



The ***Spoonbill***

September 2000
Volume 49, No 9

October Meeting Program

For the October OG meeting, we will return to our regular meeting place at Bayland Park, and to our regular meeting day, the first Monday which is 2 October 2000. Meeting time is 7:00 PM. "Learning Corner" begins at 6:30.

The program will be presented by Don Richardson on:

"What Makes a Bird a Bird?"

Don has presented this program on several occasions and it is always well received. It was originally created as an Elderhostel program, for groups hosted by Texas A&M at Galveston. Don currently writes a series of articles for "Texas Birds", The Texas Ornithological Society's biannual magazine. The series carries the same name.

Don says "I used to call it 'Ornithology 101' but nobody came. Now I call it 'What Makes a Bird a Bird?' and people seem to love it."

Really though, come to this program and you'll probably go away knowing a lot of neat things about birds that you never thought about before.

September OG Meeting

Pat Pease - Secretary

The Ornithology group met on September 13, 2000 to see and hear a most interesting and informative presentation by Steve Howell on the Birds of Chile. Steve Howell is the author of *A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America*. The presentation was co-sponsored by Houston Audubon Society and was held at the Houston Zoological Gardens. Since this was a joint meeting, no business was done and there were no other items on the agenda for OG.

Announcements

The Learning Corner Coordinator position must be filled so that the Learning Corner can be presented at future meetings. Please contact David Sarkozi to volunteer.

A Clearinghouse Editor is needed. We need a new editor as soon as possible. Contact David Sarkozi about this very important position.

The Aluminum Chairperson has provided revenue for improving the library, paid for top programs and helped the treasury in many other ways. We need this revenue and we need a chairperson to take on that job.

A Spoonbill Editor is much needed. Don Richardson is filling in as a temporary editor but other commitments will not allow him to continue, in that capacity, past the end of 2000. This job is both rewarding and prestigious. Please consider it.

David Sarkozi can be reached at (713) 520-5906 or dsarkozi@flash.net.

Field Trip

David Heincke (Leader)

There will be a field trip on Sunday, October 22, 2000 at 7:15 AM. Meet at Brazos Bend State Park in the Forty Acre Lake parking area. Admission to the park is \$3.00 per person. To find the Forty Acre Lake parking area, enter the park on the only entry road and turn into the parking area on the left just a few hundred yards past the gate. If you see the road begin to curve and pass through some woody oak woods, you have gone too far.

David Heincke, Interpretative Naturalist at Brazos Bend Park, will lead our group. Expect to see birds, butterflies and dragonflies along with David's insights into these and their habitats.

Chairman's Message

David Sarkozi

I was out on Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge doing some volunteer work the other day. This happened to be the opening day of Teal Season and the first day that seemed "cool" to me. It was really starting to seem like fall was finally here.

Lots of teal were up and around, plus two large groups of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks flew over. I saw perhaps a dozen Northern Harriers that day. With the sound of the hunters' shotguns in the background, my thoughts returned to one of the most noble of birdwatching pastimes, the Annual Christmas Bird Counts.

I know this seems early, but they aren't that far away. Now is a great time to figure out what counts you're going to participate in.

Some of the most exciting birding can be had on the more exotic CBC's in Mexico and West Texas. Now is the time to think about doing one of these counts. These counts often will take a greater commitment from you to do, but can be very rewarding. If a Blue-crowned Motmot is on your Christmas Wish List, now is the time to plan for it.

Lots of counts need area leaders. Think about volunteering for one of those. This time can be used to good advantage scouting your area and figuring out what tracts can give you the most birds per hour and it gives you enough time to track down the owners of a piece of property to gain access to new areas.

If you do volunteer to be an area leader, you can use this time to recruit participants to help you. Getting lots of eyes out there in the field is the key to finding those rarities that make CBC's so exciting.

Now is also a great time to start "tuning up" for CBC's. Study all those fall neotropical migrants closely. Get a good feel for those birds that are common fall migrants in drab clothing. Every year some of these birds are found overwintering on the Upper Texas Coast. Spend some time at a Hawk Watch and get comfortable with hawks again. Sparrows will be returning soon and you might want to take some time to study up on them a little. Pick one or two birds and get comfortable with them. When you feel good about those birds maybe you'll have time to study some more groups.

