



THE SPOONBILL

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

COMING EVENTS

- Thursday
March 25 Deadline for THE SPOONBILL announcements, articles, etc.
- Saturday, Sunday
March 27 & 28 ONC Spring Open House and Youth Day at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary. See February Spoonbill or March Nature Notes for details.
- Thursday
April 1 OG regular meeting at Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 S. Braeswood Blvd., 7:30 p.m. Program entitled "Spring Migration on the UTC" by Jim Morgan will discuss the when, where and how's of spring migration on the UTC plus a slide show on many of the migrant warblers that pass through.
- Saturday
April 3 Clearing House deadline for observations for March. Please send early.
- Wednesday
April 7 Photography Group regular meeting at Bayou Manor auditorium, 7:30 p.m. Con Marks, a world traveler, and excellent photographer, will show slides on "Iran during the Reign of the Shah".
- Tuesday
April 13 ONC regular meeting at the Garden Center, 1900 Hermann Dr., 7:30 p.m. Sandra Thorne-Brown will give a program on "Developing the Urban Forest".
- Sunday
April 18 ONC Field Trip sponsored by the Photography Group and led by Mike Noel, to Anahuac Nat'l. Wildlife Refuge. Contact Mike Noel (529-5047) if you want to go.
- Saturday
April 24 OG Field Trip - Annual Spring Round-Up. Form your own party (3-4 people is ideal) and bird the coast any way you would like. For many, the goal will be to see as many species as possible, for others, the day will be spent on Galveston Island or at High Island, checking out warblers. We will meet at 7:30 at Luby's/Romano cafeteria in Baybrook Mall (on I-45 N of Galveston) that evening to compare observations. Write or call David Matson (5510 Arboles, Houston 77035, ph. 723-1968) for a report form. Those who can't make the dinner may mail their sightings to David Matson. (All reports received will be forwarded to the Clearing House.) Birders throughout Texas will be participating in their areas the same day.

Peregrine Inc. wishes to inform OG members and friends that we have scheduled April Migration Weekend Tours for April 9-11, 16-18, and 23-25. Leaders will be T. Ben Feltner and Bob Behrstock. The weekends are an inexpensive and fun way for newcomers to familiarize themselves with about 200 species of Upper Texas Coast birds, and are a great review for the intermediate birder. Habitats, habits and plumages will be discussed throughout each weekend. If you are interested, or wish to sign up, please call the Peregrine office at 520-7747.

TEXAS BIRD WATCHING: BIRDS OF THE TEXAS BORDER

The Rio Grande Valley is home to hundreds of species of birds, including some of the most exotic and interesting to be found in North America. Join Elaine Robinson Adams, well-known leader of bird watching tours, for a two-day field trip to Santa Ana Refuge and Falcon State Park on the Texas Border. The field trip will be preceded by a lecture.

Date: April 14th for the lecture.
April 17 & 18 for the field trip.

Course Fee: \$55

For more information call Rice University, Offices of Continuing Studies and Special Programs, 527-4803 or 520-6022.

FIELD TRIP A BIG SUCCESS

by Tony Gallucci

Birders who started at Jones State Forest the morning of Feb. 13th were treated to fantastic looks at a Red-cockaded Woodpecker apparently feeding its mate in a nest-hole, and fifteen foot views of Brown-headed Nuthatches. We are indebted to Gary and Randy Clark for information that helped us locate these birds.

In addition, several other good birds were seen in the piney woods area, including excellent looks at Pine Siskins feeding on Sweetgum balls, and a gorgeous male Pine Warbler. Ron Braun also was able to locate a Fox Sparrow and Rufous-sided Towhee. Various trip members got good, albeit brief looks at Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Creeper and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

From the state forest we trekked on towards Warren Lake where we were to meet Ted Eubanks and Field Trip Group I. While scanning a group of Snow Geese for the elusive Ross', the entire flock burst from the ground, and a few seconds of scanning spotted a beautifully plumaged adult Bald Eagle soaring high overhead. Later at Warren Lake we spotted an immature bird. These sightings are especially noteworthy because most eagles have gone north to begin their nesting season.

Unfortunately, many area farmers chose the week of the trip to plow the rice fields in preparation for planting and many of the birds of the area dispersed. We were able to see quite a few ducks on the big ponds but sparrows and other passerines were very difficult to find.

Those who were able to stay after lunch were treated to the sight of another adult Bald Eagle and, finally, outstanding looks at six cooperative Ross' Geese in a mixed flock. The numbers of UTC birds seen are presented in this month's Clearing House. Important numbers of birds seen in Jones State Forest include: 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, 2 Common Flickers, 3 Pileated Woodpeckers, 5 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 3 Downy Woodpeckers, 4 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, 8 Brown-headed Nuthatches, 2 Brown Creepers, 1 Brown Thrasher, 300 American Robins, 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, 2 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 2 Solitary Vireos, 3 Orange-crowned Warblers, 25 Pine Warblers, 6 Pine Siskins, 35 American Goldfinches, 2 Rufous-sided Towhees, 1 Fox Sparrow. All told this portion of the trip saw 86 species.

Can you name an area within Texas where no species of corvid (Jays, Crows, and allies) breeds regularly, and where it would even be difficult to find a single individual corvid during any month most years?

Hint: Since Blue Jays can be found fairly easily at any time from Sabine Pass to Freeport, and north to Lake Houston, you know the answer is not the UTC!

PANAMA 1982

by Jim Morgan

On February 5 I departed for Panama to participate in a Peregrine Inc. tour led by fellow OG members T. Ben Feltner and Bob Behrstock, both of whom are able and experienced neotropical birders. I was to spend the next 16 days seeing more species of birds than I had ever seen before in a like period of time.

My trip to Panama was not a sudden decision. After reading past accounts in THE SPOONBILL of Panama birding by other OG members, and knowing the uncertainty of the future of this small but bird rich country, I have been chomping at the bit to go. In fact, a Panama trip had been my number one ambition among birding trip possibilities for over three years, dating back to January, 1979, after completing my first tropical birding experience in West Africa. It was on January 31, 1979, that I purchased my copy from The Chickadee of Ridgely's A Guide to the Birds of Panama. Almost three years to the day later I was finally getting my chance to make good use of the information in this valuable book.

We began our birding on the Pacific side of Panama covering the areas of Cerro Campana, Cerro Azul/Jeffe, Pipeline Road, Chiva Chiva Road and a couple of other birding areas not too distant from Panama City. Every day of the 5½ days (including an extra day for me prior to joining the tour) of birding these areas was filled with excitement and an almost continuous string of life birds for me. It is hard to single out highlights when each and every day produced so much, but my most notable two are mentioned below.

