathes mosquitoes (which transmit jungle yellow fever), a moth-eating bat, a "poison-arrow" frog, used by the Indians to make arrow poison, and a bunch of Choco Indians in native drag.

The last major portion of the trip was to Western Panama, to the area of Vulcan Baru, Panama's highest mountain (3478 m). We stayed at about 6200 feet, at a field station of the Panama Audubon Society. Among the great birds seen here were the Quetzal, Green-fronted Lancebill, Fiery-billed Aracari, Blue Seedeater, Barred Parakeet, Flame-colored Tanager, and Red-headed Barbet. This was a delightful area after the tepid lowlands. Temps at night were in the 50's and in the day low 80's. We had great times around the fireplace, had fresh fruit and vegetables from local farmers, and basically lived it up. Norm and I found a patch of cloud forest hanging with moss, where each foot sank 4-6 inches, and perpetual clouds limited visibility. We walked up to the saddle on the shoulder of Vulcan Baru (8000 ft.) and came into virgin forest.

All in all, it was a delightful trip, with pure vacation the goal.

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LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN by Bessie Cornelius

The Grouse family and owls seem to be some of the last birds to get on a birder's North American checklist and I've heard that even Roger T. Peterson has not added the Lesser Prairie Chicken to his impressive total. It is almost impossible to find this buffy little chicken of* the southern Great Plains unless it is booming and coming to the lek, the most active time being from about the middle of March into May. If you have never seen this species, now might be a good time to start thinking about a trip to west Texas to see and experience a beautiful sight.

Jenny Huey of Dallas, Katy Munro, Frances Wier and I of Beaumont went to Lubbock the last of March this year to find this bird. We enlisted the help of Cliff and Dixie Stogner of Lubbock. Busy schedules of everyone meant several changes of dates but March 28 weekend was settled upon. Cliff and Dixie must be two of the nicest people in the bird world. They had arranged for us to be at their house by 4:30a.m. so we could be parked and settled near the lek long before dawn. The Stogners provided coffee for the long cold wait and even ordered up a clear sky after a threatening wind and rain the night before. Cliff said the birds are not so active if it rains or is overcast.

We headed at a fast pace for the small town of Sundown 45 miles southwest of Lubbock and for the lek in an oilfield 7 miles farther south. We were settled in before 5:30. We communicated by signs and whispers as it is important to be quiet. This small prairie bird has long been accustomed to the harsh climate of the west Texas plains, carving a niche for itself among the prairie dogs, rattlesnakes, dust devils, tornados and storms. The prairie dogs are almost gone now, and most of the rattlers, but the birds hang on.

We had waited for some time before we began to hear strange sounds coming from the distance. Cliff, too, had heard the drawn-out hollow cooing. He indicated everything was just right and that the birds would show on the northwest corner of the clearing for their performance. But it was ten or fifteen minutes before these ardent swains came upon the lek. It takes time to begin the ancient rites -- the stage must be properly set before the male's strutting courtship can proceed. We strained to see into the dry, sparse grass beyond the clearing. Finally a small wispy shape bravely sashayed in and then quickly out of the grassy boundary. Other shadowy forms appeared and

* A lek is an area of "common ground" used by males of a species to perform their courtship displays. They typically are "judged" by females at the lek, after which pairing occurs and then mating. Lek behavior is characteristic of many gallinaceous (chicken-like) birds, as well as other groups.-Ed.

disappeared. In this strange luminous half-light that precedes the dawn in this arid land it is difficult to be sure you are seeing the real thing. They are paler in color than the Attwater Prairie Chicken on the coast and their creamy buff colors blend and meld into the pale buff of dried grass and caliche.

Something eerie and uncanny now seemed to fill the air. The winds that prevail on the western plains had died down and now the world belonged to these waifs of the wild bent upon an ageless ritual on their ancestral grounds. These small creatures kept coming into the clearing. They were now oblivious to our presence. The chortles became louder, sounding like water gurgling out of a bottle and by the moment they became bolder and more active, jumping a few feet into the air or taking short sparring jabs at the nearest opponent. Some would lay their heads almost to the ground, glaring at close quarters, then quickly rise and go off backstage, perhaps to follow some hen that had given him the nod while lurking in the wings. Sometimes their feathers fluffed to great proportions and stood out from the body, tail turned nearly over the back. The ears would rise and lower constantly, enlarged and standing erect or bending over almost horizontal to the body, extending far beyond the beak. Females began to come out momentarily but only to teasingly flirt their skirts and disappear.