Several weeks before the counts start birding your area. Get intimate with it and its birds. Learn where those special birds are and what places aren't as special anymore. This can save you a lot of time and frustration on count day. Get out and bird with your fellow participants and plan ahead. Be ready on count day to divide and conquer!

Last year we in the OG turned out in the largest group in a decade for the Houston CBC. The numbers reflected it with

the most species reported for the count in ten years. Let's keep working on that and build up even more this year. I know I could have used more help in Area Nine, and I'm sure other area leaders felt the same. The Houston CBC still has some great birds and fun birding; consider being there to find them this year.

Adventures in Chinese Birding

By Stanley (Skip) Almony

© 2000 By the author - Part one of four

Introduction

Over the last five years, I have had the opportunity to visit various parts of China on business. While on these trips I was able to find time to bird watch in a variety of locations. Most of my bird watching was done during free time and often I was traveling with non-birders who did not have the patience to stop and wait for a bird to show itself. Only one trip, to Emei Mountain in September 1999, was really planned as a birding trip. This is a description of some of my experiences trying to bird watch in China.

One overriding aspect of birding in China must be kept in mind. China is not an easy place to find birds. Compared to what we have available on the Gulf Coast of Texas, it might be considered as almost impossible. We are used to looking out our window and seeing tens of birds of maybe 15 different species in a five minute span. In the places I have been in China, seeing 15 different species may take several hours if at all. Only in the more remote areas have I been able to find moderate numbers of birds and species in a reasonably short time.

In early 1996, when I first visited China, I was a novice birder, only having begun birding while working in Sumatra in 1994. On my first trip to the interior of China, I was so ill equipped as a birder that I began taking field notes on whatever writeable surface I had available. The birds were not at all like the birds I had seen previously in the US, or even in Indonesia, and the only field guide I had at the time was King, et al. "Field Guide of Southeast Asia". As a consequence, I saw any number of birds that I could not identify quickly and soon I realized I needed to write a description and hope that upon returning home I might be able to identify the birds. So, on this first trip, I used the small hotel telephone pads to record my bird descriptions as well as the hotel key wallet. I was able to identify many of the birds I saw using this makeshift system, but some I have yet to identify.

When I returned home, I knew there were several tools I needed to help me with my bird identification. First, I needed a field guide for China. After a search, the only identifiable China guide I found was Schoenberg's "The Birds of China". This book certainly was an improvement over King's book, but over time, it also proved to be inadequate. Second, I needed a better system for field notes. As I am not a very good artist and because writing notes in the field took

precious time from observing the birds, I got a mini-cassette tape recorder that has been my companion on most birding trips since then. I simply record the descriptions while watching the birds and later transcribe the notes into chronological birding notes.

April/May 1996 Trips

My first trips in April and May 1996 included stops in Beijing and Chengdu. These two cities were the primary places I visited during my trips. I have birded in both and during side trips from these two major cities. Most everyone knows of Beijing, but many have never heard of Chengdu. It is the capital of Sichuan Province and is located at the base of the Tibetan Plateau on a flat plain surrounded by fields of rice, rape seed (canola) and wheat. The city of approximately three million people is where most people visiting Tibet begin their journey. On my first trip to Chengdu I birded in a small garden on the grounds of the Jin Jiang Hotel and along the river adjacent to the hotel. During this stay, I saw eight species, including the most abundant bird, the Light-vented (or Chinese) Bulbul. These were common and usually in flocks of five to ten, although finding a solitary bird was not uncommon. I saw my first Daurian Redstart in the underbrush and two other species that I would see almost every trip into Sichuan, Magpie Robin and Black-throated Tit.

