



THE SPOONBILL

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

COMING EVENTS

Visitors are always welcome at OG meetings and field trips. SPOONBILL subscribers are especially urged to attend OG functions.

On all UTC field trips remember to bring lunch, insect repellent and sack for aluminum litter.

- Saturday
Jan. 13 OG field trip to W. Harris County, including Bear Creek Park. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in front of small white church on Hwy 6 just north of I-10. Remember to car pool if possible.
- Saturday
Jan. 20 HAS Beginning Birding Trip to Cooling Ponds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Rest Area on I-10 just east of San Jacinto River. David Dauphin, leader, says if the temperature is less than 37° don't bother to come, there would be too much fog and mist on the ponds to see any birds!
- Thursday
Jan. 25 SPOONBILL deadline for articles, announcements, etc. Readers' contributions to these pages make your newsletter interesting. If you have been thinking of sending in an item, but haven't yet done so, now would be a good time. We would like to hear from some of our out-of-state subscribers too.
- Sat. & Sun.
Jan. 27-28 ONC field trip to the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, sponsored by the OG. Camping will be a joyful experience if you wish to spend the week-end instead of just a day. If you camp, you may do so Friday and/or Saturday nights. Do remember to bring your own water as well as food, for there is no electricity or water at the Sanctuary. Plan on enjoying winter birding at our Sanctuary (Mary Tigner, the warden, knows three places to find woodcocks). If you need directions, call Marian Taylor, 665-8809, or Kay Lewis, 523-9347.
- Thursday
Feb. 1 OG meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 So. Braeswood Blvd. will feature John Tveten, noted nature photographer, author and lecturer. The subject of Tveten's talk will be the nesting habits and practices of birds.
- Saturday
Feb. 3 Deadline for Clearing House January observations.
- Wednesday
Feb. 7 Photography Group regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 So. Braeswood Blvd. will have a program presented by Dennis Caputo. Dennis, an OG new member and an accomplished photographer, was the sharp-eyed observer who first saw and called David Dauphin's attention to the visitor of the year, the Varied Thrush. His program will be on National Parks of the Southwest.
- Tuesday
Feb. 13 ONC meeting, 8:00 p.m., Garden Center in Hermann Park.

Future trips to plan for now:

Merlin Birding Tours is offering three mini-tours to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, led by the Valley expert, John Arvin, and covering Brownsville-King Ranch, Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, Roma, Falcon Dam area. Each tourlet is limited to a small number of participants, assuring you of maximum attention from the leaders, Arvin and Feltner. The dates are March 9-11, March 16-18, or March 23-25. Write Merlin Birding Tours, Box 19687 for further details.

NEWS OF AN ILL FRIEND

We have just learned that Wesley Brannon, our genial host of Smith's Woods, suffered a severe illness with attendant serious operation last November. Kathleen Brannon reported January 6 that Wes is doing better, is in a nursing home, but she has hopes of bringing him home sometime in the future. I know all readers of the SPOONBILL who have ever birded Smith's Woods and enjoyed conversations with the Brannons join in wishing Wesley a complete recovery. A friendly card to Wes should be addressed to him at Box 1013, High Island, Texas 77623

A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION from Tony Gallucci

Tony, our dynamic young speaker at the January meeting, needs our help. He says: "I am compiling a review of recent records and observations of albinistic (total and partial) and melanistic birds in Texas. I would appreciate information concerning any birds with plumage color abnormalities. The paper will be published." Send any information you can contribute to: Tony Gallucci, P.O. Box SR-6381, Alpine, Texas 79830.

REGARDING THOSE DUES

Your dues or subscriptions were due January 1. If, during the Christmas rush, you failed to attend to this, please take a moment to do so right now. We can mail the SPOONBILL under the bulk rate of 2.7 cents per copy only when 200 or more are mailed at the same time. When payment is late, and the member's name has been removed from the mailing list, any desired missed copies cost 20 cents to mail. (It also costs 20 cents when a change of address is not sent in, and the Post Office has to return a copy to us). So please, when you know you are going to renew, save the OG money and send your payment in promptly.

ORNITHOLOGY GROUP REGULAR MEETING, Minutes, December 7, 1978

Chairman Ted Eubanks called the December 7 meeting of the Ornithology Group to order at 7:30 p.m. Mailing Chairman Maxine Davis reported that the group is now mailing over 400 SPOONBILLS a month. Maxine also asked members to report any address changes as soon as possible so the group can avoid the expense of re-mailing. Resource Chairman Avis Brister displayed the new library bookcart to the group. This cart was purchased with funds from the Exxon grant. The library will be housed at Bayou Manor, and will be available to the membership at each meeting. To check out a book, Avis says: write your name on the card in the pouch on the back cover of the book; next write the name of the following month under the column titled "Date Due". Members should clearly understand that they are liable for the books while in their possession. Avis also reported that the Junior Education Committee of the ONC will sponsor a contest for junior members and children of ONC members. The object will be to produce a nature project of any sort that will interest the child. The contest ends May 1. David Dauphin made a motion that the OG provide as a second prize in the contest a copy of Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds of Texas. The motion carried. Treasurer Mary Gillette reported that as of the first of November the OG had a balance on hand of \$2359.94. With income of \$248, and \$84 in expenses, the OG as of the first of December had a balance on hand of \$2524.32. Mary also noted that after the purchase of the tapes of Peterson's birdsong records, and the acquisition of the bookcart, the OG has around \$350 left of the Exxon grant. Rare Bird Alert Chairman David Dauphin reported that a Bahama Pintail, described by Dauphin as a "zoo-bird looking duck", had been observed at the Laguna Atascosa NWR. Directions to the exact location of the bird can be obtained from refuge personnel. Field Trip Chairman Jim Morgan reported that the Connecticut Warbler seen on the September 16 OG trip to High Island has apparently been accepted by the TOS Records Committee as the first documented record of the bird for Texas. He also reported that the OG would go to The Cinco Ranch on December 9. Publicity Chairman Gladys Galbreath asked that members hearing or seeing notices of upcoming OG meetings in the media report them to her. Chairman Eubanks noted that January 27 & 28 will be a birding weekend at the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, and he urged members to attend. The various Christmas Count compilers reported on their respective counts, including Paul Nimmons on Houston (12/16), Ted Eubanks on Freeport (12/17), and David Dauphin on Galveston (12/23). Registrar Wes Cureton reported that over 100 members were in attendance. Program Chairman Bob Moulton announced the upcoming January program, which will be Tony Gallucci speaking on McKittrick Canyon. Chairman Eubanks reported that Ben Feltner is presently working on the final armpatch design, and it should be in production soon. The Chairman also reminded members that as of January 1, dues are due! Jim Morgan, head of the Nominating Committee, presented the Committee's recommendations for the 1978-79 OG officers. The following slate was proposed: Chairman--Ted Eubanks; Vice-Chairman--Wesley Cureton; Secretary--Janet Eubanks; Treasurer--Mary Gillette. A motion was made that the slate be accepted as proposed,

and was accepted unanimously by the membership. Chairman Eubanks then turned the meeting over to Seminar Chairman Jack Gillette, who introduced the evening's speaker, Victor Emanuel. Victor spoke on the identification problems associated with the raptors, and was aided in his presentation by slides from the Hawk Migration Association. The program was entertaining and informative, and thoroughly enjoyed by all. After the meeting, Paul Nimmons showed slides taken by Marilyn Crane of birds to be expected on the Houston Christmas Count. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Eubanks