The gular sacs of the male is a dull purplish red rather than the orange of the Greater Prairie Chicken. This dry prairie where bunch grass, sage and oak shinnery grow well makes an ideal place for a nest in a grass-lined hollow under a bush. Eleven to thirteen buff-colored, dotted eggs are usually laid, all blending into the ground cover. The chicks are even paler than the pale female and are thus perfectly camouflaged.

The rites were now continuing at a greater frenzy. Each seemed to be doing his own thing. Some were doing the pattering dance they are noted for, circling as they stomped their tiny feet. This strange dance has been copied by the Plains Indians, who knew good choreography. We counted 16 chickens, at least 13 males and 3 females on the lek at the same time. The females became bolder and almost impudent at times and were staying longer in the clearing. The gular sacs of the cocks were now greatly inflated and the shadow-boxing among them became more fierce and furious. But as the sun began to tip the horizon and the sky brightened all activity slowly ceased. The females had quietly left without our knowing they were gone and most of the males were quickly following. Only a few die-hards came back occasionally to strut a few paces and glare at a rival. Probably by now all the females had chosen their mates and the left-over disappointed lovers were venting their dismay by glowering at one another. All were soon gone.

We had been completely absorbed. We drove slowly back to the highway. I believe all of us were thinking and hoping this wonderful place would stay untouched forever; that here these small creatures could always keep their prehistoric appointment with the dawn and dance to a primitive beat known only to them, the wind and the sky of the high plains.

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CLEARING HOUSE September 1981

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 before they are considered valid and included in the next checklist.