By far my most vivid memory of birding the Pacific slopes is of the day spent on Cerro Azul/Jeffe. During the day we encountered two excellent flocks of mixed tropical species interspersed with numerous neotropical migrant warblers and vireos. Imagine similar mixed flocks you may have encountered in Mexico and then imagine what those flocks would be like with about 10-20 species of beautiful brightly colored tanagers mixed in. That's precisely what we experienced. With numerous "yankee" warblers zipping around and about, joined also by local tyrant flycatchers, woodcreepers, vireos and hummingbirds, these flocks, dominated by tanagers and honeycreepers, moved in and out of fruiting trees. One could stand in one spot and let the entire scene unfold in front of one's very eyes. Holding binoculars on a fixed spot in a fruiting tree produced a virtual kaleidoscope of color as brightly colored honeycreepers and tanagers came, went, and returned time and again. Among this array were such gems as Red-legged, Green, and Shining Honeycreepers, Blue Dacnis and Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, and such gorgeous tanagers as Emerald, Speckled, Silver-throated, Golden-masked, Bay-headed, Rufous-winged, Crimson-backed and Black and Yellow. Such a color display can only be achieved in the tropics!

Another exciting experience took place on Chiva Chiva Road where I marvelled at the beauty of a pair of Savanna Hawks. The beauty and grace of this magnificent raptor is not captured in the field guides. With long broad rufous wings and warm cinnamon underparts this hawk can hold one's attention almost to the point of missing other nearby attractions, which in Panama are numerous indeed.

Among the more interesting and difficult to find species seen on the Pacific side were King Vulture, Semiplumbeous Hawk, Crane Hawk, Green Thorntail, White-whiskered Puffbird, Striped Foliage-Gleaner, Plain and Spot-crowned Antvireos, White-bellied Antbird, five species of manakins, White-ringed Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Olive-striped Flycatcher, Song Wren, and the classy Buff-rumped Warbler. Missed by me, but seen by other participants were Stripe-cheeked Woodpecker and Tawny-capped Euphonia.

Our next base of operations was in Colon, on the Caribbean side of Panama. From here we birded Escobal Road, Achote Road, S9 Road, Black-tank Road, the Tiger Trail and Ft. Sherman Road. While some species were repeats of those on the Pacific side, many new species were encountered during 3½ days of birding and two nights of owling. Two experiences stand out from the others.

I have read about, and heard tales of bird activity around ant swarms

but I had not yet experienced this, even in southern Mexico. So it was with anticipation that I welcomed the word passed on to Ben from Jaime Fujals about an ant swarm he had found. One of our tour participants, the very capable Ron Huffman from San Antonio, was first to find the swarm and the accompanying bird activity. This activity was disrupted by many participants trying to get good views of the birds so I just waited everybody out then set myself down to just watch and experience this phenomenon. As you probably know, antbirds and several other species feed on the insects which are dislodged and stirred up by the ant swarm. In this ant swarm were two highly visible antbirds - the Bicolored and the Spotted. These beautiful birds soon ignored me and went about their business, thus providing me with great viewing opportunities in which every aspect of their plumage and behavior could be carefully studied and enjoyed. Briefly, a Chestnut-backed Antbird appeared but he only seemed to be passing through the area, as he did not stay to join in the feast. As many as 10 Bicolored Antbirds were present and two pair of the beautiful little Spotted Antbirds remained. Not long after they were joined by a Gray-headed Tanager, another species known to be attracted to ant swarms. I stayed for about a half hour with the hopes of other species joining in - maybe an antpitta! - but not to be ... yet! Reluctantly I left this interesting display and went only 100 meters down the trail to find Ron Huffman and another participant. While birding in this spot I discovered a Pygmy Antwren, a nifty little bird that is fairly rare in Panama. After viewing this little gem something told us to go back to the ant swarm to see if something new had shown up. Upon returning the first three birds we saw were Occellated Antbirds, a species that held on to be my favorite bird for the entire Panama trip and one that far surpasses its portrayal in the plate in the field guide. This bird is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length with bare bright blue skin about the eye, black throat, dark gray crown, a bright olive brown above with black spots in a scalloped fashion leaving the feather edging to appear a bright, almost yellowish, olive. The underparts are a beautiful rich chestnut similarly scalloped with large black spots leaving semicircles of brilliant chestnut showing. If you go to Panama you must see this bird!

Another noteworthy experience on the Caribbean side of Panama was when we called out a Black and White Owl. This is another species which brings forth much more beauty and character than can be portrayed in the field guides - bright red eyes, and exquisitely fine black and white horizontal barring on the body and in arcs of circles on the head surrounding the facial disks. Responding to our tape of the species this bird put on quite a show.

Other species of interest during our birding around Colon were Band-tailed Barbthroat, Bronze-tailed Plumeteer, Spot-crowned Barbet, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Streaked Antwren, Brownish Flycatcher, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, White-headed, Stripe-breasted, and Black-bellied Wrens, Sulphur-rumped Tanager, and among those seen that I missed were Gray-headed Kite, Nightingale Wren, Rufous-crested Coquette, and Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher.

Returning to Panama City we then flew to David in the state of Chiriqui and proceeded to Volcan while making birding stops along the way. From Volcan as a base we birded the western highlands for $3\frac{1}{2}$ days. Pleasantly cooler and drier than the hot, humid lowlands the mountain birding was extremely pleasant - and very rewarding.

It would not be right to bird the western highlands and ignore possibly the most sought after bird of Latin America - the Resplendent Quetzal. We were not to be denied, nor disappointed, as we came upon a pair which put on a beautiful display for us. This species, hanging on under the pressure of forest destruction, deserves all the protection that can be afforded it. It is truly a marvel of the rich tropical birdlife of Central America.

While pursuing the quetzal, and in subsequent forays into the mountains we were fortunate to find, and I saw with much satisfaction, such species as Ruddy Pigeon, Maroon-chested Ground-Dove, four species of parakeets including Barred Parakeet, Fiery-throated and Stripe-tailed Hummingbirds, Fiery-billed Aracari, Olivaceous Piculet, Pale-breasted, Slaty and Red-faced Spinetails, Ruddy Treerunner, Spotted Barbtail,

Buffy Tuftedcheek, Silvery-fronted Tapaculo, Turquoise Cotinga, Silvery-throated Jays, Black-faced Solitaire, and the beautiful Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher. To a warbler fan such as myself it was most satisfying to find four new species for me - the equally beautiful array of Flame-throated Warbler, Collared Redstart, and Black-checked Warbler plus the Chiriqui Yellowthroat. Others were fortunate to see, but I missed the Green-fronted Lancebill, Prong-billed Barbet, White-throated Spadebill, and Golden-browed Chlorophonia.

While in the highlands a treat was provided by a Tropical Screech Owl which put on a real show one night around the grounds of our motel. Constantly investigating the tape of it's call it would fly from tree tree, stopping long enough to allow us a study of it's every feather!

Still in the highlands we made a visit to Volcan Lakes where we were fortunate to see Masked Ducks and the very rare (in Panama) Southern Lapwing. The latter, like the Lapwing of Europe, is a very beautiful plover carrying much more size and color than the plovers of North America.

Upon returning to Panama City we proceeded to our base outside the city at Tocumen. In 1½ days of birding there we saw Little Cuckoo, Greater Ani, Black-throated Mango, Scaly-breasted and Sapphire-throated Hummingbirds, Green and Rufous Kingfisher, Straight-billed Woodcreeper and the elegant Pied Water-Tyrant. Others were fortunate to see but I missed the Capped Heron and Ron Huffman was the only one to see the very rare (in Panama) Pearl Kite. Ron's description of the bird, under an hour's study, left little doubt as to the validity of his sighting. Unfortunately, we could not relocate the bird later on, and we had to return home the next day so we were denied a further opportunity to try and find this small (8 inches) raptor.