ORNITHOLOGY GROUP REGULAR MEETING, Minutes, January 4, 1979

Chairman Eubanks called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. A motion was made that the Chairman dispense with the reading of the Minutes from the December meeting since they will be published in the January SPOONBILL. The motion carried. Treasurer Mary Gillette reported that as of the first of December the OG had a balance on hand of \$2524.32. With December income of \$229.61, and expenses of \$296.51, the OG had as of December 31 a balance on hand of \$2457.42. SPOONBILL Editor Margaret Jones urged members to contribute to the "Learning Corner" feature of the SPOONBILL. Clearing House Editor Paul Jones reported that the December Clearing House would contain 248 species. Chairman Eubanks said the group was in need of members to help with the mailing of the SPOONBILL. Those interested should contact either Margaret Jones or Maxine Davis. Resource Chairman Avis Brister reported that slides are still needed for the OG slide library. Avis also noted that the library had recently acquired two new books: The History of American Ornithology Before Audubon, and A Birdwatcher's Guide to Wildlife Sanctuaries. Rare Bird Alert Chairman David Dauphin reported on the rarities in the area, including Varied Thrush and Ash-throated Flycatcher on Bolivar Peninsula, Red-necked Grebes at the HL&P Cooling Ponds and the Quintana Jetties, and Golden Eagles and Oldsquaw in West Harris Co. Aluminum Chairman Jerry Baker reported income of \$32 from Aluminum sales the past month. Chairman Eubanks reminded members that the ONC would host an open house and birding weekend at the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary on January 27 & 28, and he urged OG members to attend. Chairman Eubanks reported that the Freeport Christmas Count had 123 observers and 216 species, and the Galveston Count had 58 observers and 162 species. Houston Christmas Count compiler Paul Nimmons reported that the Houston Count had 127 observers and 177 species. Registrar Wes Cureton reported that over 130 members and guests were present at the evening's meeting. Chairman Eubanks reported that the February 1 OG meeting would present Dr. John Tveten, noted nature photographer, author and lecturer. Tveten will speak on the nesting habits of birds. Tveten presented a copy of his new children's book on nesting to the OG library. The Chairman asked that all interested chairmen submit to him by May 1st a report of their respective OG activities during the preceding year, and any suggestions they may have as to the improvement of the group. Mary Gillette, on behalf of the OG, presented SPOONBILL Editor Margaret Jones a copy of Pough's A Field Guide to the Western Birds in appreciation of her ceaseless efforts in the publishing of the OG newsletter. Melba Drake reported that Sarah Gordon had been the subject of an Exxon television interview concerning the Houston Christmas Count. Chairman Eubanks then introduced the evening's speaker, Tony Gallucci. Gallucci, presently completing his master's degree in ornithology at Sul Ross University, showed two films, one about the function and importance of water in the desert and the other concerning the Aplomado Falcon. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Eubanks.

PLACES TO GO

As you will see when you read the Clearing House and Field Notes, W. Harris County or habitat similar to that area, will be productive. With W. Harris County harboring Golden and Bald Eagles, Ross' Geese among the thousands of Snows and Blues, it isn't surprising an Oldsquaw popped up on the Cypress Creek Christmas Count.

Longspurs will be seen in that area until the end of January, if past appearances hold true. Quoting from the January SPOONBILL of 1977: "...look for a loose flock that will rise, fly, wheel, and turn with a flash of white bellies, then as they get close to the ground, will drop all at once. Shorebirds, and there are some out there, fly in tight flocks, and never very high as they wheel over a wet field, and blackbirds are much less disciplined in their flocks, and, of course, never flash that white."

The Varied Thrush hopefully will stay around for awhile (the one seen in 1965 stayed two months). So far, Sun Oil has not objected to birders entering their property in search of this bird, who is staying in a large Hackberry grove. Complete directions may be gotten from David Dauphin or the editor.

TOTALS	SPECIES												
	1977	1978	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
370	458	Canvasback	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4855	4230	Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	-	-	458	-	-	-	-	-
35	7	Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	-	660	7	3500	11	50	2
90	92	Bufflehead	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	4	-
-	1	White-winged Scotter	-	-	-	-	5	47	-	20	-	12	8
367	327	Ruddy Duck	-	-	-	-	-	102	-	50	8	167	-
561	5	Red-breasted Duck sp.	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	-
61	200	Turkey Vulture	63	24	22	19	5	650	-	-	-	8	-
-	50	Black Vulture	24	1	1	9	12	35	1	8	18	15	16
11	7	White-tailed Kite	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
11	4	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
6	5	Cooper's Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	Accipiter sp.	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	-
100	260	Red-tailed Hawk	91	21	13	20	10	50	8	8	15	20	8
1	1	Red-tailed Hawk (Harlan's)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	36	Red-shoudered Hawk	7	1	1	2	3	8	1	-	5	4	4
49	122	Marsh Hawk	30	25	5	7	3	29	5	3	8	7	-
1	3	Osprey	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
-	2	Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	1	Merlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
137	153	American Kestrel	7	19	6	13	7	38	7	9	1	11	6
-	112	Hawk sp.	-	112	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	-
56	92	Bobwhite	26	-	17	24	1	5	11	-	5	3	-
3	19	King Rail	8	2	-	1	1	1	6	-	1	1	-
6	7	Clapper Rail	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	2	-	-
2	4	Virginia Rail	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-
-	2	Sora	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
2	8	Common Gallinule	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	1	1	-
162	345	American Coot	-	-	5	-	-	15	-	301	10	14	-
707	1041	Killdeer	107	21	58	62	30	310	75	30	200	91	57
16	13	Black-bellied Plover	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	4	4	3	-
-	5	Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	1	-
3	18	American Woodcock	7	-	-	1	1	1	3	-	3	1	-
18	14	Common Snipe	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
-	23	Long-billed Curlew	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
53	47	Spotted Sandpiper	2	1	2	-	10	5	1	6	4	9	7
42	53	Willet	-	-	-	-	2	17	4	6	10	8	6

TOTALS		SPECIES	AREAS:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1977	1978													
37	229	Greater Yellowlegs		3	-	6	-	1	3	-	-	200	16	-
38	536	Lesser Yellowlegs		22	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	501	9	-
15	3	Least Sandpiper		-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-	10	-	-
53	53	Dunlin		-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	18	25	-
50	16	Short-billed Dowitcher		-	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	-
6	6	Long-billed Dowitcher		-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
181	570	Dowitcher sp.		-	-	-	-	6	8	-	-	500	56	-
229	37	Semipalmated Sandpiper		-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	35	-
151	614	Western Sandpiper		-	-	-	-	-	4	400	-	10	100	100
105	123	Sanderling		-	-	-	-	-	30	3	-	-	90	-
-	65	peep sp.		-	-	-	-	5	60	-	-	-	-	-
265	161	American Avocet		-	-	-	-	-	-	36	-	14	111	-
90	72	Herring Gull		-	-	2	-	2	3	1	6	14	4	40
2800	1500	Ring-billed Gull		-	15	186	-	100	200	60	75	300	670	150
2750	5000	Laughing Gull		-	-	66	4	500	200	50	417	3500	853	600
34	11	Bonaparte's Gull		-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	5	2	-
500	61	gull sp.		1	-	-	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-
890	145	Forster's Tern		-	-	7	-	15	34	10	20	11	17	31
198	8	Common Tern		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	3
180	107	Royal Tern		-	-	26	-	8	13	2	9	12	3	34
110	115	Caspian Tern		-	-	6	-	20	24	13	13	2	16	21
-	1	Black Tern		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
-	1	Black Skimmer		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
231	276	Rock Dove		-	2	73	16	30	19	3	31	40	60	2
550	949	Mourning Dove		59	58	52	66	20	260	100	24	100	209	1
3	2	Ground Dove		-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	4	Inca Dove		-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	9	Groove-billed Ani		1	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	2	-
8	9	Barn Owl		2	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	3	2	-
19	23	Screech Owl		2	-	1	1	2	1	5	-	8	3	-
4	3	Great Horned Owl		2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
7	9	Barred Owl		3	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	3	1	-
-	1	Short-eared Owl		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
-	1	Anna's Hummingbird		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
-	1	Rufous Hummingbird		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
88	67	Belted Kingfisher		6	3	9	3	5	6	4	6	15	4	6
118	138	Common Flicker (Vel.-sh.)		28	6	8	41	10	8	16	9	5	6	1
20	46	Pileated Woodpecker		30	6	-	5	3	5	2	-	-	1	-
48	101	Red-bellied Woodpecker		31	1	7	11	5	7	2	13	6	18	-