Grebe, Eared: Galv--(1)12,W
Grebe, Pied-billed: 9 reports (1-20)
Pelican, White: 12 reports (2-71)
Cormorant, Double-crested: Bolivar Flats--(4)19,R; Anahuac NWR--(4) 20,KW
Cormorant, Olivaceous: 11 reports (1-20)
Anhinga: 3 reports (1-2)
Frigatebird, Magnificent: Bolivar--(1)25,B
Heron, Great Blue: 18 reports (1-40)
Heron, Green: 12 reports (1-8)
Heron, Little Blue: 14 reports (1-20)
Egret, Cattle: 17 reports (5-1200)
Egret, Reddish: 16 reports (1-25)
Egret, Great: 18 reports (3-102)
Egret, Snowy: 20 reports (2-20)
Heron, Louisiana: 16 reports (2-50)
Night Heron, Black-crowned: 2 reports (1-2)
Night Heron, Yellow-crowned: 6 reports (1-4)
Bittern, Least: Chambers Co.--(2)19,R,SC,D; Freeport--(1)5, Anahuac NWR--(4)10,G
Bittern, American: Anahuac NWR--(2)19,R
Stork, Wood: W. Galv--(1)19,R; (2)26,H,N; Chambers Co.--(35)6,SC; Winnie--(6)13,SC
Ibis, White-faced: 12 reports (1-250)
Ibis, White: 8 reports (1-50)
Spoonbill, Roseate: 13 reports (2-50)
Goose, Snow (Blue): Anahuac NWR--(12)19,R...needs notes; Chambers Co.--(1)6,SC...needs notes
Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied: Hale Ranch--(2)7,J
Whistling-Duck, Fulvous: Chambers Co.--(20)6,(4)19,SC; (25)10,G
Mallard: Anahuac NWR--(3)20,KW...needs notes
Duck, Mottled: 12 reports (2-30)
Pintail, Common: Anahuac NWR--(20)19,SC
Teal, Green-winged: Anahuac NWR--(3)19,R,SC; Chambers Co.--(100)6,SC; Bolivar--(1)27,P
Teal, Blue-winged: Chambers Co.--(2000)6,SC; 5 other reports (1-50)
Wigeon, American: Anahuac NWR--(4)19,R; Freeport--(10)27,S
Shoveler, Northern: Anahuac NWR--(4)19,R
Duck, Ruddy: Freeport--(1)27,S
Vulture, Turkey: 9 reports (1-20)
Vulture, Black: 3 reports (1-6)
Kite, White-tailed: W. Galv--(1)19,R; (2)17,0; (3)26,H
Kite, Mississippi: Sharpstown--(1)9,SW; Freeport--(2)5,D; Edith Moore--(1)9,13,A; Crabb Rd.--(2)7,C
Hawk, Sharp-shinned: Chambers Co.--(2)19,R; Winnie--(1)21,SC; W.Galv--(2)17,0; Bellaire--(1)18-30,J
Hawk, Cooper's: W. Galv--(1)17,V
Hawk, Red-tailed: Fort Bend Co.--(1)7,J; Algoa--(1)18,DW; W.Galv--(1) 17,V
Hawk, Red-shouldered: 9 reports (1-3)
Hawk, Broad-winged: Houston--(2)16,(1)17,WC; (1)13,16,27,A; (1000+) 21,MA,Paul Jones; White Park--(1200)19,R; Winnie--(1)11,17,18,SC; High Island--(2)12,SC; Arcola--(1)27,S; Bolivar--(1)10,G; Northshore--(250)20,CB
Hawk, Swainson's: W. Harris Co.--(1)12,D; Freeport--(1)27,S
Hawk, Marsh: Chambers Co.--(5)19,R,SC,D; (2)12,SC; (2)20,KW; W.Galv--(1)8,K; (3)17,V; Bolivar--(1)28,E; (1)19,N
Osprey: W. Galv--(1)19,R,N; Winnie--(1)18,SC; Armand Bayou--(2)26,RP
Falcon, Peregrine: Sabine Pass--(1)23,Tom Stehn; McFaddin Marsh--(1) 24, Tom Stehn
Merlin: Anahuac NWR--(1)19,SC; Houston--(1)14,SW; W.Harris Co.--(1) 15,E
Kestrel, American: Houston--(1)10,WC; (1)20,27,S; (1)24,RP; Chambers Co.--(1)19,R,D; (1)20,KW; Winnie--(1)10,(2)19,SC; W.Harris Co.--(1) 18,E; Freeport--(2)27,S; Bolivar--(1)26,N; (2)10,G; (1)27,P; Manvel--(3)all month
Bobwhite: 8 reports (1-9)
Rail, King: 4 reports (1)
Rail, Clapper: 7 reports (1-8)