During the next trip in May I traveled along the mountain front in Western Sichuan. My business took me to Leshan and Ya'an in Southern Sichuan and included a weekend stop in Emei. This first exposure to Emei Shan was not very productive as we did not visit the mountain, but remained in and around Emei City. Fortunately, I was able to return and bird the mountain a few years later. While in this southern portion of Sichuan, I did add new birds to my list including the Spangled Drongo in Leshan and the White-tailed Robin and the Plumbeous Redstart. Following this trip to Ya'an and vicinity, I traveled to Jiangyou, a city some four hours drive north of Chengdu. After two days of business we visited a Buddhist monastery situated on a mountaintop called Doutuanshan. A unique feature of this mountain was a 1000-foot chimney-like erosional peak offset from the main mountain by about 50 feet. The monks had stretched a chain across the abyss and did acrobatic performances on this chain several times a day. The route to the top of the mountain included a chairlift ride followed by a several kilometer walk. As I was traveling with others, including my Chinese hosts, I did not have time to fully observe all the birds I saw, but two new birds did make my list, Mugimaki Flycatcher and Brown-breasted (Anderson's) Bulbul. This seemed to be a good site and I wished I had had more time and freedom to wander around on my own. During these early years there was a definite effort to keep us under close surveillance when we were traveling. Our business visas were actually more restrictive than tourist visas. As the relationship with our hosts grew stronger, this restrictive environment loosened significantly.

In May on my way home, I did my first birding in Hong Kong

and discovered that Kowloon Park provided me with more species in two hours of birding than I normally saw in Chengdu in twice that time. Some species of note on this first trip were nesting Rose-ringed Parakeets, Common Koel and Greater Coucal, a Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike and the Masked Laughingthrush.

Beginning Birding **Your Binoculars, Technical Stuff**

By Don Richardson

Making a good choice when purchasing your binoculars is paramount to your enjoyment of them in the future. We'll try, in this article, to make you aware of some things that are important in making your selection. In the form of a brief overview, you'll see how to be sure you get a sharp, bright, full frame image to look at, how you can comfortably accommodate your eyeglasses if you wear them, and how you can focus the binoculars at objects, close up. You can pay from \$100 to \$3000 for binoculars (and more). There are good choices in all price ranges, and the information here should help you find those good choices.

Here are some terms that describe characteristics of binoculars that affect their performance:

Magnification represents the number of times larger an object will appear in the binoculars than without them.

Aperture is the size of the objective lens (the big front one) and is normally expressed in millimeters.

Brightness is a function of the combination of magnification, aperture and transmittance.

Transmittance measures the efficiency of the glass and reflectors in the instrument. A transmittance of 95% means that 95% of the light gets to your eye and 5% gets reflected away or absorbed by the elements.

Field of view is the width of the view you see. It is usually expressed as width in feet at a distance of 1000 yards. Sometimes it is expressed in degrees. One degree equals about 52 1/2 feet at 1000 yards.

Depth of field describes the depth of the view that is in acceptably sharp focus.

Close focus distance is the distance to the viewed object when the binoculars are focused at their closest possible adjustment.

Eye relief describes the optimal distance between the eyepiece and your eye. Very important to eyeglass users.

Interpupillary distance is the distance between the centers of the two eyepieces.

There are some differences in the engineering and construction of binoculars. The two general types one sees on today's market are either porro prism or roof prism. The roof prism units are perceived to be better in quality and are more expensive. Generally, they are the better, but porro prism units have come up in the world. There are many fine porro prism units available. In both types, prisms reflect light coming from the objective lens in several directions and eventually directs it to the eyepiece. All this just lengthens

the optical distance to something more than the physical binocular length. The two types are easily identified. In roof prism units, the objective lens and eyepiece are in a straight line, and in porro prism units they are offset.

There are three features I would avoid. First are "zoom" (variable magnification) units and second, are "wide field of view" units. I believe that some clarity and sharpness is sacrificed by incorporating these features. Third, controls can vary a bit, but one arrangement I would absolutely avoid is a focus system that requires the readjustment of each side of the binoculars each time the distance to the target changes.

Good features in modern binoculars are coatings which reduce inter-element reflections and improve light transmittance. Multi layer coatings provide a significant increase in transmittance over single coatings. The quality of the coatings on lens surfaces can be a big factor in both cost and performance.

Magnification values that are popular with birders seem to run from seven to ten power. Most experienced birders prefer 10 power binoculars, but they take practice. You will find it is easier to locate a bird using a lower power. Binoculars higher than 10 power are difficult to hand hold and may require a post or rest to steady them. While some additional practice is needed to use the higher powered units, the learning curve is not too steep or difficult. Unless you have somewhat less than average strength or steadiness, you should be able to handle the higher powered units just fine.