While in Panama other wildlife besides birds were most evident. Butterflies were numerous and in splendid variety and beauty. Many beautiful and unusual insects were to be found. We were fortunate to see several snakes of interest including a 6 foot Boa Constrictor, an unidentified water snake, an unidentified grass snake and a strikingly beautiful bright yellow 12 inch long viper of the Bothrops genus and tentatively identified as an Eye-lashed Viper. Among the mammals seen were White-faced Cappucin Monkey, Howler Monkey, Geoffrey's Marmoset, Mid-american Opossum, Prehensile-tailed Porcupine, Tayra, Jaguarundi, Two-toed and Three-toed Sloths, Red-bellied and White-bellied Squirrels, Armadillo, Coatimundi and Olingo. We also saw Poison Arrow Frog, Iguana, and Basilisk Lizard.

Using any measure the trip was truly a success. All-in-all the tour participants saw 432 bird species and heard an additional seven more species. Making no real effort to find water (shore) birds this is quite a total in 15 days. With a little patience, a lot of perserverence, some homework before the trip, and some luck, I personally saw 395 species and heard 5 more for an even 400 species seen and/or heard in 16 days of intensive birding. My species totals (tour totals in parentheses) for some of the larger neotropical families were 10(11) pigeons/doves, 10(10) parrots/parakeets, 24(27) hummingbirds, 9(10) woodpeckers, 10(10) woodcreepers, 8(9) ovenbirds, 17(17) antbirds, 46(51) tyrant flycatchers, 13(14) wrens, 26(28) warblers, 14(15) icterids, 33(37) tanagers, and 22(24) fringillids. Among the species seen I recorded 207 life birds for my world list, thus exceeding my goal of 200 I had set for the trip.

This article would not be complete without mentioning the enjoyment and learning experience I received while birding with Ben and Bob, two experts on neotropical birds. They were especially helpful to me on the more difficult ID's such as some of the flycatchers and the female hummingbirds. Also very helpful was the tape recording of the songs and calls of many species that Bob was doing. Bob recorded about 70 species on the trip, and we used these calls to help lure some of the more secretive birds into the open.

One final sobering note. While we were searching for the Quetzal we were subjected to the noise of bulldozers and trucks which were making way for a paved road above Cerro Punta to the saddle below Volcan Baru.

In the same area we lured the tapaculo out while hearing background noise of chain saws. Bob has the tapaculo and a recording of Andean Pygmy Owl on tape with background chain saw noise! The conclusion is that the Quetzal and other high forest species may not be found so easily in the future. One may have to hike further and work harder in coming years. In addition, the future of the former Canal Zone jungles will remain uncertain. No doubt, there will be good birding in "the zone" for several more years and good birding in the wilder parts of Panama (e.g., Bocas del Toro and Darien) for possibly even longer. But one never knows the fate of the tropics, with strong pressures of population, economic and agricultural development, and often uncertain and volatile political frameworks. These above factors were mixed in with my desires to see Panama's rich birdlife, and together they provided the impetus to make the trip this year. If you are thinking about birding Panama, go soon while you can still see so much. Any lover of birds will find it very rewarding.

AROUND AND ABOUT

The Texas Ornithological Society will hold its spring meeting in Van Horn, 20-22 May 1982. The main purpose for holding the trip there is for easy access to the Guadalupe Mountains. Other field trips will be taken to the Davis Mountains, Lake Balmorhea, Presidio County and possibly the El Paso area. Additional details are to be published in the TOS Newsletter, or can be obtained by talking to Tony Gallucci, meeting chairman, 932-9630.

In conjunction with the TOS meeting, Tony Gallucci will lead a back-country trip across the backbone of the Guadalupe. The trip involves a one day trek to the high-country, and two to three days hiking the pine forests looking for such specialties as Mountain Chickadee, Steller's Jay, Pygmy Nuthatch, Gray-headed Junco, Red Crossbill and Spotted Owl. Many other species nest here and nowhere else in Texas. Tony is the veteran of trips across the area in all seasons and knows the birds perhaps better than any current birder. The last day to day and a half will be spent birding McKittrick Canyon and possibly other lowland spots. Cost is \$140 and includes food, group equipment and transportation to and from Van Horn or Carlsbad, if necessary. For more information write Tony at 2237 Shadowdale, Houston, Texas 77043.

This year has been hailed by the National Wildlife Federation as "The Year of the Eagle," and Bald Eagles in Texas appear to be responding to the 200th year of their acceptance as the national bird by making extra efforts at reproduction. Biologists of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department already can account for 12 nesting pairs of the national bird, the greatest number recorded since the pesticide difficulties in the early 1950s. John Smith, wildlife biologist in Rockport, has observed nesting activity in 11 sites along the mid-coast region. During aerial and ground inspections of six sites in Victoria, Goliad, Refugio and Calhoun Counties, he found four eaglets, but the nesting birds at four other sites would not leave the nests long enough for inspections. Such insistence to stay on the nest is interpreted as a good sign that the birds either have eggs or young, he said. One nesting pair in Goliad County probably has the best parenting attitude of the group, but they have not produced young in the last four years. "Each year the female sits on the nest for four months, but she has not been able to produce young," Smith said. Another five sites in Matagorda, Brazoria and Fort Bend Counties along the Texas coast will be inspected by air as soon as suitable weather arrives, he said. Harry Haucke, wildlife biologist in Red River County in Northeast Texas, is awaiting suitable weather to inspect a known nesting site on the Red River. Ranch hands have reported activity around the large nest in a 100-foot tall cottonwood tree, but they haven't been able to get close because of the mud, Haucke said. Bald Eagles, which nest in large trees near rivers, streams and lakes in the eastern part of the state, are primarily fish eaters and scavengers which makes them especially susceptible to pesticides. They differ in many ways from the Golden Eagles found in the western parts of the state. Nationally, this July

will mark the 200th anniversary of the adoption of the present national seal which includes the Bald Eagle. Texans who have the opportunity to use the waterways in the heavier wooded areas of the state can participate by reporting eagle nesting activity. Reports can be made by calling the department's toll-free number, 1-800-792-1112.

LOOKING FOR BIRDS IN THE GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS, Part 1

by Tony Gallucci

With the upcoming Spring meeting of the Texas Ornithological Society to be held in Van Horn, I thought it appropriate to present a resume of birding in this great location. The Guadalupe provide the richest avifauna of any mountain system in Texas and many species nest here that nest nowhere else in Texas accessible to birders.

From desert lowland hills around 5000 feet, the Guadalupe Mountains tower at their southernmost, stretching to Texas' highest peak at 8751 feet. From this arrow-point, the mountains spread in two long forks into New Mexico. The whole of the Texas portion of these mountains is included in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

The great range in elevation allows for a great diversity of habitats, and thus birds. To see the wealth of birds in the area birders should plan to visit three areas: the Frijole-Pine Springs area, McKittrick Canyon, and the high country.