Gallinule, Purple: Anahuac--(1)12,SC; (3)19,R,SC; (1)10,G
Gallinule, Common: 9 reports (1-40)
Coot, American: Chambers Co.--(3)6,SC; W. Galv--(1)8,K; Freeport--(20)27,S; Anahuac NWR--(35)20,KW
Oystercatcher, American: Bolivar--(4)12,CS; (1)25,B; (3)27,P; W. Galv--(1)19,R,D
Plover, Semipalmated: Bolivar--(500)12,CS; 9 other reports (1-10)
Plover, Piping: Bolivar--(300)12,CS; 13 other reports (1-40)
Plover, Snowy: Bolivar--(4)19,R; (2)28,E; (4)10,G
Plover, Wilson's: 5 reports (1-4)
Killdeer: 16 reports (1-30)
Plover, Black-bellied: Bolivar--(300)12,CS; 13 other reports (1-50)
Turnstone, Ruddy: Bolivar--(150)12,CS; 11 other reports (1-20)
Snipe, Common: Freeport--(1)27,S
Curlew, Long-billed: 9 reports (1-10)
Sandpiper, Spotted: 6 reports (1-2)
Sandpiper, Solitary: Chambers Co.--(1)6,SC; Crabb Rd.--(1)7,C
Willet: 17 reports (2-45)
Yellowlegs, Greater: 11 reports (1-8)
Yellowlegs, Lesser: 8 reports (1-50)
Knot, Red: Bolivar--(150)12,CS; (4)10,G; 4 other reports (1-50)
Sandpiper, Pectoral: 3 reports (2-50)
Sandpiper, Least: 8 reports (1-215)
Dunlin: Bolivar--(5)12,CS; (2)19,D; (4)25,B; (25)28,E
Dowitcher, Short-billed: 3 reports (4-100)
Dowitcher, Long-billed: 6 reports (3-100)
dowitcher spp.: 5 reports (6-300)
Sandpiper, Semipalmated: Bolivar--(3000)12,CS; 3 other reports (1-20)
Sandpiper, Western: 13 reports (4-800)
Sandpiper, Buff-breasted: Chambers Co.--(2)6,SC
Godwit, Marbled: Bolivar--(26)19,R,D,N; (6)12,CS; (3)25,B; (3)10,G; (25)27,P; (4)20,KW; Galv--(4)8,K; (1)17,V; (2)19,M
Sanderling: 12 reports (8-250)
Avocet, American: 5 reports (1-40)
Stilt, Black-necked: 11 reports (1-30)
Phalarope, Wilson's: Chambers Co.--(18)6,SC
Gull, Herring: Bolivar--(4)19,R; (2)12,CS; (8)28,E; (2)27,N,P(1)10,G; (8)20,KW; Freeport--(1)27,S
Gull, Ring-billed: Bolivar--(10)19,R; (25)12,CS; (10)25,B; (3)28,E; (1)19,N; (10)10,G; (35)27,P; Freeport--(4)5,D; (35)27,S; Galv--(30)19,M
Gull, Laughing: 15 reports (2-2000)
Tern, Gull-billed: 4 reports (2)
Tern, Forster's: 10 reports (1-250)
Tern, Common: Bolivar--(1)19,R; (2)28,E
Tern, Least: Bolivar Flats--(1)19,N; (4)10,G
Tern, Royal: 13 reports (6-2000)
Tern, Sandwich: 8 reports (6-200)
Tern, Caspian: 11 reports (1-30)
Tern, Black: 6 reports (3-50)
Skimmer, Black: 13 reports (1-250)
Dove, Rock: 6 reports (2-60)
Dove, White-winged: 3 reports (3-5), all in Galveston
Dove, Mourning: 18 reports (2-80)
Dove, Ground: W. Galv--(2)17,V
Dove, Inca: 9 reports (1-50)
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: 13 reports (1-4)
Owl, Barn: Bolivar--(1)19,R
Owl, Screech: Yard--(2)all month,JM
Owl, Barred: Fort Bend Co.--(2)7,J; Deussen Park--(3)1,SW; W. Harris Co.--(1-3)all month,E; Freeport--(2)27,S
Chuck-will's-widow: High Island--(2)19,R; (2)27,RP; W. Galv--(1)17,V; (1)26,H; White Oak Bayou--(1)13,WC; Crabb Rd.--(1)7,C
Nighthawk, Common: 6 reports (1-5)
Swift, Chimney: 14 reports (1-50)
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: 18 reports (1-25)
Hummingbird, Rufous: Winnie--(1)9,SC; Algoa--(1 ad. Male)13-29,(1-2 imm.)13-29,DW; Bolivar--(1)26,N
Kingfisher, Belted: 12 reports (1-5)
Flicker, Common (Yellow-shafted): Chambers Co.--(2)19,R; Houston--(1)