Aperture is the size of the objective (front) lens in millimeters. It has a lot to do with light gathering or brightness. It also has a lot to do with the weight of the binoculars. Two numbers are usually expressed together and they represent the binocular's magnification and aperture. 7 x 35 binoculars have a magnification of 7 times and an aperture of 35 mm. The diameter of the objective (front) lens is 35 mm.

Brightness is important. If your binoculars are not bright enough, you will find they fail when you attempt to use them in dim light. Dusk, dawn, and in a dark forest are examples. Also, if birds are back lighted, you'll not be able to see detail and color as well as with a brighter pair. Be sure your binoculars provide a bright image. If you purchase "teeny-tiny" binoculars because they're nice and light, you'll surely be disappointed. Brightness is dependent on several things, but it is largely dependent on the ratio of aperture to magnification. This ratio is called the "exit pupil". For 7 x 35 binoculars, the exit pupil is 5mm and for 10 x 40s it is 4mm. You can see it by holding the unit away from you and looking through the eyepiece. If you were to measure the diameter of the little circle of light you see, you would be measuring the "exit pupil". An old rule of thumb recommended an exit pupil of at least 5. A smaller ratio would provide insufficient brightness. With newer, more efficient units, you will no doubt be satisfied with a ratio of about 4.

Note: The maximum size of our eye reduces from 7 or 8mm when we are quite young, to about 5mm at age 50. Buying binoculars

with an exit pupil greater than 5 would likely provide a capacity our eye could not use. These units are heavier and the excess weight is unnecessary.

Transmittance also is important to brightness. A certain amount of light is lost through absorption and reflection at each air-to-glass surface and inside the prism itself. Transmittance may vary from 50% to 97%. Certainly any unit you would choose for birding today would be in the 90% + category.

Field of View indicates the wide angle(ness) of the binoculars. Wide angle binoculars are available and may help in locating birds. The field is usually stated in linear feet viewed at 1000 yards, but sometimes in degrees. Each degree represents about 52.5 feet at 1000 yards. There is usually a decrease in sharpness with wide angle binoculars, so this writer does not recommend them. Practice will provide the skill necessary to locate the bird you are observing.

Depth of Field is the distance in front and in back of the target object which remains in acceptable focus. This depth decreases with higher power and with larger aperture. It is true that the narrow depth of field accompanied by powerful, bright binoculars is at times bothersome, but I recommend sacrificing the depth of field for the power and the brightness. Most binocular purchasers don't even look at depth of field when they purchase, since there is little they can do to control it.

Close Focus Distance is a must. Birders like to use binoculars to view birds that are close. Units that will focus as close as 18 to 20 feet are often satisfactory but many birders insist on binoculars that will focus to less than 15 or even 10 feet. In today's technical environment, I would look for a unit that will focus at ten feet or less.

Eye Relief is the distance between the eyepiece and the user's eye for optimum viewing. This distance is of particular importance to eyeglass wearers. An observer who cannot place the eye close enough to the eyepiece will view a tunnel-like result. Binoculars with a longer eye relief will accommodate the eyeglasses and allow the viewer to see a "full frame" view. About 15 to 17 mm of eye relief is required for eyeglass wearers to obtain good results. Rubber cups or other devices on the eyepiece can be folded down or moved in to allow eyeglass wearers to get closer to the eyepiece.

Interpupillary Distance is the distance between the centers of the two eyepieces. The distance is adjusted by "bending" the binoculars at a joint between the two "barrels". Be certain the maximum interpupillary distance is a little wider than the distance between the centers of the pupils of your own eyes. If the distance is too narrow, you will be unable to look down the center of both "barrels", resulting in a view that is not full frame and clear on both sides.

What's New?

Birders are becoming an ever increasing part of the binocular marketplace and the manufacturers know it. There is also

tremendous competition in that marketplace. Here are some features just coming on the market. Look for them - they just suit you to a T.

Diopter Adjustment: That's the adjustment for just one side. The adjustment is now available with "click stops" to keep the setting from drifting.

Eyecups: We are now seeing eye cups that are firm and either slide or twist in and out. They can even be set to an intermediate position. These will rapidly replace the "fold-down" rubber cups.

Glove-like Fit: Many units are now molded into shapes that really fit the hands.