Birders planning to visit the national park should write ahead to: Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 3225 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220, a month ahead for information concerning camping and hiking in the mountains. Ask for a map, which will identify all the localities mentioned in this summary.

Many birders have not ventured to the area because of its distance from other major birding locales and because of the renown of the arduous back-country hike required to see some of the birds. A visit at the proper time of the year and proper preparation will allow you to see many of the area birds even if you cannot get to the high elevations. Recent, massive improvements in the road systems and facilities make most portions of the park very accessible to birders.

Spring and summer are the best times to visit the park, though winter and fall are capable of producing interesting birds too. In the colder months the densities are fairly low, though, and you may become frustrated.

Luckily for the birder, lowland sites for birding are quite limited and you will not waste much time looking over large areas for desert birds. Pine Springs and Frijole Station, all are along a single trail, and a morning there is well spent. The trail leads from Lower Sonoran Zone desert to the base of the eastern escarpment. Typical desert birds to be found along the trail are Cactus Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, House Finch, Black-throated Sparrow, and Pyrrhuloxia. Watch for Cliff Swallows feeding over Manzanita, and in migration other species may be seen here.

Watch along the juniper-lined draw just above the Frijole Ranger Station for Plain Titmouse, which nests nowhere else in Texas except these foothills. They may be seen elsewhere but this is clearly the best location. They can often be seen with Common Bushtits, and careful attention paid here, especially in winter and spring may net a Phainopepla. The beautiful oasis at Pine Springs is capable of turning up almost anything, in spring look for Western and Hepatic Tanagers, and Scott's Orioles. Listen in the evening for Lesser Nighthawks and Poor-wills. In late fall and winter watch here for Steller's Jay and Mountain Chickadees, refugees from the cold highlands.

All hummingbirds visiting these spring sites should be carefully identified. I have seen Broad-tailed, Black-chinned, Rufous, and Blue-throated here and others almost certainly visit.

Those of you who choose to walk McKittrick Canyon must be aware that you may not camp there, so birding must be done in a day's time. If you have time you may wish to spend more than one day here as birding can be overwhelming at times. On a one-day trip, walking at a reasonable pace will allow you to bird the entire length of the canyon that is accessible. Be sure to carry plenty of water. Pay careful attention to the changing vegetation as you walk to and through the canyon. Desert vegetation near the mouth produces many of the desert birds common to the Frijole area. Bewick's, Canyon and Rock Wren songs mingle freely here. In winter the area is host to Sage Thrashers, and, in the brushy draws, Sage Sparrows. Some winters Mountain Bluebirds are quite common near the mouth in junipers, and Phainopeplas may mix with them.

As you enter the canyon watch the shrubby low hillsides and dry streambeds for Gray Vireo, Black-chinned Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow (a local race) and Brown Towhee, any or all of which may first be located by their songs. Where the canyon bottoms become lined with a low story of Madrone, Rocky Mountain Bigtooth Maples and oaks, Solitary and Warbling Vireos make an appearance (pay careful attention to detail as all three of the large vireos here are plain gray). Summer Tanagers (Cooper's race here has an orange cast) nest here if at all. Black-headed Grosbeaks build their nests in the oaks and can be found on up into the high country. This is an excellent area for migrants in early May. Look here for Wilson's, Black-throated Gray, Townsend's, MacGillivray's, Audubon's, and, rarely, Hermit Warbler.

Farther up the trail, the streambed gradually holds water, with flashing Rainbow Trout, and soon the vegetation begins to soar. In the vicinity of the Pratt Lodge, the Canyon forks, one going south, the other turning back north. The south fork is the best bet. In the vicinity of the lodge in the maples, Ponderosa Pine and scattered Douglas Fir, you should find the birding rich and exciting. You should find Black-chinned and Blue-throated Hummingbirds, Western Wood Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Scrub Jay, Common Bush-tit, Bewick's and Canyon Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Solitary Vireo, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western and Hepatic Tanagers, Scott's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lesser Goldfinch, Rufous-sided and Brown Towehees. Some of those may also be found into winter. Winter, often fierce in the high country, may drive some coniferous forest birds into the canyon, and they may linger into early May. I have seen Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Red Crossbill, Steller's Jay and Pine Siskin here. Grace's Warbler occasionally breed in this area also. Others have found Spotted and Flammulated Owls near the lodge.

Two birds of this area are highly sought after and merit special attention. George Newman's census work here has shown that Rivoli's Hummingbird occurs regularly in the canyon. In 1979, I found the only known Texas nest of this bird just up the canyon from the lodge. You will round a sharp bend of the canyon to the left and up above is the oddly shaped geological formation known as Turtle Rock. Trail signs mark this point at another bend of the canyon. Hikers may not go beyond this point as park service management has closed it. A pair of Peregrines nests in the higher canyon, and restriction of access is those birds only guarantee of survival. Watch overhead, or hike the back-country to see them. The Rivoli's have been most often seen by my groups in the short stretch between these two bends, and it was here that the nest was found, alongside the stream. Beware, for Blue-throated Hummingbirds occur also.

In this same stretch, on the grassy slopes under scattered oaks, nest Virginia's Warbler. This species nests nowhere else in Texas. If you cannot find it by searching these slopes from the canyon bottom, try hiking the Turtle Rock trail for a short distance. Some have reported the bird is more easily found in early spring when migrants are around-breeders seem to be quite shy.

I am currently compiling records of Guadalupe Mountains birds and would appreciate receiving copies of your bird lists (including past trips) and important observations. Please send them to Tony Gallucci, 2237 Shadowdale, Houston, Texas 77043.

*****Look for Part 2 on birding the Guadalupe's high country in next month's Spoonbill.

CAUSE OF DEATH SOUGHT FOR PANHANDLE CRANES

Wildlife researchers are looking for the cause of death of an estimated 450 Sandhill Cranes around Cedar Lake, 15 miles northwest of Lamesa, Texas. Weldon Fromm, regional law enforcement director for the Parks and Wildlife Department in Lubbock, reported an estimated 200 dead and 600 to 700 sick birds around the 2400-acre lake February 17. Further checks by department personnel brought the estimate to 450 dead birds late on the 18th. The current Sandhill Crane population around Cedar Lake is estimated at 16,000 birds.

Pathologists later that week were still looking for a cause of death, but have ruled out botulism and avian cholera after tests were completed on birds captured late on the 18th. Dr. Dan Pence, assistant professor of pathology at the School of Medicine at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, said the birds' symptoms were similar to those expected for avian cholera, but blood tests ruled this out. Tissue samples from the birds will be sent for further study to the Texas A & M School of Veterinary Medicine at College Station as well as U.S. Fish and Wildlife laboratories at Victoria, Texas, and Madison, Wisconsin. Fromm said only Sandhill Cranes from the Cedar Lake area were affected while those at Mound Lake, a 1200-acre playa lake east of Brownfield, and 600-acre Rich Lake, north of Brownfield, still appeared healthy. (From Texas Parks and Wildlife News, Feb. 24 issue, page 4).

OLD BALD EAGLE MALE TAKES NEW YOUNG BRIDE

Anyone knowledgeable about Bald Eagles can tell you that they mate for life. Yet, hardly anyone knows for sure what happens when one of the pair dies.