TOTALS	SPECIES		AREAS:										
	1977	1978	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
40	47	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	13	2	6	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	15	Downy Woodpecker	3	2	2	-	3	-	4	3	11	2	-
74	54	Eastern Phoebe	20	1	1	-	5	1	8	1	6	1	-
1	45	Tree Swallow	-	6	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	32	-
197	271	Blue Jay	13	17	34	17	40	32	6	17	50	45	-
190	236	Common Crow	54	27	13	22	40	7	6	35	4	25	-
3	1	Fish Crow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
163	393	Carolina Chickadee	175	35	2	93	3	12	17	11	12	43	-
40	79	Tufted Titmouse	22	4	-	25	-	2	-	12	1	13	-
2	8	Brown Creeper	1	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	-
33	76	House Wren	21	2	2	5	11	1	9	-	21	4	-
8	6	Winter Wren	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	2	-
51	153	Carolina Wren	41	10	8	16	6	7	14	6	3	42	-
5	18	Long-billed Marsh Wren	-	4	-	1	5	1	7	-	3	2	-
22	132	Short-billed Marsh Wren	34	4	-	22	4	1	1	1	46	16	-
304	569	Mockingbird	31	54	29	84	50	150	24	28	50	66	3
10	31	Gray Catbird	-	-	2	1	-	15	6	6	2	4	-
123	167	Brown Thrasher	13	3	4	5	30	16	22	6	38	30	-
223	940	American Robin	34	-	5	651	20	40	34	1	53	102	-
-	3	Wood Thrush	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
15	21	Hermit Thrush	5	-	-	2	10	-	-	3	1	-	-
26	32	Eastern Bluebird	27	-	-	2	6	-	3	-	-	15	-
103	183	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	53	-	2	3	6	4	25	-	75	1	-
7	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
309	513	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	104	3	19	85	75	35	30	35	52	77	-
106	176	Water Pipit	5	-	24	6	10	2	10	-	-	119	-
2	3	Sprague's Pipit	-	-	-	3	-	-	5	-	-	23	-
148	83	Cedar Waxwing	4	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	10	23	-
302	342	Loggerhead Shrike	21	30	31	66	15	49	25	14	38	44	9
1042	1350	Starling	346	11	405	257	50	66	11	50	98	50	9
3	10	White-eyed Vireo	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	3	4	1	-
2	26	Solitary Vireo	4	-	-	1	10	-	1	3	5	2	-
-	1	Tennessee Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	19	-
63	76	Orange-crowned Warbler	17	-	2	5	2	3	6	3	3	19	-
896	1908	Nashville Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-
2	4	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) W.	378	26	-	284	125	100	-	50	144	563	-
35	1	Black-throated Green Warbler	-	-	-	15	-	-	167	-	1	-	-
	45	Pine Warbler	27	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-

TOTALS		AREAS:										
1977	1978	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
5	3	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
13	55	7	1	-	33	-	-	1	1	3	-	-
-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	6	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
328	500	160	16	80	15	75	7	7	7	93	40	-
63	262	57	35	43	50	2	15	8	2	26	24	-
278	345	200	40	-	8	-	-	39	-	50	8	-
14,000	11,500	2310	3300	250	3500	40	2	20	43	270	1980	5
77	850	-	-	-	150	-	-	-	-	-	700	-
1	13	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	3	-	-
43	120	-	-	13	2	25	1	-	7	40	32	-
6000	738	149	21	74	327	25	15	1	7	65	61	-
10,200	1145	90	10	12	4	30	190	430	15	254	110	-
12,000	17,300	2500	5000	-	3000	-	1000	-	6	-	5800	30
371	521	105	38	22	32	35	47	79	15	90	57	1
66	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-
24	12	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	10	-	-	-
611	711	166	27	30	67	125	83	104	7	59	43	-
3	10	1	-	-	3	-	1	1	7	4	-	-
173	248	70	8	45	46	1	-	42	-	19	17	-
1	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	26	13	-	-	-	-	1	10	-	-	2	-
2	8	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	-	-	-	-
2	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
33	6	-	-	-	1	-	2	3	-	11	-	-
21	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
99	80	12	60	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
25	23	16	4	-	1	2	-	-	-	3	3	-
1	5	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
52	18	5	-	3	2	-	-	3	2	1	2	-
627	1462	273	24	37	90	30	59	138	28	503	280	-
5	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	1	-
70	64	4	4	1	13	6	-	11	1	12	12	-
140	281	111	-	6	61	20	-	2	3	16	62	-
46	30	6	-	2	9	5	-	2	-	4	2	-
TOTAL SPECIES BY AREA		89	61	84	74	96	107	103	77	134	119	41

Count totals for individuals reflect Compiler's adjustment of possible over-lapping area sightings.

SPECIES	COMPARISON WITH PRIOR YEARS			AREAS: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11																			
	YEAR	INDIVIDUALS	OBSERVERS																				
o 160	1970	200,619	55	68	60	62	51	73	95	58	74	77	106										
o 156	1971	54,320	57	87	58	68	54	77	106	62	70	73	89										
o 158	1972	61,802	59	87	58	68	54	77	106	62	70	73	89										
o 144+3	1973	94,944	63	60	52	53	36	62	103	61	62	64	86										
o 163+1	1974	176,900	77	53	68	43	91	109	83	79	66	70	86										
o 170+1	1975	209,200	99	72	69	56	74	100	120	85	82	70	116										
o 173+2	1976	120,288	123	74	69	79	70	106	122	101	100	99	112										
o 183+2	1977	73,449	130	84	63	61	72	109	97	100	62	132	122										
o 177+2	1978	77,719	127	89	61	84	74	96	107	103	77	134	119										

[In area 10]

1978 CHRISTMAS COUNT WRAP-UPS

Houston: The Houston CC had another successful year. The weather was balmy and the birding company was great. We hope those of our members who missed this count can join us for the next. The 127 who did come saw 177 different species of birds, the third highest total ever for the Houston Christmas Count.

The most exciting discoveries were Red-necked grebe, White-winged Scoter and Tennessee Warbler. These birds had not been seen on any of the eight preceding counts (1970-1977--the only years checked). Seven species had been seen only once in the preceding eight years: White-tailed Kite (7) (One seen in 1977). These birds are making an onslaught on the upper Texas coast and are being seen in good numbers on most of the Christmas counts of this area); Peregrine falcon (2) (One seen in 1976); Merlin (1977); Black tern (1973); Short-eared owl (1971); Anna's hummingbird (1975) and Yellow-breasted chat (1973).

We saw every species that can be hoped for except Red-throated loon, American bittern, Semi-palmated plover, Gull-billed tern, Rusty blackbird, Black headed grosbeak and Henslow's sparrow. None of these birds are seen every year, and when they are seen, they are usually in small numbers. If you did not make the count, perhaps you can join us next year to find the missing birds. If you were on the count, look up your area in the chart and compare it with the other areas. You may be surprised to learn that you saw a bird seen by very few others on the count, or even that you saw an exclusive bird. --Paul W. Nimmons, Jr., Compiler

Freeport: This Christmas Count, by any standards, was an unqualified success. Good weather, a mild winter and a large number of observers made this year's Count the second highest in its history. A total of 123 birders participated in the 1978 Count, eclipsing the previous high of 114. An outstanding 216 species were recorded during the day, tying the 1975 Count for the next to highest total. Among the more outstanding species seen were Red-necked Grebe, Oldsquaw, Black Scoter, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Say's Phoebe and Curve-billed Thrasher. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the day's birding was the extremely high number of raptors. An astounding 18 species of raptors (plus 1 form), and an incredible 1,685 individuals were recorded during the day. A note of thanks should be extended to Dow Chemical Company at Freeport for the hospitality and warm friendship they extended at the countdown dinner they hosted after the Count. --Ted Eubanks, Jr.