Lightness: Magnesium-alloy and other light weight materials are allowing binoculars to become lighter, shaving two to four ounces off the older weights. These materials still allow the unit to be sturdy and well sealed.

Loss-proof lens caps: Lens caps are now attached to the unit so you can keep track of them and get the unit protected in a sudden rain or cloud of dust.

Special Coatings: Abbreviations like **FL** (Fluorite) and **ED** (Extra-low Dispersion) refer to a manufacturing process that creates a very sharp, bright, and clear optical system. These have been around in spotting scopes for several years and are making their way into binoculars now. It's expensive but well worth it.

Optical Image Stabilizers: Special electronic stabilizing circuits are now built into binoculars that are able to correct for rough handshake as well as small vibrations. The stabilizer is functional almost the instant it is turned on. It allows you to "hand hold" a more powerful unit and to use the unit in a shaky environment like in wind or a moving vehicle. I recently met a birder suffering from Parkinson's Disease who had been unable to use binoculars until his daughter bought him a stabilized unit. He was able to hand hold his new binoculars very well.

I hope this helps with those holiday gifts. While you're at it, get a new pair for yourself. Next month - back to birds.

Don is a regular writer and lecturer about birds and teaches a beginning birding field course in conjunction with the Houston Audubon Society. Contact him at (281) 997-0485 or cdplace@concentric.net

Field Tips

Don Richardson

In winter, we have a plentiful supply of ducks here on the Upper Texas Coast (UTC). One of the most common is the Green-winged Teal. In the last "Field Tips" article, we saw that the Spotted Sandpiper had a vertical white mark, in front of the wing, that was helpful in its identification. A similar



Green-winged Teal by Don Richardson

white mark gives us some help with the Green-winged Teal. A vertical white mark on the sides of the breast and just in front of the wing is usually quite easily seen on the drake. Another mark, a bright golden patch at the rump, in combination with this white mark identifies this duck as a "Green-winged". One might wonder why this is important on a duck so easy to identify in other ways. The answer to that lies in the fact that when this and other ducks are seen at a long distance and under difficult conditions, those easy features cannot be seen and these telltale marks are the tools that make the identification. Those difficult conditions might be haze or those little wavy heat lines you see in the scope, or maybe just the distance.

About the Ornithology Group

The Ornithology Group (OG) is a member of the Outdoor Nature Club (ONC), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing greater knowledge about the environment and wildlife on the Upper Texas Coast.

The OG is a club of individuals interested in birding. Some members focus on bird identification and others keep lists of bird sightings. Many enter into competitive birding events and others make a study of their behavior, biology, distribution and migration. Some just enjoy watching birds. The OG is organized to accommodate all of these diverse birding interests. Members also benefit from the synergism of getting together to share knowledge and interests during the club's activities. OG activities make learning about birds fun.

Officers:

Chair	David Sarkozi	713-520-5906
Vice-Chair	Skip Almoney	713-524-4285
Secretary	Pat Pease	713-789-3306
Treasurer	Bob Simmons	713-776-2511
Clearinghouse	Open	
SB Editor	Open	281-997-0485 (Temporary)

To Start or Renew a Membership:

Members receive both the Spoonbill and the ONC Nature Notes. Send us a note containing the following information along with \$22.00 annual dues:

Your Name
Your address: street, city, state, zip
Your Telephone
Your e-mail

Send this to: Outdoor Nature Club
PO Box 270894
Houston TX 77277-0894

You can also join through our web site.

OG Website: <http://texasbirding.simplenet.com/hog>

To add your name to our e-mail list:
Send a message to listserv@listserv.uh.edu. On the first line of the message put: "subscribe HOUSTON-OG first-name last-name". You will receive a confirmation within a few minutes.

Clearinghouse List Submissions:

Temporarily, bird sightings for the Clearinghouse can be sent to:
David Sarkozi
111 Welch Street, Apt B.
Houston TX 77006
E-mail: dsarkozi@flash.net

Clearinghouse submission forms are available at the meeting or for download from the OG web page at:

<http://texasbirding.simplenet.com/hog/>.

You can also send sighting information via e-mail using the following format: species, date, county, location, count, observer. Notice that the commas separate the data elements. If you omit an element, there should be two commas at that point to indicate the omission. The omission of "location" might result in:

[Common Loon, 01/09/2000, GA, , 16, DGR].