Wildlife biologists monitoring Bald Eagle nesting sites for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department reported observing an unproductive nest for four years in Victoria County. This year biologists found a young female eagle on the nest. Coloration of her plumage indicated she was about three years old and just reaching maturity.

When biologists approached, she became nervous and left the nest, revealing two eaglets. The male stayed nearby for a while, then calmly returned to the nest and began brooding duties. The male was very tame and seemed familiar with all the traffic while the young female remained nervous, said biologist John Smith of Rockport. Based on his observations, Smith speculated that the old female died and the male took a young bride.

(From Texas Parks and Wildlife News, March 4 issue, page 5).

CLEARING HOUSE February 1982

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made on the Upper Texas Coast. How to read the CH: Species: Location--(how many) date, observers. Those common species which can be easily identified and are widely distributed in the UTC will also be listed, followed by the number of reports, with the lowest and highest number of individuals seen in parentheses, i.e. (1-40). Noteworthy sightings will be underlined, capitalized, or both, according to their status. All observations reported below must be accepted by the Checklist Committee (Ben Feltner, Jim Morgan, and Noel Pettingell) before they are considered valid and included in the next checklist.

Loon, Common: 8 reports (1-100), mostly at Texas City Dike
 Loon, Red-throated: Texas City Dike--(1)6,20,28,R,TG,EM...see notes
 Grebe, Horned: Freeport--(1)14,R
 Grebe, Eared: 10 reports (1-85)
 Grebe, Least: Jefferson Co.--(1)20,TG...see notes
 Grebe, Pied-billed: 12 reports (1-30)
 Pelican, White: 11 reports (2-200)
 BOOBY, MASKED: Gulf--(1)21,F...see notes

Gannet, Northern: Galv--(12 ad., 8 imm.)28,H; Gulf--(4 imm.)21,F...12-13 miles out
 Cormorant, Double-crested: 15 reports (1-400)
 Cormorant, Olivaceous: Chambers Co.--(2)6,R; (4)7,KW; Manvel--(3)21,KW; Bolivar--(10)9,A; (1)20,CC; Texas City--(12)28,B
 Anhinga: Brazoria Co.--(1)21,KW; (1)10,SW
 Heron, Great Blue: 17 reports (1-43)
 Heron, Green: Freeport--(1)14,R; Bolivar--(1)9,A
 Heron, Little Blue: 10 reports (1-16)
 Egret, Cattle: 14 reports (1-40)
 Egret, Reddish: 5 reports (1-3)
 Egret, Great: 20 reports (1-30)
 Egret, Snowy: 18 reports (1-50)
 Heron, Louisiana: 12 reports (1-10)
 Night Heron, Black-crowned: 5 reports (1-50)
 Bittern, American: W. Galv--(1)21,MAU
 Ibis, White-faced: 6 reports (1-200)
 Ibis, White: 6 reports (1-36)
 Spoonbill, Roseate: 8 reports (2-25)
 Goose, Canada: 6 reports (3-3500)
 Goose, White-fronted: 7 reports (5-2000)
 Goose, Snow: 11 reports (46-45,000)
 Goose, Snow (Blue): 6 reports (30-10,000)
 Goose, Ross': W. Harris Co.--(21)12,TG; 4 other reports (2-8),TG
 Mallard: 5 reports (1-125)
 Duck, Mottled: 9 reports (1-20)
 Gadwall: 10 reports (1-750)
 Pintail, Common: 8 reports (4-450)
 Teal, Green-winged: 8 reports (4-3000)
 Teal, Blue-winged: 9 reports (1-30)
 Teal, Cinnamon: Brazoria Co.--(2)12,R
 Wigeon, American: 7 reports (3-250)
 Shoveler, Northern: 13 reports (2-400)
 Duck, Wood: Clear Lake--(1)9,A
 Redhead: W. Galv--(2)21,MAU; W. Harris Co.--(1)8-14,TG
 Duck, Ring-necked: W. Galv--(6)21,MAU; (2)8,H; Freeport--(2)10,SW; W. Harris Co.--(6-10)8,13,TG; (80)7,(250)27,RP
 Canvasback: 12 reports (1-250)
 Scaup, Greater: Galv Co.--(5)8,(4)11,H; (400)9,A; (18)20,CC; Brazoria Co.--(1)12,R; W. Harris Co.--(6)8,A; Jefferson Co.--(48)20,TG; Texas City--(2)28,B
 Scaup, Lesser: 15 reports (6-1000)
 Goldeneye, Common: Kemah--(1)7,MAU; Texas City--(1)all month,MAU,R,B; W. Galv--(1)28,L
 Bufflehead: Texas City--(3-8)7-9, several observers
Oldsquaw: High Island--(1)23,27,Paul Micallif, Tyrrell & Mike Harvey
 ...see notes
 Scoter, White-winged: Bolivar--(2)7,E; (1 m.)9,A; (1 m.)20,TG
 Scoter, Surf: Bolivar--(2 m.)9,A
 Scoter, Black: Bolivar--(120)9,A...notes submitted
 Duck, Ruddy: 8 reports (6-1800)
 Merganser, Red-breasted: 7 reports (2-65)
 Vulture, Turkey: 18 reports (1-40)
 Vulture, Black: 6 reports (1-10)
 Kite, White-tailed: 3 reports (1-3)
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: 7 reports (1-2)
 Hawk, Cooper's: Houston--(1)28,SW; Brazoria Co.--(1)10,SW; W. Harris Co.--(1)21,TG
 Hawk, Red-tailed: 16 reports (1-40)
 Hawk, Red-tailed (Krider's): Damon--(1)10,SW; W. Harris Co.--(1)8-21, TG; (1)7,C
 Hawk, (Harlan's): W. Harris Co.--(1)8,A...previously described
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: 9 reports (1-5)
 HAWK, SWAINSON'S: Houston--(1)28,RS...see notes
 Hawk, White-tailed: Hwy. 2004--(1)13...notes submitted
 Hawk, Ferruginous: W. Harris Co.--(1)7,C; (1)8,A (both reports believed to be the same individual, an adult believed to be different bird from one reported earlier)...notes submitted; (1 imm.)21,TG...notes submitted