21,29,A; (1)19,Penny Cureton; (1)27,WC; Pasadena--(1)30,RP
Woodpecker, Pileated: 7 reports (1-6)
Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 9 reports (1-8)
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: Crabb Rd.--(1)7,C...needs Notes
Woodpecker, Red-headed: Chambers Co.--(12)19,R; Deussen Park--(5)1, SW; W. Harris Co.--(2)12,D; Edith Moore--(1)8,A
Woodpecker, Downy: 8 reports (1-4)
Kingbird, Eastern: 17 reports (1-92)
Kingbird, Western: Galv--(1)8,K; (1)17,V; (1)18,H; Bolivar--(1)10,G; Anahuac NWR--(1)20,KW
Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: 16 reports (1-55)
Flycatcher, Great Crested: 10 reports (1-3)
Flycatcher, Acadian: High Island--(1)19,R; W. Galv--(1)17,V...how identified?
Empidonax spp.: Manor Lake--(1)7,J; Houston--(1)3,17-20,26; (1)21,A; High Island--(3)12, (2)19,SC; Anahuac--(1)19,SC; Freeport--(2)5,D; (1)27,S
Pewee, Eastern: White Oak Bayou--(1)7,26,27,WC; High Island--(3)19,R, SC; Humble--(1)19,SW; Galv--(1)8,K;(1)17,V; (1)28,H; Crabb Rd.--(1) 7,C
Flycatcher, Olive-sided: White Oak Bayou--(1)10,20,26,WC; High Island--(1)19,R
Flycatcher, Vermilion: W. Galv--(1)19,R; Memorial--(1)23,24,JM
Lark, Horned: Bolivar--(2)19,R,N; (1)25,B; (2)10,G
Swallow, Tree: 5 reports (2-100)
Swallow, Bank: Chambers Co.--(15)6,(20)12,(4)19,SC; Mouth of Brazos--(2)7,C; Galena Park--(5)2,RP
Swallow, Rough-winged: Brazoria Co.--(4)7,J; Anahuac NWR--(50)19,R,SC; Chambers Co.--(6)6,SC
Swallow, Barn: 13 reports (3-150)
Swallow, Cliff: Anahuac NWR--(4)19,R,SC; (2)12,SC; (4)10,G; Chambers Co.--(2)16,SC
Martin, Purple: White Oak Bayou--(5)3,(6)12,WC; High Island--(3)12, SC; Anahuac NWR--(1)19,SC
Jay, Blue: 9 reports (1-20)
Crow, Common: 10 reports (1-60)
Chickadee, Carolina: 6 reports (3-15)
Titmouse, Tufted: 6 reports (1-20)
Nuthatch, Brown-headed: Lake Charlotte--(2)19,R; Yard--(2)21,JM
Wren, House: White Oak Bayou--(1)19,WC
Wren, Carolina: 8 reports (1-15)
Wren, Marsh: Chambers Co.--(1)6,SC
Mockingbird, Northern: 13 reports (1-30)
Catbird, Gray: White Oak Bayou--(1)13,WC; High Island--(16)19,R,SC; Anahuac NWR--(1)19,SC; Galv--(1)19,M; Bolivar--(2)27,RP
Thrasher, Brown: Bolivar--(30)19,R,SC; (10)27,P; Anahuac NWR--(1)19, SC; Houston--(6)18,WC; (1)21,29,A; (1)24,S; Algoa--(1)25,DW; Galv--(1)19,M; (2)21,H; Armand Bayou--(3)26,RP
Robin, American: Irvington Blvd.--(2)all month,Glenn Cureton
Thrush, Wood: White Oak Bayou--(1-4, including 2 fledglings)all month, WC
Thrush, Swainson's: White Oak Bayou--(1)19,20,WC...see notes; Anahuac NWR--(1)19,SC...needs notes
Bluebird, Eastern: Chambers Co.--(1)19,R; Deussen Park--(7)1,SW
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 16 reports (1-15)
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: Manor Lake--(1)7,J...needs notes; Chambers Co.--(1)19,D...needs notes; Bolivar--(2)27,RP
Shrike, Loggerhead: 13 reports (1-40)
Starling: 15 reports (4-600)
Vireo, White-eyed: 3 reports (1-6)
Vireo, Yellow-throated: Chambers Co.--(1)19,R
Vireo, Solitary: High Island--(1)19,R...needs notes
Vireo, Red-eyed: High Island--(1)19,R,SC
Vireo, Warbling: White Oak Bayou--(2)20,WC
Warbler, Black-and-white: Bolivar--(20)19,R; High Island--(25)19,SC; (1)10,G; Galv--(1)8,K; (2)21,H; White Oak Bayou--(1)18,WC
Warbler, Prothonotary: Fort Bend Co.--(1)7,J
Warbler, Blue-winged: High Island--(2)19,R,SC
Warbler, Nashville: Houston--(1)27,WC; (1)30,MA; (4)29,A; High Island--