Galveston: The Galveston Christmas Count, after a decade-long absence, returned to the fold on December 23 with a record number of birders observing

a count-high total of species. Fifty-eight observers birded east Galveston Island, the southwestern tip of Bolivar Peninsula, Texas City and the intervening areas to tally 162 species, eclipsing the previous count high of 156 by six species. Among the more noteworthy species seen were two red-throated Loons off the Texas city dike, seven White-tailed Kites (not seen previously), and a Buff-bellied Hummingbird observed by Wes Cureton, et al, feeding on shrimp plant in a Galveston yard (no feeder bird, this one!). With such an enthusiastic response, it looks as though the Galveston Christmas Count has returned to stay! --Ted Eubanks, Jr.

Cypress Creek: In its third year of miserable weather this count still managed to hit a new high of 132 species. The 3-year composite total of over 160 species shows the "good-weather" potential of this count. Northern woodland birds are low as they have been on previous counts--i.e. Junco, Chippies, Purple Finch, Pine Warbler, etc. Best bird of the count was a male Oldsquaw found on a private tank. Other good birds were Henslow's Sparrow, Gulls, Terns, Rough-legged Hawk, 2 (maybe 3) Golden Eagles, Caracara, 16 Bald Eagles, 120,000 Geese, including Ross' Geese, Catbird, Blue-winged Teal, swallow species. --Tony Gallucci

Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR: During perfect weather on December 22, the Attwater Count was attended by 24 observers, many of which are OG members. With more observers than usual, and the good weather, Wayne Shifflet (compiler) had his best count with 153 species seen. Along with the area specialties of Prairie Chicken, White-tailed Hawk, and Caracara, several other good birds were seen, most notably Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Wild Turkey, and possibly 3 Bell's Vireos. The Tait Ranch area produced most of the wintering woodland species and three lingering (or wintering) warbler species....Black-and-white, Nashville, and a surprisingly beautiful adult Pine Warbler. As usual, this was a most enjoyable count and one that is highly recommended for OG members and others to attend in future years. --Jim Morgan

Old River: With 141 species + 1 form reported by 24 observers this count has yet to achieve its true potential. With varied habitat, including Arlie MacKay's Cove area, Lake Charlotte, Trinity and Old River marshes, as well as woodlands, this count seems to need only more participants to make it an outstanding one. Red-breasted nuthatches, Baltimore Oriole, Yellow-throated Vireo and Rough-winged Swallow were among species reported. Numbers were down, perhaps due to extremely dry conditions. Local trappers and hunters feel the growing popularity of the sport of air-boating and the joy-riding, ill-considered use of them is partly responsible for the absence of ducks and other waterfowl from usual haunts in areas above and below the Trinity River bridge at I-10. --Jonelle Buckels and T. Paul Jones

Bolivar: Approximately 37 observers reported 152 species on this count; two of the observers being the fortunate Dennis Caputo and David Dauphin who found THE bird of the UTC Christmas Counts, in fact, THE bird of the year: the Varied Thrush. Otherwise, dry conditions seemed to limit numbers of waterfowl at Anahuac and other places, with numbers of individuals of many species down. --David Dauphin

CLEARING HOUSE, December, 1978

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made in the six counties comprising the upper Texas coast: Jefferson, Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Ft. Bend, and Brazoria. How to read the CH: Species: Location--(how many) date, observers. Those common species which can be readily identified and are widely distributed in the UTC will also be listed, followed by number of reports, with lowest and highest numbers seen in parentheses, i.e. (1-42). If any of these species is reported in unusual habitat or numbers that will be noted separately.

Loon, Common: Galveston--(66)2,G, (2)30,TE,DD; Baytown--(5)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(6)17,F; Cooling Ponds--(1)18,m.ob.

Loon, Red-throated: Galveston--(2)23,G

GREBE, RED-NECKED: Cooling Ponds--(1)16,H(David Marrack), 18, m.ob.; Quintana Jetty--(1)17,DC,DD(Freeport CC-see notes)

Grebe, Horned: Baytown--(6)16,H; Cooling Ponds--(14)18,m.ob.; Galveston--(5)23,G

Grebe, Eared: 8 reports (2-356)

Grebe, Pied-billed: 13 reports (2-129)

Pelican, White: 11 reports (1-860)

PELICAN, BROWN: Galveston--(4)23,G

Cormorant, Double-crested: 15 reports (1-630)

Cormorant, Olivaceous: Maner Lake--(7)2,PM; Baytown--(44)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(45)17,F; Galveston--(5)23,G; Bolivar--(1)29,WC; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C

Anhinga: 6 reports (1-19)

Heron, Great Blue: 18 reports (1-429)

Heron, Green: Baytown--(3)16,H; Freeport--(2)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G; Cove--(1)28,J Houston--(1)28,PM (Westbury)

Heron, Little Blue: 10 reports (1-49)
 Egret, Cattle: 15 reports (1-199)
 Egret, Reddish: Brazoria Co.--(5)10,TE, (9)17,F; Baytown--(2)16,H; Galveston--(15)23,G
 Egret, Great: 18 reports (1-393)
 Egret, Snowy: 14 reports (2-314)
 Heron, Louisiana: 11 reports (1-76)
 Night Heron, Black-crowned: Brazoria Co.--(200)10,TE, (236)17,F, (2)27,FC,TG; Baytown--(37)16,H; Galveston--(262)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(9)Jan.1,C
 Night Heron, Yellow-crowned: Baytown--(12)16,H; Freeport--(21)17,F; Galveston--(60)23,G
 Bittern, American: Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(1)31,MA
 Ibis, White-faced: 7 reports (1-1776)
 Ibis, White: Center Point--(1)2,WC; Brazoria Co.--(2)10,M, (5)10,TE, (760)17,F, (12)27,FC,TG; Galveston--(154)23,G, (1)29,B&EW; Cove--(8)28,J; Bolivar--(5)30,DD,TE.
 Spoonbill, Roseate: Seabrook--(1)2,WC; Baytown--(39)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(28)17,F; Galveston--(90)23,G, (10)30,DD,TE; Cove--(2)28,J; Hitchcock--(3)29,B&EW
 Goose, Canada: Baytown--(63)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(970)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(350)21,25,TG, (100)23,JEy, (1560)Jan.1,C
 Goose, White-fronted: 9 reports (10-5758)
 Goose, Snow: W.Harris Co.--(15,000)3,JEy (see notes); 15 additional reports (200-83,990, including many "blue" morphs)
 Goose, Ross': Freeport--(3)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(1)21,25,TG, (4)Jan.1,C
 Whistling Duck, Black-bellied: W.Harris Co.--(24)21,TG
 Mallard: 10 reports (5-4,500)
 Duck, Mottled: 7 reports (2-1280)
 Duck, Gadwall: 10 reports (2-2800)
 Pintail: 14 reports (1-7687)
 Teal, Green-winged: 11 reports (46-16,115)
 Teal, Blue-winged: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,TE, (85)17,F; Baytown--(20)16,H; Galveston--(26)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(18)21,TG, (1)Jan.1,C
 Teal, Cinnamon: Freeport--(2)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(4)21,TG
 Wigeon, American: 10 reports (6-2500)
 Shoveler, Northern: 15 reports (2-8602)
 Duck, Wood: Ft. Bend Co.--(3)11,TG; Baytown--(13)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(52)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(1)21,TG, (12)Jan.1,C
 Redhead: Baytown--(5)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(4)17,F, (25)27,TG,FC; Galveston--(1)23,G
 Duck, Ring-necked: Baytown--(2)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(5)17,F; Cooling Ponds--(20)18,m.ob.; W.Harris Co.--(14)23,JEy, (4)Jan.1,C
 Canvasback: Brazoria Co.--(5)10,M, (256)17,F, (100)27,TG,FC; Cooling Ponds--(458)16,H, (3)18,m.ob.; Galveston--(5)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
 Scaup, Greater: Freeport--(5)17,F
 Scaup, Lesser: 11 reports (1-4230)
 Goldeneye, Common: Cooling Ponds--(7)16,H, (4)18,m.ob.; Galveston--(10)23,G
 Bufflehead: Cooling Ponds--(92)16,H, (24)18,m.ob.; Brazoria Co.--(4)17,F; Galveston--(7)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
 Oldsquaw: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
 Scoter, White-winged: Cooling Ponds--(1)16,H
 Scoter, Common: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Duck, Ruddy: 12 reports (1-920)
 Merganser, Hooded: Brazoria Co.--(12)17,F, (1)27,FC,TG; Houston--(4)19,WC (Mercury Dr.)
 Merganser, Red-breasted: Baytown--(5)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(56)17,F, (7)27,FC,TG; Cooling Ponds--(1)18,m.ob.; Galveston--(99)23,G, (2)29,B&EW, (10)30,DD,TE.
 Vulture, Turkey: 13 reports (3-346)
 Vulture, Black: 8 reports (2-241)
 Kite-White-tailed: Baytown--(3)2,JMo, (7)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(1)2,PM, (1)10,M, (3)10,TE, (44)17,F, (3)27,FC,TG; Cedar Point--(1)2,WC, W.Harris Co.--(1)9,J&MG; Galveston--(7)23,G; Houston--(1)23,MA (Astrodome)
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: Baytown--(4)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(10)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(1)24,TG, (1)Jan.1,C; Cove--(1)28,J; Houston--(1)30,B
 Hawk, Cooper's: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,M, (1)10,TE, (10)17,F; Baytown--(5)16,H; Houston--(1)30,B
 Hawk, Red-tailed: 20 reports (2-261); 5 additional reports--*Krideri* (1-6); 4 additional reports--*Harlan* (1-2)
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: 8 reports (1-102)
 Hawk, Swainson's: Freeport--(1)17,F
 Hawk, White-tailed: Freeport--(2)17,F; Ellington AFB--(1)30,A (prior reports)
 Hawk, Rough-legged: Freeport--(3)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(1)21,TG (see notes), (1)Jan.1,C
 Hawk, Ferruginous: Freeport--(2)17,F
 Eagle, Golden: W.Harris Co.--(1 imm.), 28,WM (see notes); (1 ad.-1 imm.)Jan.1,C