Eagle, Bald: Brazoria Co.--(2 ad., 1 young in nest)20,PM; W. Harris Co.--(1 imm.)8,A; (2 ad., 1 imm.)13,OG; Warren Lake--(2 ad.)7,C
 Hawk, Marsh: 16 reports (1-35)
 Osprey: Sheldon Reservoir--(1)17,CB
 Falcon, Peregrine: Galv bank bldg--(1)20,TG
 Kestrel, American: 19 reports (1-30)
 Prairie Chicken, Greater: Spaceland Airport--(8)14,(7)19,20, several observers; Texas City--(4)28,H...1½ mi. N of intersection of Loop 197 and Hwy. 146
 Bobwhite: 7 reports (1-21)
 Crane, Sandhill: 7 reports (1-300)
 Rail, King: 4 reports (1-4)
 Rail, Clapper: 6 reports (1-12)
 Rail, Virginia: Texas City Dike--(1)15,M; W. Harris Co.--(1)27,TG
 Gallinule, Common: 9 reports (1-20)
 Coot, American: 13 reports (1-1000)
 Plover, Semipalmated: 4 reports (1-5)
 Plover, Piping: 5 reports (2-45)
 Plover, Snowy: Bolivar--(1)9,20,TG
 Plover, Wilson's: Texas City Dike--(1)15,M; Jefferson Co.--(1)20,TG
 Killdeer: 21 reports (1-300)
 Plover, Black-bellied: 11 reports (1-200)
 Oystercatcher, American: Galv--(85)7,FV
 Turnstone, Ruddy: 2 reports (3,4)
 Snipe, Common: Gulf--(1)21...46 mi. out; 8 other reports (1-20)
 Curlew, Long-billed: 8 reports (1-21)
 Sandpiper, Spotted: 4 reports (1-2)
 Willet: 11 reports (1-60)
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 7 reports (1-20) Knot, Red: Bolivar flats--(50)28,D
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: 6 reports (1-8)
 Sandpiper, Least: 6 reports (4-125)
 Dunlin: 4 reports (10-400)
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: Bolivar--(10)6,R; (60)9,A; (25)28,D; Freeport--(100)14,R; (10)10,SW
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: 5 reports (1-100)
 dowitcher species: Gulf--(2)21,F...42 mi. out; 7 other reports (4-1000)
 Sandpiper, Stilt: W. Harris Co.--(1)12,TG...see notes
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: Freeport--(10 by call)10, SW
 Sandpiper, Western: 8 reports (1-2000)
 Godwit, Marbled: W. Galv--(2)28,L; Bolivar--(7)9,A; (15)28,D
 Sanderling: 11 reports (2-2000)
 Avocet, American: 6 reports (2-4000)
 Stilt, Black-necked: Bolivar (Bob's Bait Camp Road)--(1)9,A
 Jaeger, Pomarine: Gulf--(1)21,F...see notes
 Jaeger, Parasitic: Gulf--(1)21,F...see notes
 Gull, Glaucous: Galv--(1)28,H,L,B...see notes
 Gull, Greater Black-backed: Kemah--(1)7-28,MAu,W,A,B,EM...see notes
 Gull, Herring: 10 reports (2-250)
 Gull, Ring-billed: 18 reports (1-3000)
 Gull, Laughing: 13 reports (30-6000)
 Gull, Bonaparte's: 8 reports (1-150)
 Tern, Gull-billed: W. Galv--(2)8,M; Bolivar--(1)9,A
 Tern, Forster's: 12 reports (2-160)
 Tern, Common: Freeport--(5)12,(10)14,R; (2)10,SW; Galv--(3)9,A; (20)20,CC; (25)28,B; Jefferson Co.--(90)20,TG
 Tern, Royal: 11 reports (1-75)
 Tern, Sandwich: Texas City Dike--(1)15,M
 Tern, Caspian: 10 reports (1-20)
 Skimmer, Black: 6 reports (1-500)
 Dove, Rock: 13 reports (4-105)
 Dove, White-winged: Galv--(50)9,Hm...at Public Health Hosp.; 3 other reports at Galv (2,3,3)
 Dove, Mourning: 21 reports (2-600)
 Dove, Ground: W. Galv--(1)21,MAu; W. Harris Co.--(1)14,TG
 Dove, Inca: 11 reports (1-30)
 Ani, Groove-billed: W. Galv--(4)15,M; W. Harris Co.--(1)8,A
 Owl, Barn: Galv--(1)10,Hm; Manvel--(1)14,KW; Houston--(1)19,SW; San Bernard R--(1)20,PM; W. Harris Co.--(2)21,TG

Owl, Screech: Alcoa--(1)all month,DW; Manvel--(2)all month, KW
 Owl, Great Horned: W. Harris Co.--(1)21,TC
 Owl, Barred: W. Harris Co.--(1-4)all month,Esh; Manor Lake--(1)10,SW;
 San Bernard R--(1)20,PM
 Owl, LONG-EARED: Houston--(1 found injured)12...see notes
 Owl, Short-eared: W. Harris Co.--(3)7,BH
 Hummingbird, Rufous: Lake Jackson--(2)all month, Faye Humphrey; Yard
 in Houston--(1 ad. m.)all month,RP
Hummingbird, Buff-bellied: Freeport--(1)12,14,R...at feeder.Notes sub-
 mitted
 Kingfisher, Belted: 20 reports (1-18)
 Flicker, Common (Yellow-shafted): 12 reports (1-9)
 Woodpecker, Pileated: 8 reports (1-3)
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 14 reports (1-7)
 Woodpecker, Red-headed: Chambers Co.--(1)20,SW
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: 11 reports (1-2)
 Woodpecker, Hairy: Bear Cr. Pk.--(1)8,A; Houston(yard)--(1)18,RS
 Woodpecker, Downy: 9 reports (1-10)
 Phoebe, Eastern: 14 reports (1-16)
 Flycatcher, Vermilion: Anahuac NWR--(1)7,KW
 Lark, Horned: 4 reports (1-35)
 Swallow, Tree: Chambers Co.--(5)6,R; W. Galv--(1)28,L; Texas City--
 (200)28,TG
 Martin, Purple: Houston--(1)1,Glenn Cureton; (3)13,WC; (2-3)17-27,RS;
 (1)24,PM; (5)21,RP; Texas City--(10)15,W; Pearland--(1)17,(2)20,W;
 Friendswood--(2)5,MAU; W. Harris Co.--(4-12)24-28,Esh; (25)27,RP;
 Brazoria Co.--(5)21,E; (3)10,SW; Galv--(4)8,(10)11,M; (25)28,L;
 (200)9,A; (45)20,CC; (15)28,D; Jefferson Co.--(40)20,TG
 Jay, Blue: 17 reports (1-30)
 Crow, Common: 14 reports (2-40)
 Chickadee, Carolina: 13 reports (1-25)
 Titmouse, Tufted: 10 reports (1-25)
 Nuthatch, Brown-headed: Chambers Co.--(2)20,SW
 Creeper, Brown: W. Harris Co.--(1)Jan. 2,PV; (1)5,Esh; Chambers Co.--
 (1)20,SW
 Wren, House: 4 reports (1-4)
 Wren, Winter: White Oak Bayou--(1)28,WC
 Wren, Carolina: 9 reports (1-20)
 Wren, Marsh: W. Galv--(1)21,MAU; Bolivar--(3)6,R; Freeport--(1)10,SW
 Wren, Sedge: 4 reports (1-5)
 Mockingbird, Northern: 20 reports (1-30)
 Thrasher, Brown: 10 reports (1-8)
 Robin, American: 13 reports (2-8000); seem to have increased in number
 since early winter
 Thrush, Hermit: Brazoria Co.--(2)21,E; Lake Charlotte--(2)6,R; W. Har-
 ris Co.--(2)7,C
 Bluebird, Eastern: 7 reports (1-6)
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 6 reports (1-5)
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: Lake Charlotte--(1)20,SW; White Park--(1)6,R
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 15 reports (1-15)
 Pipit, Water: 15 reports (1-50)
 Pipit, Sprague's: Texas City--(3)7,MAU; W. Harris Co.--(1)8,A; Free-
 port--(2)21,EH
 Waxwing, Cedar: 7 reports (5-150); seem to have increased in number
 since early winter
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 20 reports (1-35)
 Starling: 17 reports (2-250)
 Vireo, White-eyed: E. Harris Co.--(1)14,MAU
 Vireo, Solitary: 5 reports (1-15)
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: 5 reports (1)
Warbler, Nashville: W. Galv--(1)8,M...needs notes
Warbler, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle): 16 reports (1-80)...This month Ted
 Eubanks netted two birds in his yard which he had banded there on
 Dec.15, 1980 and Jan.10, 1981.
Warbler, Black-throated Green: High Island--(1)9,Kathleen Brannan
 (fide Tony Callucci)...needs notes
 Warbler, Pine: 3 reports (1-12)
 Warbler, Palm: W. Galv--(8)21,MAU
Ovenbird: Galv--(1)10,Hm...yard; needs notes
 Yellowthroat, Common: 4 reports (1-8)

Warbler, Wilson's: W. Galv--(1)11,M; Arboretum--(1)13,BH
 Sparrow, House: 15 reports (3-100)
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 18 reports (2-60)
 Meadowlark, Western: Damon--(1 by song)10,SW
 Blackbird, Yellow-headed: W. Harris Co.--(1 female)7,C...see notes
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 21 reports (1-10,000)
 Oriole, Orchard: Clear Lake City--(1)20,Buz and Sara Peine...see notes
 Oriole, Northern (Bullock's): Bellaire--(1)2,E; Galv--(1 fm.)17,Hm...
 yard
 Blackbird, Rusty: W. Harris Co.--(1)12,TG; (12)15,TG; (4)27,RP
 Blackbird, Brewer's: 7 reports (5-250)
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: 5 reports (2-45)
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 15 reports (1-2000)
 Grackle, Common: 15 reports (10-10,000)
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 12 reports (4-5000)
 Cardinal: 20 reports (1-40)
 Siskin, Pine: Friendswood--(1)18,19,(6)26,MAu; Bellaire--(50)all month,
 E; W. Harris Co.--(1-2)27,28,Esh...Ted Eubanks netted one in his
 yard which he had banded there on March 17,1981.
 Goldfinch, American: 13 reports (5-200)
 Towhee, Eastern: W. Harris Co.--(1)8,A
 Sparrow, Savannah: 9 reports (5-200)
 Sparrow, Le Conte's: W. Galv--(1)8,M; W. Harris Co.--(2 banded)21,TG;
 (2 banded)27,TG
 Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: Bolivar--(2)28,D
 Sparrow, Seaside: 3 reports (1-5)
 Sparrow, Vesper: 2 reports (4,10)
 Sparrow, Lark: Damon--(4)10,SW
 SPARROW, BLACK-THROATED: W. Harris Co.--(1)7,BH...see notes
 Junco, Dark-eyed (Slate-colored): W. Harris Co.--(nc)all month, Esh
 Sparrow, Chipping: Algoa--(3-12)1-7, (10)20,DW; W. Harris Co.--(50)
 all month,Esh; (10)8,A; Chambers Co.--(15)6,R
 Sparrow, Field: Algoa--(1-3)all month,DW
 Sparrow, Harris': W. Harris Co.--(1)Jan. 9,PV
 Sparrow, White-crowned: 4 reports (1-14)
 Sparrow, White-throated: 10 reports (1-16)
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: 8 reports (1-12)
 Sparrow, Swamp: 7 reports (1-35)
 Sparrow, Song: 4 reports (1-2)

Clearing House Contributors - February, 1982: A--Tony Gallucci, Shirley Hartman, Leona McDowell, Mary Dobinski, Mildred Clark; B--Ron & Marcia Braun, Tony Gallucci; BH--Bob Honig; C--Randy Pinkston, Jerry Caraviotis, Matt Pinkston; CB--Charles Browning; CC--Houston Community College field trip, led by Tony Gallucci; D--Randy Pinkston, Jerry Caraviotis; DW--Diane Wise; E--Ted & Virginia Eubanks; EM--Elric McHenry; Esh--Dick & Vesta Eshbaugh; F--Larry & Martha Ballard, Alan Mueller, Pat Bolton, Les Chamness, Al Clarke; H--Bill & Jean Harwell, Ray & Ann Booth; Hm--John & Jane Hamilton; KW--Kris Wilson; L--Linda Roach, Ben Feltner; M--John & Jane Hamilton, Alan Mueller; MAu--Mike Austin; OG--Ornithology Group field trip; PM--Peggy Milstead; PV--Peter Vennema; R--Don & Lee Richardson, Gill & Linda Douglas, Craig Sims; RF--Randy Pinkston; RS--Robert L. Sylvester, Jr.; SW--Steve Williams; TG--Tony Gallucci; W--Bob & Edith Willman; WC--Wesley Cureton

Field Notes - February, 1982

Red-throated Loon: small loon with white spots on dark back. Nape and crown paler and grayer than nearby Common Loons. Bill much smaller and noticeably upturned. Channel side of Texas City Dike around Curl's Bait Camp.

--Elric McHenry

Least Grebe: seen at 40 yds. swimming in surf just west of Sea Rim St. Fk. First thought to be a Pied-billed, but close examination revealed a thin, straight, pointed, all dark bill and a yellow eye, which contrasted with the all brown winter plumage. Had a distinct whitish throat and white wing patch.

--Tony Gallucci

MASKED BOOBY: brownish-black head, dirty white body, dark tail. Definite separation between colors of head, body, and tail. Seen at 50 yds. in clear morning light.

--Larry Ballard

Oldsquaw: seen near Shorty's Longest Pier near High Island. About size of Lesser Scaup. Head white except for large black oval spot behind and below eye and narrow black cap extending from forehead to back of head. The white of the neck went down low on the breast. Bill black with orange at base. Eye dark. Back and wings a mixture of black and brown. The black of the lower breast connected with the dark of the back. Belly and undersides white. Tail feathers came to a sharp point, but no needlelike feathers were present. Bill seemed very small. Dove often. Seemed very tame.

--Paul Micallif, Tyrrell Harvey

SWAINSON'S HAWK: shaped like red-tail, but wings more pointed. Breast, belly, wing linings, and flight feathers dark. Tail gray with vague bands. Flew in long glides, during which wings were held slightly above horizontal. Seen at 9:30 AM and 5:30 PM over open field with scattered trees on Briarforest between Dairy-Ashford and Hwy. 6 for about 2 minutes. Looked exactly like dark form of Swainson's in Peterson's Field Guide to Texas. Seen overhead. Not a Turkey Vulture because of the large head. Not a Harlan's Hawk because of lack of mottling on tail. I have seen this species before.

--Robert L. Sylvester, Jr.

Stilt Sandpiper: feeding by probing with dowitchers. Smaller and slimmer than dowitchers. Longer-legged and larger than nearby peeps. Long bill drooped at tip. Gray back, white rump.

--Tony Gallucci

Fomarine Jaeger: observed three times as it followed gulls around boats. First one seen harassing Ring-billed Gull. Second and third sightings were probably the same bird. Immature. Bulky. Hawklike flight. No central tail feather visible. Identification based on size and flight. About size of Ring-billed Gull. Plumage grayish, black, and brownish.