Newsletter Submissions:

Sent to: Don Richardson
2709 Robinhood Cir.
Pearland, TX 77581-4812
e-mail: cdplace@concentric.net

Via e-mail, please send a file in "RTF" format. The Spoonbill uses a 10 point Times New Roman font.

Rare Bird Hotline:

Texas Rare Bird Alert: 713-369-9673.

May 2000 Clearinghouse

By David Sarkozi

Welcome back to the Clearinghouse. I'm temporarily filling in as Clearinghouse Editor until a permanent replacement is found, and catching up on the data and reports. If you still have data for June - September please send it on to me. There are little data right now for the summer months I'll "double up" to catch up.

Several reported birds are noteworthy:

- Several observers in Brazoria County found a Black-whiskered Vireo, a Texas Review Species and, if accepted by the Texas Bird Records Committee, it will make two years in a row that this species has occurred on the UTC;

- The Red-breasted Nuthatch found in Chambers County on May 15 may represent a new late date;

- The May 6 Mallard reported from Chambers County, while an unusual record, likely represents a wounded bird that did not migrate. This is often the case with summer waterfowl;

- An Aplomado Falcon write-up represents the fourth record for the Upper Texas Coast in the last five years. They can be assumed to be "hacked" birds from the release program. Hundreds have been released and some are doing well in the wild. Perhaps the day when we can count them as established in Texas is not far off. Records like these are important for determining that.

Keep that data coming! Next month I will have time for a more-in depth analysis. You can now send reports in two ways electronically. You can e-mail data directly to me in this format:

Species, Date, County, Location (optional), Count, Observer

If you do not submit a location please include the comma with a space (ex. Willet, 5/5/00, Harris, , 12, David Sarkozi). You can also enter records and submit your write-up via our website at <http://texasbirding.simplenet.com/hog> click on "Add records to the Clearinghouse". You can add an entire day list in one operation, or you can add a few interesting birds you've observed during your day. If your sighting needs a write-up, you can submit it from the website by clicking on "Report a Rare Bird".

Many of the programs used to track your birding records can export data that can be used for the Clearinghouse. If you would like to submit this data, send me a sample and I'll let you know if I can use it.

Of course, data is acceptable the old-fashioned way, via mail. Forms are available at our meetings, or just list them with the information as in an electronic submission.

Remember, notes are required for birds listed as "very rare" or "not present" for the week of your sighting in "*A Birder's Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast*", Eighth Edition.

Key to locations:

ANWR = Anahuac NWR, BCP = Bear Creek Park, BBSP = Brazos Bend SP, EMS = Edith Moore Sanctuary, NF=Nelson Farms, QNBS = Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary, SW = Sabine Woods.

Key to Observers:

BF = Brush Freeman, DS = David Sarkozi, KR = Kathy Reiser, KH = Ken Hartman, MW = Matt Whitbeck, MSW = Mitten Sifford and Wetzel, NB=Nicholas Block, RG = Russell Graham.

Key to Counties:

BR = Brazoria, CH = Chambers, FB = Fort Bend, GA = Galveston, HA = Harris, JE = Jefferson County.