Eagle, Bald: Freeport--(1)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(1 ad.-8 imm.)23,JEy, (3 Imm.)25,TG, (2 ad.-6 imm.)28,WM, (6 ad.-10 imm.)Jan.1,C
Hawk, Marsh: 19 reports (2-254)
Osprey: Baytown--(3)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(3)17,F
Caracara: W.Harris Co.--(1)15,TG, (1)Jan.1,C; Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
Falcon, Peregrine: Baytown--(2)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G
Merlin: Baytown--(1)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(1)21,TG (see notes); Galveston--(2)23,G
Kestrel, American: 19 reports (5-261)
Bobwhite: 13 reports (1-556)
Crane, Sandhill: W.Harris Co.--(1,000)9,OG, (4)Jan.1,C; Brazoria Co.--(13)10,M, (459)17,F; Galveston--(6)23,G
Rail, King: Baytown--(1)2,JMO, (19)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(6)17,F; Galveston--(5)23,G; Bolivar--(1)30,P&MJ
Rail, Clapper: Baytown--(7)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(23)17,F; Galveston--(49)23,G, (2)30,DD,TE
Rail, Virginia: Baytown--(4)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(3)17,F; Galveston--(3)23,G
Sora: Baytown--(2)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G
Gallinule, Common: Baytown--(8)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(5)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G
Coot, American: 10 reports (2-1623)
Oystercatcher, American: Galveston--(21)23,G, (2)30,DD,TE; Bolivar--(1)29,WC
Plover, Semipalmated: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,TE, (78)17,F; Galveston--(63)23,G; Bolivar--(10)30,DD,TE
Plover, Piping: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,TE, (6)17,F; Galveston--(65)23,G; Bolivar--(4)29,WC, (2)30,DD,TE
Plover, Snowy: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,TE, (3)17,F; Galveston--(8)23,G; Bolivar--(4)29,WC
Plover, Wilson's: Galveston--(6)23,G
Killdeer: 19 reports (10-1579)
Plover, Blackbellied: Baytown--(13)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(50)10,TE, (146)17,F; Galveston--(244)23,G, (50)30,DD,TE
Turnstone, Ruddy: Baytown--(5)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(8)17,F, (10)27,TG,FC; Galveston--(243)23,G, (5)30,DD,TE
Woodcock, American: W.Harris Co.--(2)9,OG, (6)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(18)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(26)17,F; Bolivar--(5)30,DD,TE
Snipe, Common: 11 reports (1-160)
Curlew, Long-billed: 14 reports (1-148)
Sandpiper, Spotted: 8 reports (1-47)
Willet: 7 reports (4-414)
Yellowlegs, Greater: 11 reports (3-229)
Yellowlegs, Lesser: 7 reports (6-536)
Knot, Red: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,TE, (20)17,F; Galveston--(7)23,G, (3)30,DD,TE
Sandpiper, Least: 7 reports (5-364)
Dunlin: 6 reports (2-914)
Dowitcher, Short-billed: Texas City--(6)2,WC; Brazoria Co.--(30)10,TE, (104)17,F; Baytown--(16)16,H; Galveston--(19)23,G, (2)30,DD,TE
Dowitcher, Long-billed: Baytown--(6)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(543)17,F; Galveston--(42)23,G, (2)30,DD,TE; W.Harris Co.--(10)Jan.1,C
Dowitcher, species: 6 reports (1-1082)
Sandpiper, Stilt: Houston--(32)2,JMO (Mercury Dr.-previously reported)
Sandpiper, Semipalmated: Baytown--(37)16,H
Sandpiper, Western: 8 reports (5-775)
Sandpiper, *Ereunetes* species: Brazoria Co.--(4)17,F; Galveston--(5052)23,G
Godwit, Marbled: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F; Galveston--(16)23,G; Bolivar--(1)29,WC
Sanderling: 7 reports (1-510)
Avocet, American: 5 reports (20-525)
Stilt, Black-necked: Bolivar--(1)29,WC (see notes); Houston--(4)30,B
Gull, Herring: 8 reports (2-1151)
Gull, Ring-billed: 11 reports (4-5,000)
Gull, Laughing: 9 reports (6-7,895)
Gull, Bonaparte's: Baytown--(11)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(40)17,F, (15)27,FC,TG; Galveston--(80)23,G; Bolivar--(50)30,DD,TE; W.Harris Co.--(2)Jan.1,C
Tern, Gull-billed: Brazoria Co.--(6)17,F; Galveston--(3)23,G
Tern, Forster's: 9 reports (1-365)
Tern, Common: Baytown--(8)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(10)17,F, (1)27,FC,TG; Galveston--(15)23,G
Tern, Royal: 7 reports (1-250)
Tern, Sandwich: Freeport--(3)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G
Tern, Caspian: 8 reports (2-153)
TERN, BLACK: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,TE (see notes); Baytown--(1)16,H; Texas City--(1)31,JCG, Joyce Brannon (see notes)
Skimmer, Black: Baytown--(1)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(3)17,F; Galveston--(755)23,G