--Larry Ballard

Parasitic Jaeger: sharply pointed central tail feathers, wedge-shaped tail. Seen in fairly bright light at ca. 60 yds.

--Larry Ballard

Glaucous Gull: much larger than Ring-billed and Laughing Gulls. Nearly same size as young Herring Gulls, or slightly larger, but much larger than adult Herring. Pure white with few colored markings. Feet flesh-colored. Base of bill fleshy-pink, but lighter than legs. Bill blackish near tip, but actual tip of bill light in color. Eye very light without ring. Body quite heavy. Legs shorter than Herring's. Tail extended 1-2 inches beyond tail. Bill straight with very slight swelling near tip. Wings in flight appeared quite short, but narrowly pointed. Because of relatively small size and relatively small bill, this bird seemed to be Ft. Barrow race. Seen on East Beach, Galveston.

--Tony Gallucci

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL: probably same bird as last year. Seems to be 4th- or 5th-winter female. Only slightly larger than Herring Gulls. Bill light yellow with dark subterminal spot on both mandibles. Red spot forming on lower mandible just below and contiguous to the dark spot. Bill tip almost white. Eye dark, but at close range and in good light appears dark brownish gold. Eyelid very pale. Head all white except for very light streaking on crown and nape. Mantle gray-black with very subtle brownish undertones visible in good light. Wings in flight appear longer than those of Herring Gulls. Wingbeat slower and more powerful. Wings in flight show white trailing edges and large white area at end of outer primaries. The end of the outermost primary is all white. There is no mirror separated from the white tip--apparently the mirror and the white tip have merged. These white areas in the wing seem to be the main point of difference from last year's bird. The penultimate primary also has a largely white end, but it is almost separated into two areas by an intruding black area. The underparts, flanks, rump, and tail are white without flecks or streaks. Legs and

feet pinkish flesh color.

--Elric McHenry

LONG-EARED OWL: found injured by construction worker on Feb. 12 at intersection of Holcombe and Hwy. 288. Died the next day. Passed through several hands and finally examined by Ben Feltner and Linda Roach. About 12 inches long. Weighed 240 grams. Gray overall with touch of ochre-buff mottled into the plumage. Facial disc reddish ochre with black border. Lores white. Throat dark brown with heavy vertical buff and cream streaks. Breast and abdomen have a dark "arrow" pattern. Tarsi and small feet extensively feathered with ochre-buff. Mottled dark brown, with hint of buff, cover head, back, rump, and wings. Upper surface of outer primaries have wide bars of alternating colors: dark brown and buff at base grading to brown with mottled gray bars at tips. Underside of wings are solid pale gray-buff with dark gray barring towards tip. A bold blackish "wristmark" accents the underwing. Eartufts are approx. 1½ in. long, blackish with white mottled edges on the inside and ochre on the outside. Skin will probably be donated to the LSU Museum of Ornithology. The 8th acceptable record for the Upper Texas Coast.

--Linda Roach

Yellow-headed Blackbird: spotted this female bird in a flock of red-wings and Brown-headed Cowbirds along Logenbaugh Rd., just east of its intersection with Katy-Hockley Rd. In flight, immediately noticed larger size and yellow anteriorly. Later, we watched it a minute or so as it foraged on plowed ground. Noted dark brown-black plumage and distinct yellow from chin to chest and yellow superciliary line. From as close as 20 meters with 10X and 7X binocs.

--Randy Pinkston, Jerry Caraviotis, Matt Pinkston

Orchard Oriole: about size of Brown-headed Cowbird. Greenish yellow in color with a black throat. Fairly long, thin bill. Has been seen several times since the first day.

--Buz and Sara Peine

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW: seen early in the morning in a fence row thicket on Clay Rd. between Hwy. 6 and Katy. I had stopped to look at some sparrows, and this bird flew from behind me into the thicket. The gray back and white outer tail feathers made me think it was a junco. When it perched on an exposed branch, however, I was able to see clearly the black chin and face with two white facial stripes. It then flew back across the road and hopped around in grass with White-crowned Sparrows. I left and then came back 10 or 15 minutes later and saw the bird again. I figured the bird was a little out of range, but didn't realize that there is only one other record. Having only recently arrived in Houston from West Virginia, I didn't know anybody to call until I read The Spoonbill. 8 X30 binocs.

--Bob Honig

MINUTES OF OG MEETING, MARCH 4, 1982

Ron Braun opened the meeting. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The treasurer reported a balance of \$3,943.03.

Announcements were as follows:

Paul Jones: The OG aluminum drive accepts any kind of aluminum. Beverage cans bring the highest prices. Take a sack and collect cans on bird trips.

David Matson: The Annual Spring Round-Up is scheduled for Saturday, April 24th. Birders from the entire state of Texas are requested to send records of that day to him. Local birders will meet at Luby's Cafeteria at Baybrook Mall (Bay Area Blvd. exit off the Gulf Freeway) at 7:30 PM to share results of the day.

Ron Braun: HAS meeting, March 24th at Museum of Natural Science, 7:30 PM. Ted Eubanks will speak on UTC spring migration. HAS field trip, March 27th, 7:00 AM, Lewis Smith Sanctuary. Auction on May 29rd at Edith Moore Sanctuary to benefit HAS and Lewis Smith Sanctuary. Rare birds seen this month: Glaucous Gull at East Beach, Galveston; Oldsquaw near Shorty's Longest Pier; Prairie Chickens off Hwy. 146;

(continued on outside flap)

Greater Black-backed Gull still at Kemah. Long-eared Owl was found dead near Holcombe and Hwy. 288. Clay-colored Robin and Tropical Parula at Sarita rest stop.

Mary Ann Chapman: Peregrine will hold three 3-day seminars on April weekends. Peregrine's Alaska trip will include visit to Barrow this year.

Steve Williams: ONC air trip to Santa Fe on Memorial Day weekend. Call Steve's answering service if you are interested: 661-0726.

Red Eubanks: Public hearing on Mitchell Woods in Galveston coming up. HAS and ONC conservation groups would be happy for you to help them.

A Screech-Owl print by Charles Frace was auctioned to Gene Heitzman for \$37.50.

Ted Eubanks made a motion that a regular meeting be held May 6th, and the annual picnic be held the last of the month or the first of June. The motion was seconded and passed. (Call Ron if you have a suggestion where the picnic can be held.)

Emory Froelich introduced Dr. Harold Haley, who showed some of his beautiful slides taken in the Galapagos Islands.

Ellen Red, Secretary

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Linda Walsh, 702 Marshall, Houston 77006
Annual Membership dues: \$7.00 (ONC-\$5.00, OG-\$2.00) 528-0139
Annual Subscriptions: \$4.00

Send material for THE SPOONBILL by 25th of month to:
Randy Pinkston, 5447 Kuldell, Houston 77096 667-1334

Send bird records for Clearing House before 3rd of month to:
Wesley Cureton, 6623 Grovewood, Houston 77008 862-5255

Send requests for OG information, checklists, maps to:
Maxine Davis, 10602 Cedarhurst, Houston 77096 723-8559