(2)19,SC; Galv--(1)8,K; (1)18,H
Warbler, Yellow: Galena Park--(1)2,RP
Warbler, Magnolia: Edith Moore--(1)29,A; High Island--(1)27,P
WARBLER, TOWNSEND'S: Bolivar--(1)25-27,B,P...see notes
Warbler, Black-throated Green: White Park--(1)19,R; High Island--(1) 19,SC; Bolivar--(1)25,B
Warbler, Blackburnian: Bolivar--(1)27,P
Warbler, Pine: 1 report (20)
Warbler, Prairie: Freeport--(1)5,D; Yard--(1)28,MA; Anahuac NWR--(1) 10,G
WARBLER, PALM: White Oak Bayou--(2)10,WC...see notes
Ovenbird: High Island--(2)19,R
Yellowthroat, Common: 7 reports (1-3)
Chat, Yellow-breasted: White Oak Bayou--(1)3,7,19,WC; High Island--(1)19,R; (1)10,G; Algoa--(1)19,DW; Galv--(1)18,H
Warbler, Wilson's: Houston--(1)9-12,20,26,WC; (2)29,A; High Island--(2)19,R,SC; (1)27,RP; Freeport--(2)27,S; Bolivar--(1)27,P
Warbler, Canada: High Island--(25)19,R,SC; (2)12,SC; (2)10,G; Galv--(1)18,H; Houston--(1)29,A; Freeport--(1)27,S; Bolivar--(1)27,RP; Armand Bayou--(1)26,RP
Redstart, American: High Island--(1)19,R,SC; Galv--(1)18,H; Houston--(1)29,A; Bolivar--(1)27,P
Sparrow, House: 9 reports (1-90)
Meadowlark, Eastern: 10 reports (1-8)
Blackbird, Red-winged: 10 reports (10-3500)
Oriole, Baltimore: White Oak Bayou--(5)7,(3)16,(6)19,(1)26,WC; Chambers Co.--(190)19,R; High Island--(40)19,SC; (1)10,G; Freeport--(1) 5,D; W. Galv--(4)17,V; Crabb Rd.--(1)7,C
Grackle, Boat-tailed: 6 reports (5-50)
Grackle, Great-tailed: 10 reports (1-50)
Grackle, Common: 5 reports (1-100)
Cowbird, Brown-headed: 8 reports (1-400)
Tanager, Summer: Hale Ranch--(2)7,J; Deussen Park--(2)1,SW; Edith Moore--(2)29,A; White Oak Bayou--(1)2,WC
Cardinal: 11 reports (1-20)
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted: Humble--(1)20,SW
Grosbeak, Blue: White Oak Bayou--(1)17,18,WC; High Island--(1)19,R; W. Harris Co.--(1)12,D
Bunting, Indigo: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)7,J; Houston--(1)10,(2)17,(3)25,WC; (1)29,A; High Island--(1)19,SC
Sparrow, Savannah: Anahuac Rfg--(1)19,R...needs notes
Sparrow, Lark: Winnie--(1)11,SC
Sparrow, Seaside: Bolivar--(1)19,N; (2)27,RP

Clearing House Contributors - September, 1981: A-Houston Audubon Society;B-John and Jane Hamilton, members of Inland Bird Banders Association;C-Robert A. Behrstock and Mary Ann Chapman;CB-Charles Browning; CS-Colin Summerhayes;D-Don and Lee Richardson, Gil and Linda Douglas, Craig Sims;DW-Diane Wise;E-Dick and Vesta Eshbaugh;G-Robert A. Behrstock, Edward S. Gruson;H-John and Jane Hamilton;J-Paul and Margaret Jones;JM-Jim Morgan;K-John and Jane Hamilton, Carolyn Killian, Faye Humphrey;KW-Kris Wilson;M-Jane Hamilton, Allen Mueller, Martha Micks; MA-Margaret Anderson;N-North Harris County College birding class, led by Gary and Randy Clark;P-Randy Pinkston and Greg Lasley;R-Linda Roach and Ben Feltner;RP-Randy Pinkston;S-Ena Spalding, John Bargman;SC-Steve Calver;SW-Steve Williams;W-Bob and Edith Willman;WC-Wesley Cureton

Field Notes - September 1981

House Wren: tiny uniformly pale brown wren very near the ground in brush patch. Gave the familiar rapid scolding noise. Earliest sighting at White Oak Bayou.

Wesley Cureton

Swainson's Thrush: smaller than Wood Thrushes I had been seeing in the same area. Head and back were dull brown. I did not see the color of the tail, but it did not flick, as a Hermit Thrush's often does. The breast was a dingy off-white with a brown flecking that gave the upper breast a buffy look. The area around the eye was also very buffy. The small size, pale color, and buffy face would distinguish this bird from the four other possible thrushes. The next morning it was singing weakly. The first fall sighting at White Oak Bayou.

Wesley Cureton

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER: A group of 10 from the Inland Bird Bander's meeting were with us. We all examined the bird for 30 minutes in clear sun light as close as 10 feet. He seemed to be a typical winter Townsend's--medium bright yellow through chest area, strong black streaks on side, mottled striping across upper chest, medium dark yellow around auriculars and towards rear, black patch around eye on cheek, under eye lid clearly yellow, white wing bars, back dark. My binocs are Leitz 7X35. Jane and John Hamilton and Roger Clapp from Natural History Museum, Wash.,D.C.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (Dendroica townsendi): Rediscovered in an oak at Johnson's Place on Bolivar Peninsula by Ellen Red and Polly Moore at about 9:30 a.m. on 27 September 1981. I rushed over and soon found the bird. A description of its physical appearance follows: size of Black-throated Green Warbler; upperparts suggestive of Black-throated Green including two distinct white wing-bars; large cheek patch, including a marginal area outside the auriculars, very dark green appearing blackish in poor light (this cheek patch is the diagnostic mark for Townsend's in my experience); distinct yellow from chin to lower breast (margin of yellow 1-2 cm anterior to origin of legs); belly and crissum white; sparse dark streaks from bend of wing down sides; very sparse dark smudges across chest, with no suggestion of the bold black area on a spring male's dress; rectrices with extensive white marking: on outer rectrix, outer web all dark, inner web all white except for dark along the anteromedial margin; legs black. I watched it a total of 10-15 minutes on moss-covered branches (3-5" diameter), as it foraged. I saw it catch and eat one small moth. It stayed mostly from 10-20' up in the canopy, sometimes down to 8'. Black-throated Green Warbler can be eliminated without doubt because of our bird's broad dark cheek patch and yellow underparts. The species which should present the most confusion is the female Blackburnian Warbler. Unbelievably, we were lucky enough to observe a female Blackburnian foraging 3-5' from this individual for at least half the observation period. It had a decidedly paler (browner) and thinner cheek patch and more "orangey" underparts. I have considerable experience with Townsend's Warbler in the western U.S. and western Mexico, and ample experience with the other species mentioned here in Texas. My optical equipment was 10 X 50 binoculars, light conditions excellent to poor. Other observers included Greg Lasley and Dr. David Ferry (who photographed the bird).

Randy Pinkston

PALM WARBLER: not seen to complete satisfaction, but both birds were very brown on upper parts, except for a light rump and faint wingbars. The underparts were light. The throat was bright yellow, and the spectacle was a paler yellow. The underside of the tail feathers had a black and white pattern, and the crissum was a rich yellow. On the flank was a faint gray shading, not exactly what you would call streaks. Flicked the tail. Seems to be the earliest sighting.

Wesley Cureton

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RED-BILLED QUELEA or SUDAN DIOCH (Quelea quelea) -- SPECIAL "THAT'S INCREDIBLE" REPORT

by Tony Gallucci

Halfway through an otherwise fine day of birding (15 August 1981), Jim Morgan, Linda Roach, Randy Pinkston, and I came upon the Sun Oil Fields, whereupon Jim and I were beseeched to relocate Prairie Warblers for Randy and Linda (we had them there Aug. 1). Instead Jim stumbled upon a dickcissel sized bird the likes of which none of us had ever seen previously. In proportion, it most closely resembled the Bobolink of our familiarity; stubby-tailed, heavy-bodied and thick-billed. The bird was in impeccably brilliant plumage as though just recently molted. The face was red and black; scarlet rather which extended from the forehead around the eye and down onto the lower breast. The black mask, began at the top of the bill circling around the eye and down onto the throat. The bill, very stout, seemed most reminiscent

of the larger ground finches of the Galapagos. It was waxy in texture and brilliant cherry red. The belly was orange buffy; the back streaked and salmon colored. The tail was short and dark, the legs bright coral. Field sketches were made by Linda Roach. We worked over the field guides when we got back and the characters listed above plus Linda's sketches eliminated all but the Red-billed Quelea of northeast and central Africa.

Two possibilities (plausible anyway) exist. The bird might be an escape - although it had none of the classic signs of such - worn, spotted, or broken plumage, etc., although if recently molted as this bird looked then that would account for such - it still lacked marks or scratches on the bill or long claws. It was rather tame, though, we approached within 4 feet or so before it flushed.

It might also be ship-assisted. Its occurring so close to Galveston Bay Shipping Lanes and the Intracoastal canal is intriguing. It does occur in oil producing countries and might easily occur near ports. It is incredibly abundant in its range (comparable to the Red-winged Blackbird here). It is interesting that at Sun it was feeding avidly and efficiently in a huisache bush - and acacia - virtually the same as its food plant of east Africa.

I checked with the Houston Zoo and they reported never having any but said the bird is obtainable in the trade.

Make what you will of this - it probably wouldn't have attracted much attention had we found it in Hermann Park or Bellaire, etc., but there was something eerie about seeing it so far from anywhere.

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MORE NEWS ON THE KEMAH-SEABROOK MYSTERY GULL

Dr. Keith Arnold wrote Dr. Joseph R. Jehl, Jr., of the Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute in San Diego, California, on March 11, 1981. He enclosed five slides of the Kemah gull and asked for an unequivocal identification. Dr. Jehl's comment was "Guy McCaskie and I agree that this is Larus marinus (Great Black-backed Gull). It certainly is not a Western or Lesser Black-back."

Dr. Arnold received another letter from Robert F. Andrle, Curator, Division of Vertebrate Zoology, at the Buffalo Museum of Science in Buffalo, New York. His reply was:

"As to your Seabrook and Kemah bird, based on the photographs (which, of course, may not always show true color), in my opinion, it is a Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus). Following are my reasons and comments. Although I don't have dates, I presume it occurred in winter.

1) Mantle color (slaty black) is correct for this species. I possibly detect some brownish in the mantle, which often occurs in a bird of this age - apparently fourth year non-nuptial plumage.

2) Its bill size, color and pattern are correct also, and the terminal black often occurs in such individuals. We see them here frequently at that stage. The bill appears fairly large and stout to me, although perhaps proportionately not as long as in some individuals on the average.

3) The head appears to have a slight amount of winter streaking, which also is characteristic of this species.

4) The outer primary appears to be white-tipped with no "mirror", again, a character which occurs in many but not all Great Black-backed Gulls.

5) Although it is difficult to judge, it looks to me as if the bird is on the small side but at least as large and probably slightly larger than nearby Herring Gulls, at least in body bulk. Great Black-backed Gulls in my experience vary considerably in size. We see small individuals frequently, some approaching Herring Gull size. These are probably females, which your bird likely is.

6)Your bird's mantle color is not correct for the race (L. fuscus graellsii) of the Lesser Black-backed Gull that so far has been identified in this country. The race L. f. fuscus does have a mantle color about the same as Great Black-backed Gull, however. But your bird's overall size and bill size and shape are not correct for L. fuscus of either race. Lesser Black-backs also do not usually have the white-tipped first primary and the small amount of head streaking that your bird shows. Of course, its leg color is wrong for Lesser Black-backed Gull of this age.

7)I think that your bird's mantle is too dark for the darker-mantled race of Western Gull. Also, Western does not normally have a white-tipped first primary. The southern Great Black-backed (L. dominicanus) has greenish-yellow legs. I do not see that your bird can be any other species but L. marinus, and it does not appear to me to have any characters that might be attributable to hybridism."

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Last but certainly not least, I'd like to announce that OG member Don Richardson of Houston has volunteered to be publisher of THE SPOONBILL. Don is a welcomed addition to the staff, and I'm sure his efforts will be greatly appreciated in the months ahead.-Ed.

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