- Dove, Rock: 15 reports (1-1,213)
Dove, White-winged: Galveston--(13)23,G
Dove, Mourning: 16 reports (6-1,326)
DOVE, RINGED TURTLE: Bellaire--(2)9,PJ (Prior reports); Houston--(1)28,Ted Eubanks, Sr. (near Campbell Road & I-10 West), (1)30,B
Dove, Ground: Baytown--(2)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(10)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(6)Jan.1,C
Dove, Inca: 7 reports (1-102)
Ani, Groove-billed: Baytown--(9)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(24)17,F; Galveston--(4)23,G
Owl, Barn: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,M, (1)17,F; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)11,TG; Baytown--(9)16,H; Galveston--(4)23,G; Cove--(1)28,J; Houston--(1)30,B; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
Owl, Screech: Baytown--(23)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(4)17,F; Cove--(1)28,J; Houston--(1)30,B; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
Owl, Great Horned: Baytown--(3)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(14)17,F; W.Harris Co.--(2)Jan.1,C
Owl, Burrowing: Houston--(1)30,B
Owl, Barred: Ft.Bend Co.--(1)11,TG; Baytown--(9)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(44)17,F; Houston--(3)30,B; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
Owl, Short-eared: Baytown--(1)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(6)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(1)15,21,TG, (2)Jan.1,C
SWIFT, CHAETURA species: Houston--(3)1,6,NP (M&M Bldg.--see notes)
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: Freeport--(3)17,F
Hummingbird, Black-chinned: Freeport--(1)17,F
HUMMINGBIRD, ANNA'S: Baytown--(1)16,H
HUMMINGBIRD, BROAD-TAILED: Freeport--(1)17,F
Hummingbird, Rufous: Algoa--(2)1,16,17, (1-Selasphorus sp.)all month,DW; Baytown--(1)16,H; Freeport--(20)(2-Selasphorus sp.)17,F; Houston--(1-Selasphorus sp.)1-10,27,30,GC (yard), (5)30,B
HUMMINGBIRD, BUFF-BELLIED: Freeport--(1)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G, (1)29,WC (same bird as on Christmas Count)
Kingfisher, Belted: 15 reports (1-67)
Flicker, Common: 11 reports (1-138)
Woodpecker, Pileated: 5 reports (1-60)
Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 10 reports (1-122)
Woodpecker, Red-headed: Baytown--(1)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: 10 reports (1-51)
Woodpecker, Hairy: Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F
Kingbird, Eastern: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: Houston--(25)17,John Perry (fide Jane Dodge--see notes)
FLYCATCHER, ASH-THROATED: Bolivar--(1)30,DD,TE (see notes)
Phoebe, Eastern: 12 reports (1-163)
PHOEBE, SAY'S: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
Flycatcher, Empidonax: Galveston--(1)23,G
Flycatcher, Vermilion: Brazoria Co.--(2)10,M, (9)17,F
Lark, Horned: Brazoria Co.--(47)17,F; Bolivar--(2)30,TE,DD; Galveston--(66)23,G; W.Harris Co.--(3)Jan.1,C
Swallow, Tree: Baytown--(45)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(7)17,F; Galveston--(3)23,G; Cove--(5)28,J; Bolivar--(2)30,DD,TE
Swallow, Barn: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
Jay, Blue: 15 reports (1-271)
Crow, Common: 17 reports (3-575)
Crow, Fish: Baytown--(1)16,H
Chickadee, Carolina: 12 reports (1-393)
Titmouse, Tufted: 10 reports (1-388)
Nuthatch, Red-breasted: Houston--(2)30,B
Creeper, Brown: W.Harris Co.--(1)9,OG, (1)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(8)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(10)17,F; Houston--(14)30,B
Wren, House: 10 reports (1-76)
Wren, Winter: Brazoria Co.--(3)10,TE, (16)17,F; Baytown--(6)16,H; Galveston--(4)23,G
Wren, Carolina: 10 reports (1-157)
Wren, Long-billed Marsh: Baytown--(18)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(15)17,F; Galveston--(31)23,G
Wren, Sedge (Short-billed Marsh): W.Harris Co.--(2)3,JEy, (1)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(132)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(32)17,H; Galveston--(68)23,G, (2)30,DD,TE; Cove--(1)28,J
Mockingbird: 19 reports (2-569)
Catbird, Gray: Galveston--(1)2,WC, (10)23,G; Baytown--(31)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(5)17,F; Cove--(2)28,J; Houston--(3)30,B; W.Harris Co.--(2)Jan.1,C
Thrasher, Brown: 14 reports (1-192)
THRASHER, CURVE-BILLED: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
Robin, American: 16 reports (1-12,001)
THRUSH, VARIOUS: Gilchrist--(1)27-Jan.3,DC,DD,m.ob. (see notes)
Thrush, Wood: Baytown--(3)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G

Thrush, Hermit: 7 reports (1-28)
 Thrush, Swainson's: Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F
 Bluebird, Eastern: W.Harris Co.--(10)9,OG; Baytown--(32)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(4)17,H
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 10 reports (3-514)
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: Baytown--(2)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F; Houston--(7)30,B;
 W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 14 reports (1-513)
 Pipit, Water: 11 reports (2-242)
 Pipit, Sprague's: Baytown--(3)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G; W.
 Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
 Waxwing, Cedar: 8 reports (10-135)
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 19 reports (1-368)
 Starling: 17 reports (12-4,419)
 Vireo, White-eyed: Baytown--(10)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(9)17,F; Cove--(1)28,J; Houston
 --(5)30,B
 Vireo, Solitary: 7 reports (1-56)
 Warbler, Black-and-white: Brazoria Co.--(5)17,F; Houston--(1)30,B
 Warbler, Tennessee: Baytown--(1)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: 9 reports (2-170)
 Warbler, Nashville: Baytown--(4)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Warbler, Yellow: Brazoria Co.--(3)17,F
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped: 19 reports (3-399) plus 1 Audubon's
 Warbler, Black-throated Green: Baytown--(1)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Warbler, Yellow-throated: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Warbler, Bay-breasted: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Warbler, Pine: Baytown--(45)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(7)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G; Hous-
 ton--(52)30,B
 Warbler, Palm: Brazoria Co.--(1)10,M, (17)17,F; Baytown--(3)16,H; Galveston--(5)23,G
 Overbird: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Waterthrush, Northern: Brazoria Co.--(2, + 2 *Seiurus* sp.)17,F
 Warbler, *Oporornis* sp.: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Yellowthroat, Common: 7 reports (1-158)
 Chat- Yellow-breasted: Baytown--(1)16,H
 Warbler, Wilson's: Baytown--(6)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(22)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G;
 Houston--(1)30,B
 Redstart, American: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Sparrow, House: 19 reports (2-1,510)
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 12 reports (1-889)
 Meadowlark, Western: Brazoria Co.--(2)17,F
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 15 reports (15-11,500)
 Oriole, Northern (Baltimore): Brazoria Co.--(3)17,F; Cove--(1)28,J (see notes)
 Blackbird, Rusty: Brazoria Co.--(10)17,F; Houston--(99)30,B; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.1,C
 Blackbird, Brewer's: 9 reports (3-850)
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: Galveston--(10)23,G; Baytown--(13)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(6)17,
 F, (15)27,FC,TG; Galveston--(10)23,G; Bolivar--(2)29,FC,TG
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 14 reports (1-2,139)
 Grackle, Common: 11 reports (20-2,000)
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 14 reports (50-405,715)
 Cowbird, Bronzed: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F; Galveston--(3)23,G
 blackbirds: Brazoria Co.--(20 million)FC,TG (see notes)
 Tanager, Western: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Cardinal: 15 reports (1-521)
 Grosbeak, Rose-breasted: Lake Jackson--(1)10,NP (see notes)
 Grosbeak, Black-headed: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F
 Bunting, Indigo: Brazoria Co.--(16)17,F; Galveston--(44)23,G
 Finch, Purple: Baytown--(4)16,H; Galveston--(4)23,G
 Siskin, Pine: Baytown--(12)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(6)17,F; Galveston--(1)23,G; W.Harris
 Co.--(2)1Jan.1,C
 Goldfinch, American: 10 reports (5-711)
 Towhee, Rufous-sided: W.Harris Co.--(1)9,OG, (2)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(10)16,H; Brazoria
 Co.--(9)17,F; Houston--(1)30,B; Alcoa--(1)all month, DW
 Sparrow, Savannah: 11 reports (1-815)
 Sparrow, Grasshopper: Baytown--(3)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(3)17,F; Galveston--(6)23,G
 Sparrow, LeConte's: W.Harris Co.--(4)3,JEy, (1)29,CJ, (1)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(26)16,H;
 Brazoria Co.--(36)17,F; Galveston--(16)23,G; Houston--(2)30,B
 Sparrow, Henslow's: Brazoria Co.--(1)17,F; Houston--(1)30,B; W.Harris Co.--(1)Jan.
 1,C
 Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: Baytown--(8)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(4)17,F; Galveston--(19)23,G
 Sparrow, Seaside: Baytown--(13)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(22)17,F; Galveston--(43)23,G;
 Cove--(12)28,J; Bolivar--(1)30,DD,TE
 Sparrow, Vesper: W.Harris Co.--(4)9,OG, (1)21,TG, (125)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(6)16,H;
 Brazoria Co.--(7)17,F; Galveston--(2)23,G; Houston--(2)30,B

Sparrow, Lark: W. Harris Co.--(7)Jan.1,C
 Junco, Dark-eyed (Slate-colored): Baytown--(2)16,H; Brazoria Co.--(10)17,F
 Sparrow, Chipping: Baytown--(1)2,JMo, (80)16,H; Galveston--(10)23,G; Houston--(3)30,
 B; W.Harris Co.--(2)Jan.1,C
 Sparrow, Field: W.Harris Co.--(2)9,OG, (7)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(23)16,H; Brazoria Co.--
 (10)17,F
 Sparrow, Harris': Baytown--(5)16,H; W.Harris Co.--(8)Jan.1,C
 Sparrow, White-crowned: 9 reports (1-34)
 Sparrow, White-throated: 12 reports (3-1,462)
 Sparrow, Fox: W.Harris Co.--(1)9,OG, (1)10,CJ, (34)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(5)16,H; Bra-
 zoria Co.--(2)17,F; Cove--(1)28,J; Houston--(2)30,B
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: 8 reports (4-41)
 Sparrow, Swamp: 11 reports (2-295)
 Sparrow, Song: W.Harris Co.--(2)9,OG, (5)Jan.1,C; Baytown--(30)16,H; Brazoria Co.--
 (83)17,F; Galveston--(20)23,G; Houston--(3)30,B
 Longspur, Lapland: W.Harris Co.--(95)Jan.1,C

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS, December, 1978

MA--Margaret Anderson; DC--Dennis Caputo; FC--Fred Collins; G&WC--Glenn & Wesley
 Cureton; DD--David Dauphin; TE--Ted L. Eubanks, Jr.; JEy--John Eyre; TG--Tony Gallucci
 J&MG--Jack & Mary Gillette; JCG--Janet C. Green; CJ--Charles Jensen; P&MJ--T. Paul
 & Margaret Jones; WM--Bill Meriwether; PM--Peggy Milstead; JMo--Jim Morgan; NP--Noel
 Pettingell; B&EW--Bob & Edith Willman; DW--Diane Wise; A--party of Alma Barrera, Mary
 Ann Chapman & T. Ben Feltner; B--Buffalo Bayou CC; C--Cypress Creek CC; F--Freeport
 CC; G--Galveston CC; H--Houston CC; J--Party of George & Jane Clayton, PJ; M--party
 of TE, JMo, Woody Woodrow; OG--Ornithology Group field trip; m.ob--many observers

CLEARING HOUSE FIELD NOTES, December, 1978

[Comment by CH Ed. -- The compilers of the various area Christmas Counts carefully document or confirm any unusual or accidental species accepted by their counts. Thus the CH Ed. feels it is unnecessary to publish field notes on those species reported. However, the field notes on the Red-necked Grebe at the Quintana Jetty (Freeport CC) by Dennis Caputo and David Dauphin are especially interesting, as well as well-written, so they are being included for the benefit of the SPOONBILL'S readers.]

RED-NECKED GREBE: Location: Quintana Jetty, Freeport, Brazoria Co. Size: Slightly larger than Laughing Gull. Description: This bird was spotted by Dennis Caputo. At near 1300 hours, on 12/17/78, approximately 3/4 east on the Jetty and 30-40 yards south and perpendicular to the Jetty we both observed a Red-necked Grebe. Immediate impression was that it was indeed my most desired UTC bird. This bird remained floating with approximately thirty Laughing Gulls, enabling a good size comparison. Neck height from body to top of head was about nine inches. Body width was about half again as much as gulls, body length was slightly longer. Bird's beak was fine and pointed, but more loon-like than a Western Grebe and considerably shorter. Width of beak at base was somewhat wide. Bill appeared darker at tip and lighter at base, but no color was discernable. Head was very angular when viewed from the side and appeared too large. From the front, head was triangular in appearance. Bird had a large white cheek patch beginning below the eye, extending from back of head to under bill. Bird had a medium dingy gray color on top of head, back of head, back of neck, on back, and on closed wings. Front of neck, breast, sides were a much lighter dingy gray. I observed bird for approximately 2 minutes with 10x50 binocs and approximately 15 minutes with 15-60X telescope used mostly at 40X. I left scope with Dennis and left jetty for about an hour to look for other birders to come see this bird. Upon returning, Dennis had noted that upon rising in the heavy seas, the bird's legs were noted to be quite close to the rear of bird. He also noted large light wing patches in secondaries when bird rose and flapped its wings. He had viewed the bird for over an hour. Dennis' other field marks were the same as mine.

Caputo drew good pictures of the bird showing head shape from front and location of wing patches, and a side view showing body proportions and markings. Notes were read and accepted by FCC committee of Eubanks, Morgan, McHenry, Pettingell, Emanuel.

It should be noted that when Dennis told me he had seen large white wing patches on this bird, I jokingly told him to throw our notes into the Gulf, because I did not think this bird had wingpatches. Not having had a field guide with us, because I had told Dennis we would not need one, we quickly left the jetty for the car to look up the bird and those wingpatches, and I ate a great deal of crow! I was sure glad he had kept those notes (lacking paper, we had written them on a number of Dennis' business cards!) This bird was a lifer for both of us, and again, was my most desired UTC bird. It should also be noted that David Marrack's

Red-necked Grebe of 12/16/78 was seen by m.ob. on 12/18/78 at the HL&P Cooling Ponds.

Because of the location, the Jetty bird may be difficult to find again, but there is an Audubon field trip to HL&P's west Chambers Co. Ponds on January 21st. The Marrack bird may stay until then, because this area is secluded, has a great deal of food supply, and the birds are left alone. --David Dauphin

[The following notes by David Marrack will be of especial interest to those of you who intend going on the Audubon field trip. --Ed.] This grebe first called attention by its upright "stiff neck" and size greater than nearby Horned and Eared grebes. Head held at "sharp" angle to neck and bill thicker than the other grebes. White on head low, all below eye level and seemed 'posterior' on head and reaching under bill with a sharp transition to grey of neck which had little change along its length or front to back. Differed from the wider white-dark grey change across neck of all the other grebes, about 20, present. Also bigger than them. Not Western grebe by size and distribution of white. --David Marrack

Snow Goose: On 3rd, a cold front moved through W. Harris Co. in mid-morning. A cold-weather movement of 15,000 Snow Geese, watched from Clay Road. The geese were flying SW only 20-30 minutes in front of the cold weather, high, and with little indication that they were going to stop! --John Eyre

Rough-legged Hawk: Light phase buteo near Warren Lake--dark head, whitish-buff breast, throat--huge black belly band--no mottling in band--leggings buff color, heavy. Feathering on tarsi not seen. Tail 1/2 and 1/2, base white, broad black terminal band. Underwing whitish with black wrist bands and black forward and trailing end. 25x scope, flare light at 10-100 yards. Also seen with Elstons on Jan. 1, 1979. --Tony Gallucci

Golden Eagle: Seen at Warren Lake along with 8 Bald Eagle, 6 of which were immatures. At one time this immature was sitting on crossarm of power pole with an immature and adult bald eagle, so a direct comparison could be made of the two species. Field marks noted on immature golden: white undertail, white patch in wing, smaller and thinner beak than those of balds. Observer is familiar with both species from prior observations. --Bill Meriwether

Merlin: Female falcon, brown back and tail (with banding), no facial pattern obvious; bigger than kestrel. 30 yards, 7x35 binocs. --Tony Gallucci

Black-necked Stilt: Large shorebird wading in shallow water along Bob's Bait Camp road. Black upper parts, white under parts, long neck, spike beak, and long pink legs. 30x telescope, 30 yards. -- Wesley Cureton

BLACK TERN: Small, dark tern observed feeding over marsh off of hurricane protection levee near Surfside; uniform dark gray mantle, back and tail; black nape and auricular; tail slightly notched; underside white; observed with 20x scope from 100 yards, in excellent light for 5 minutes. --Ted Eubanks, Jr.