Pied-billed Grebe 5/5 BR 6 KH
American White Pelican 5/5 BR 1 KH
Brown Pelican birds=6 reports=1
Neotropic Cormorant birds=3 reports=1
Great Blue Heron birds=15 reports=6
Great Egret birds=37 reports=6
Snowy Egret birds=15 reports=6
Little Blue Heron birds=13 reports=5
Tricolored Heron birds=3 reports=3
Reddish Egret birds=3 reports=1
Cattle Egret birds=60 reports=5
Green Heron birds=15 reports=6
Black-crowned Night-Heron birds=3 reports=1
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron birds=24 reports=6
White Ibis birds=84 reports=6
White-faced Ibis birds=10 reports=1
Roseate Spoonbill 5/5 BR 3 KH
Black Vulture birds=14 reports=3
Turkey Vulture birds=11 reports=3
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck 5/5 BR 1 KH, 5/7 FB(BBSP) 12 KR, 5/13 HA 2 KH, 5/14 FB(BBSP) 12 KR, 5/28 FB(BBSP) 12 KR
Fulvous Whistling-Duck birds=2 reports=2
Mallard 5/6 CH 1 DS
Mottled Duck birds=7 reports=2
Blue-winged Teal 5/5 GA 1 KH
Northern Shoveler 5/5 BR 2 KH
Ruddy Duck 5/5 BR 20 KH
White-tailed Kite birds=2 reports=1
Northern Harrier 5/30 CH(ANWR) 2 MW
Red-shouldered Hawk birds=2 reports=1
Swainson's Hawk 5/5 BR 2 KH
Red-tailed Hawk 5/5 BR 1 KH, 5/6 HA(NF) 1 KR, 5/19 HA 1 KH
Crested Caracara 5/5 GA 2 KH
Purple Gallinule birds=23 reports=4
Common Moorhen birds=39 reports=5
American Coot birds=265 reports=4
Black-bellied Plover birds=1 reports=1
Killdeer birds=17 reports=4
Black-necked Stilt birds=18 reports=3
Willet birds=1 reports=1
Spotted Sandpiper 5/5 GA 1 KH
Whimbrel 5/5 BR 1 KH
Ruddy Turnstone birds=1 reports=1
Sanderling birds=5 reports=1
Least Sandpiper 5/5 BR 5 KH, 5/5 GA 3 KH
White-rumped Sandpiper 5/5 GA 1 KH
Stilt Sandpiper 5/5 BR 1 KH
Short-billed Dowitcher 5/5 GA 1 KH
Long-billed Dowitcher 5/5 BR 1 KH
Herring Gull birds=1 reports=1
Caspian Tern birds=2 reports=2
Common Tern birds=1 reports=1

Forster's Tern birds=2 reports=2
Least Tern birds=4 reports=1
Black Tern 5/5 BR 6 KH, 5/5 GA 20 KH
Black Skimmer birds=4 reports=1
Rock Dove birds=2 reports=1
White-winged Dove birds=5 reports=2
Mourning Dove birds=45 reports=6
Yellow-billed Cuckoo birds=9 reports=5
Common Nighthawk birds=6 reports=2
Chimney Swift birds=2 reports=1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird 5/5 BR 1 KH, 5/5 GA 2 KH, 5/5 HA 3 KH
Red-headed Woodpecker 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Red-bellied Woodpecker birds=14 reports=6
Downy Woodpecker birds=4 reports=1
Northern Flicker 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Pileated Woodpecker birds=6 reports=3
Eastern Wood-Pewee birds=6 reports=4
Acadian Flycatcher birds=2 reports=2
Alder Flycatcher 5/3 JE(SW) 1 NB
Great Crested Flycatcher birds=8 reports=4
Eastern Kingbird birds=16 reports=4
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher birds=16 reports=6
Loggerhead Shrike birds=7 reports=3
White-eyed Vireo birds=4 reports=3
Philadelphia Vireo 5/5 BR 1 KH
Red-eyed Vireo birds=5 reports=4
Black-whiskered Vireo 5/3 BR(QNBS) 1 NB, 5/5 BR 1 KH, 5/12 BR(QNBS) 1 BF, 5/13 BR(QNBS) 1 MSW, 5/13 BR(QNBS) 1 RG
Blue Jay birds=4 reports=4
American Crow birds=36 reports=6
Purple Martin 5/5 GA 1 KH, 5/6 HA(NF) 1 KR, 5/23 CH(ANWR) 14 DS
Tree Swallow birds=22 reports=3
Northern Rough-winged Swallow 5/6 HA(NF) 2 KR, 5/7 FB(BBSP) 4 KR
Cliff Swallow 5/23 CH(ANWR) 1 DS
Barn Swallow birds=51 reports=3
Carolina Chickadee birds=11 reports=3
Tufted Titmouse birds=23 reports=5
Red-breasted Nuthatch 5/15 CH 1 MW
Carolina Wren birds=43 reports=6
Marsh Wren 5/23 CH(ANWR) 2 DS
Eastern Bluebird 5/13 HA(BCP) 6 KH
Veery 5/14 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Swainson's Thrush 5/14 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Wood Thrush birds=1 reports=1
American Robin birds=4 reports=1
Gray Catbird 5/3 HA(EMS) 2 KH, 5/3 JE(SW) 150 NB, 5/5 GA 1 KH, 5/23 CH(ANWR) 1 DS
Northern Mockingbird birds=29 reports=8
European Starling birds=40 reports=5
Nashville Warbler 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Northern Parula birds=5 reports=4
Chestnut-sided Warbler 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH, 5/14 HA(EMS) 2 KH
Magnolia Warbler 5/3 HA(EMS) 6 KH, 5/5 BR 1 KH, 5/5 GA 6 KH, 5/13 HA(BCP) 1 KH, 5/14 HA(EMS) 2 KH
Black-throated Green Warbler 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Blackburnian Warbler 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Pine Warbler birds=2 reports=1
Bay-breasted Warbler 5/5 BR 1 KH
Blackpoll Warbler 5/5 BR 1 KH
Black-and-white Warbler birds=4 reports=3
American Redstart 5/3 HA(EMS) 4 KH, 5/13 HA(BCP) 1 KH, 5/14 HA(EMS) 2 KH, 5/23 CH(ANWR) 2 DS
Prothonotary Warbler birds=15 reports=3
Ovenbird 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Northern Waterthrush 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Louisiana Waterthrush 5/3 BR(QNBS) 1 NB
Mourning Warbler 5/14 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Common Yellowthroat birds=5 reports=2
Hooded Warbler birds=3 reports=2
Yellow-breasted Chat 5/3 HA(EMS) 1 KH
Summer Tanager birds=1 reports=1
Western Tanager 5/3 JE(SW) 1 NB, 5/3 JE(SW) 1 NB
Savannah Sparrow 5/5 GA 1 KH
Northern Cardinal birds=84 reports=7
Indigo Bunting birds=1 reports=1
Dickcissel birds=13 reports=2
Red-winged Blackbird birds=51 reports=5
Eastern Meadowlark birds=9 reports=3