Small, dark tern; smaller than nearby Forster's. First spotted feeding with Forster's Terns and Bonaparte's Gulls at the far east end of Texas City Dike. Lost it from view and then found it again sitting on a rock at edge of dike. Approached it within 100 feet. The mantle (wings and back) was a dark slate grey with a brownish tinge on at least the back and folded primaries. Underparts white. Head: white forehead, dark crown and back of head, dark spot posterior to eye on side of head, white nape, small black bill; rest of head plumage white. Dark (brownish slate) mark at shoulder separating flank from side of breast. Wings at rest considerably longer than tail. All observers familiar with this species. --Janet C. Green

Swift, *Chaetura* sp.: On Dec. 1 swifts were seen in vicinity of chimney at 5:23 p.m. and all 3 birds entered chimney at 5:24 (max/min. temp. 79/47) and on Dec. 6 swifts were seen entering chimney at 5:10 p.m. during a brief shower (max./min. temp. 77/52). Site was checked on Dec. 16, 20, and 22 but no swifts were observed on any of the three days. Lowest temperatures prior to departure (?) of swifts were 34 on Dec. 4 and 33 on Dec. 5 (Intercontinental Airport). See additional details in THE SPOONBILL, Dec. 1978, pp. 11, 13, 14. --Noel Pettingell

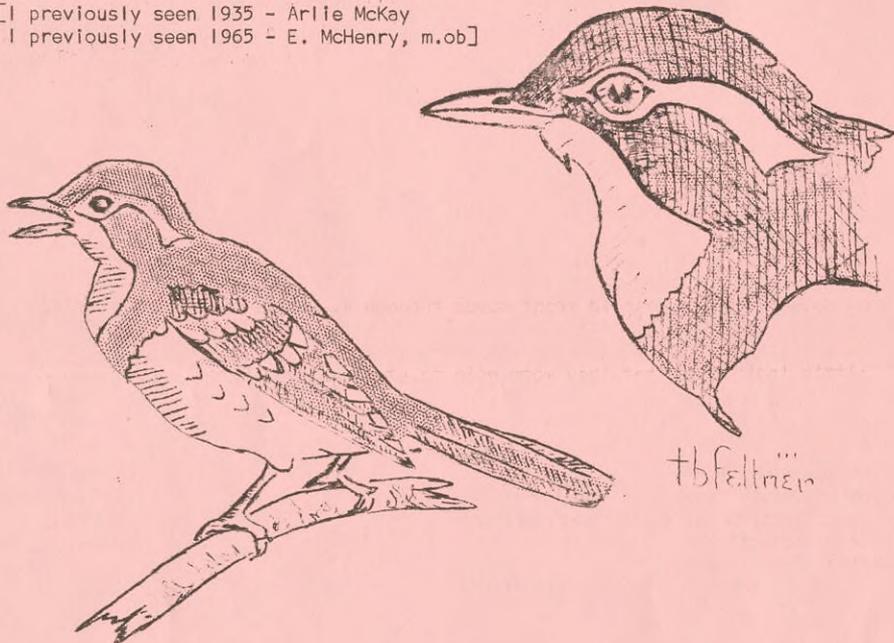
Scissor-tailed flycatcher: Seen from apartment window at 1700 Seaspray, about 8:00 a.m. Flock was flying, scissortails were clearly seen. --John Perry

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER: Small *Myiarchus* observed perched in Hercule's Club tree on the side of a levee near Port Bolivar. White throat and chest; yellowish belly and undertail; brown crown, nape and back; reddish tail, with some brown on feath-

er edgings; bird frequently vocalized a short, high-pitched "prrrt", an Ash-throated call note with which I am familiar; observed with 10x glasses in good light from as close as 30 feet for 20 minutes. --Ted Eubanks, Jr.

VARIED THRUSH:

- [I previously seen 1935 - Arlie McKay
- I previously seen 1965 - E. McHenry, m.ob]



Location: Dry hackberry grove in middle of dry marsh on Bolivar Peninsula at Sun Oil property. Size: Near Robin size. Description: Head, back, wings and tail were steely blue-grey, although head was slightly darker. Bright orange on throat and on eyestripe which extended to back of head. Rusty orange on breast, two wingbars, and on spot below rear wingbar. Some lighter orange spotting in primaries. 1/2 inch wide, almost black, stripe across chest. Belly dingy white. Under tail coverts appeared whiter. Legs pink. Beak dark. Bird had some gray near-vertical streaks on lower flanks that were hard to see. Voice: not heard. Behavior: Much like that of Robin. Scraped leaves on ground with beak while feeding. Somewhat tame until crowded by several birders. Bird would stay on ground half of the time, then fly up into low portion of bare trees, then return to ground. At one point, while I was sitting on ground, the bird approached to within at most six feet. Bird was sighted by Dennis Caputo, then by David Dauphin. We watched bird for about 15 minutes, then Caputo left to find other birders. It was later seen and photographed by Mac Read and Ken Drozd of Orange. [Ed. note: At OG meeting Jan. 4, Dauphin announced that since the Rare Bird Alert went out the night of Dec. 27, 156 people had called to report seeing the bird. He doesn't know how many had seen it but not reported]. Total duration of observation: One and one half hours for Dauphin, thirty minutes for Caputo, twenty minutes each for Read and Drozd. Closest distance: 3-6 feet, average was 25 feet. Light: bright to fair. Time of observation: 1500 hours-1630 hours. 10x50 binocs. --David Dauphin

Additional comments by other observers of Varied Thrush: "Dark tail with white-tipped outer tail feathers; orange spots below orange wingbars"--Paul Nimmons. "Behaved very much like the Aztec Thrush in Arizona (although less tame). Varied held tail higher". --Tony Gallucci

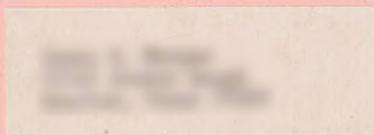
Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*): This female "Baltimore" oriole was first observed by Jane Clayton sitting high in a bare-limbed tree in good light. The overall color was orange. The wings were dark gray or blackish with a large whitish patch in the upper wing. Top of head was grayish with an orange cast to it. The tail was dark orange from below. Bill was black. The belly was of a lighter yellow-orange than the breast color. --Paul Jones

Blackbird sp.: 20,000,000 blackbirds at Maner Lake roost were watched for over an hour. At dark we estimated there may have been as many as 3 birds per cubic foot (roosting in layers in marsh) over perhaps 300 acres. Such a density is equivalent

to 39,204,000 birds. Fred Collins and I are certain the roost is at least 2 1/2 times the size of the "counted" 8 million bird Brazos County roost. We feel 20 million birds is a minimum even if it is a wild guess. We estimated 60% Redwings, 20% Brown-headed Cowbirds, and 20% Grackles, Brewers. --Tony Gallucci

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Send bird records for Clearing House before 3rd of month to: T. Paul Jones, 4902 Fern, Bellaire, Texas 77401	66 -4197
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