Common Grackle birds=4 reports=3
Boat-tailed Grackle birds=47 reports=3
Great-tailed Grackle birds=45 reports=5
Brown-headed Cowbird birds=1 reports=1
Orchard Oriole birds=4 reports=1
Baltimore Oriole 5/5 BR 1 KH, 5/14 HA(EMS) 1 KH
House Sparrow birds=1 reports=1

Observer: Anthony Allan Floyd, Lubbock, TX
Species: Aplomado Falcon, Falco femoralis
Number Present: 1 immature
County: Jefferson
Location: 10-15 miles east of Winnie on Highway73
Date: 04 / 28 / 2000

Habitat: Atop a shrub in a grassy area south of the highway.
Description: The bird was seen twice: once at 3:35 while traveling at 60 mph and once at 4:20 while traveling at 45 mph; the bare minimum that traffic will allow on this road. The bird was dark brown (chocolate) above, strongly contrasting with a beigey-orange throat/breast and a darker orange belly/undertail coverts. The throat was lighter than the breast, approaching white towards the base of the bill. The breast was lightly streaked with chocolate coloration and was separated from the belly by a thin, bold band of the same chocolate coloration. There was a single chocolate line

descending from the eye and separating the light throat from the whitish-orange face patch. Because of the angle obtained from the roadway I could not see the back of the bird's head, missing the white stripe extending from the eye to the nape, and because of the speed at which the observation was conducted I could not be sure of the white patch over the bill. The tail was consistent with other falcons in length and relative proportions and was dark brown below with numerous thin, white bands almost lending a mottled appearance to the underside of the tail - the top of the tail was not visible. The legs were thickly covered with orange feathering - the same coloration as the underside of the tail and belly. Overall, the bird most resembled the immature Aplomado Falcon illustrated on page 121 of the National Geographic Guide but with a slightly lighter orange in the breast and throat and less in the way of streaking (both in amount and intensity). The feet were not safely visible and I could not ascertain whether or not the bird was banded. In overall size the bird seemed closest to the Red-shouldered Hawk in length but was much too slim and long-tailed. The flanks were a uniform dark chocolate color narrowing to the aforementioned thin dark band across the chest.

SOLICITED MAIL

**Outdoor Nature Club
Ornithology Group
P.O. Box 270894
Houston, TX 77277-0894**

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Houston, Texas
Permit No. 1063

***TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY***