



THE SPOONBILL

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

COMING EVENTS

- Saturday
Oct. 18 ONC field trip to Big Thicket, Photography Group sponsored. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Big Thicket Museum on Hwy 770 in Saratoga (distance from Houston is approximately 77 miles. Bring drinking water, lunch insect repellent. The varied habitat to be covered may well attract a number of bird species during the early migratory season.
- Monday
Oct. 27 ONC's first film of the season, "Africa's Wild Zoo Parade", will be shown at 8:00 p.m. in a new place, the auditorium of Pershing Junior School, 7000 Braes Blvd., just a few blocks south of the 3800 block of Bellaire Blvd
- Friday
Oct. 31 Audubon's first film of the season, "Sri Landa (Ceylon) - The Resplendent Land", at 8:00 p.m., in the Houston Music Hall.
- Saturday
Nov. 1 Audubon field trip to Anahuac NWR, led by Margaret Anderson. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at entrance to refuge by registration building. Bring lunch and insect repellent. Those that can share a ride and those that need a ride, please call Holly Hobart between 8-9:30 p.m. on Monday evenings, 774-3054.
- Tuesday
Nov. 4 Regular meeting of Photography Group, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Manor Auditorium, 4141 S. Braeswood Blvd. In a program of slides to be presented by Mr. J.C. Faris "Wild Flowers of Central Texas" will bloom again.
- Weekend
Nov. 8-9 ONC Little Thicket Sanctuary Open House. Saturday - 10 a.m. until....and on Sunday from breakfast until 3 p.m. Bring water (none available at the Sanctuary) and food. Camping will be permitted Friday and Saturday nights in the Cove area. Directions: IH 45 north to Willis, turn right on FM 1097, proceed to FM 150, turn right to town of Evergreen, turn right on FM 945, go 2.2 miles, entrance is on left. This is a great opportunity to get better acquainted with our Little Thicket.
- Tuesday
Nov. 11 ONC regular meeting, 8:00 p.m., Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive. Program by S. Harold Reuter, "Our Underwater World". This should be a real treat.
- Saturday
Nov. 15 OG field trip to Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Stuckey's, 10 miles west of Sealy on IH 10. Bring lunch and insect repellent. Mr. Lee Herzberger will lead us. Prairie Chickens will not be booming, but some will probably be seen, as well as migratory and early wintering birds.

Future dates to be planned for now:

- Nov. 27-30 Victor Emanuel will offer seminars on bird finding and bird identification in the Rockport area on two dates, Nov. 27-30, 1975, and Feb. 12-15, 1976. The seminars will emphasize habitat preferences, field identification techniques and the use of the tape recorder as a birding aid. Areas to be covered include Aransas NWR, Padre Island, Mustang Island, Rockport, Corpus Christi, and the King Ranch. Part of the seminar will include a boat trip to see the Whooping Cranes. Topics to be emphasized include identification of hawks, shorebirds and sparrows. The seminar fee will be \$35. For further information, contact Emanuel, 1603 West Clay, Houston, Texas 77019.

December 20- OG's Houston Christmas Count

Dec. 29-Jan. 4 - A Winter trip to Rancho del Cielo. The ranch is maintained as a biological station by Texas Southmost College of Brownsville, Texas, and is located at about 3700 feet elevation on eastern flank of the Sierra de Guatemala in southwest Tamaulipas, Mexico. Participants are encouraged

to meet trip leader in Brownsville on morning of Dec. 29, to proceed to Gomez Farias in a group. Cost is \$170.00 per person, with check for \$10.00 (service charge) made payable to Fred S. Webster, Jr. and a check for \$160.00 made payable to Gorgas Science Society. Send checks to Fred S. Webster, Jr., 4926 Strass Drive, Austin, Texas 78731, or call him for further information - 512 451-1669.

Feb. 21-29 The trip by bus to Eastern Mexico that Bill Mealy has agreed to coordinate and lead for the OG, will cost approximately \$220. Bill has already signed up a number of people toward the maximum of 36. For further information contact Bill at 664-7862.

August 13-29, 1976 The trip to California and the Pacific Northwest, coordinated by Paul Nimmons will cost approximately \$570, exclusive of meals. Paul is asking anyone interested to contact him by October 15. A \$50.00 deposit will be required. For further information call Paul - 682-3597.

PELAGIC BIRDING by T. Ben Feltner

Over the past few years I have come to realize that pelagic birding is one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences that one can undertake, and this year, while leading an annual tour to the Pacific Northwest, I was able to participate in a pelagic trip once again.

Looking for birds that are found only in the great expanses of open ocean is exhilarating because little enough is yet known of these species that one never knows what will show up. Admittedly the majority of true pelagics are not gaudy, and for the most part fairly silent; but their romance is their domain. Shearwaters and petrels are just not found inland except by accident, and then the bird is usually dying from the after effects of a hurricane or disease. Great care must be taken in identifying pelagic birds, but with study and several field trips under your belt you can begin to name some at great distances by wingbeat, comparative size and coloration.

Our trip began rather inauspiciously, Westport was socked in by fog and visibility was down to about fifty yards. A successful pelagic trip is to a great extent dictated by the ability to see the birds and chase after them with the boat, or by chumming them to the boat by throwing overboard ladles of rancid suet. In the latter case the birds have to be able to see you.

Forty-five minutes out of Westport is a reef and the captain advised all aboard to sit down while crossing it. The advice proved sound as the thirty minute passage was very rough. During this episode of turmoil we started to have our first casualties. Ruddy complexions turned sallow and various people decided that pancakes, eggs and ham were not nearly as sustaining as they had previously thought. All of the members of my tour had received dramamine a half hour before departure, but others on board had not. It was not necessary to chum for a good hour after that ride.

About an hour out we spotted our first pelagic birds. Skimming along in the wave troughs off the starboard bow were a group of Sooty Shearwaters. Fairly large, all brown birds with dirty white wing linings, Sooty Shearwaters may well be one of the most abundant birds in the world. I have seen them on all the pelagic trips I have taken in both the Atlantic and Pacific waters. While we were engaged watching the Shearwaters, someone yelled "Fork-tailed Petrel" and a mass of humanity surged to the port side just in time to see a gray fleck disappear into the fog. So much for that Petrel.

After a fairly uneventful hour or so, in which the more vindictive of us continued to eat, a large bird was seen from the stern gliding slowly in the wake of the boat. To my great joy it turned out to be a Black-footed Albatross, and despite the fact it is a small albatross, its size was impressive. A birder's first albatross is a great event. One is compelled to be impressed, the fact that we later saw about 40 or so did not detract from the awe of seeing them. They dwarf all other pelagic birds. As the bird swept by the boat it seemed to possess a detached and sagacious expression. On land they may be "goonies" but out there they were Albatrosses.

By this time we had arrived at one of the off-shore fishing banks, and scurrying back and forth in our wake were hundreds of shearwaters. One could now pick out the larger Pink-footed Shearwaters with their all pale underparts. Pinkfoots are great gluttons and will practically climb aboard after chum. Sooties seem more reserved and tend toward better manners. Here and there were Fulmars, whose plumages vary from gull-white with gray mantles to solid gray-brown with varying shades between the extremes. They are shorter winged than the Shearwaters but they are extremely graceful flyers. At one point a Shearwater the size of a Pink-footed shot by; it was all dark brown with a yellow bill and pink feet. It was the second time I had ever seen the Pale-footed (now Flesh-footed) Shearwater.

Flitting daintily along side the boat were seven little black birds just a little larger than Barn Swallows, with slightly forked tails and white rumps. They poised with us momentarily, then dispersed into the fog: Leach's Storm-Petrels.

Attracted by the commotion over the Shearwaters, three adult Pomarine Jaegers came to look us over. One of them dashed after a Western Gull which was desperately trying to swallow an oversize piece of chum.

The boat was now surrounded by pelagic birds, some twenty or so Black-footed Albatrosses among them. Several more Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels came by and this time obligingly permitted themselves to be closely scrutinized. They are readily identifiable by the very light plumage.

Common Murres were bobbing about, invariably in pairs comprised of one adult and one immature. The boat practically ran over a tiny Cassin's Auklet that escaped at the last possible moment by diving straight down. Several more were seen well on the way back. Once the boat was circled by a Tufted Puffin, a truly incongruous bird with a white-wedged face cowed by an enormous orange bill and overlaid with two golden plumes running the length of its head. An Arctic Tern passed off the starboard with its head hunched well into its shoulders, unlike the Common Terns which are much more rakish and longer headed in flight. Just before making port we flushed ten or so Northern Phalaropes, and finally a Marbled Murrelet feeding with six or seven Pigeon Guillemots.

We were at sea from 8 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. All of us were sodden with spray, but the trip was well worth the discomforts. Practically the whole trip was made under foggy conditions and considered by those more experienced than some to be an off-day, but I remember a pelagic trip in the Gulf of Mexico when the best bird seen was a Kentucky Warbler!

SMOKY MOUNTAIN BIRDS by Wes Cureton

This past June I spent a day in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where even molehills look like mountains to such a flatlander as I. While I saw almost no new species, it was interesting to see on the breeding grounds some of our Gulf Coast migrants and winter residents.

Before actually getting to the park, I visited country cousins and, of course, observed the birds there. Among others were scarlet tanagers, overbird, and worm-eating warbler near Asheville, North Carolina, and broad-winged hawk, whip-poor-will, rough winged swallow, Louisiana waterthrush, and goldfinches near Newport, Tennessee. Neither place produced the desired ruffed grouse, however, which is called pheasant by the locals.

Entering the park, I hid myself to the Canadian zone forests which cover the upper Smokies, in hopes of seeing some of the northern birds which are at or near the southern limit of their range. Walking the half-mile trail to the top of Clingman's Dome (6643 feet), the second highest point in the eastern United States, I saw solitary vireo, golden-crowned kinglet, black-capped chickadee (my only lifer), and slate-colored junco. In fact I came to assume every small bird was a junco until proven otherwise; they were literally everywhere. Over the observation tower, chimney swifts dived and sailed with a daring I have never seen in Houston.

I then took a two-mile trail past briar patches and through eery evergreen forests to Andrew Bald, an open mountain meadow. On the way I recognized a song from one of Peter Paul Kellogg's bird recordings--sweet sweet sweet I'll switch you. Sure enough it was a chestnut-sided warbler, the first of several. The recording also helped identify the veery's song. Farther along the trail were robins, catbirds, hairy woodpeckers, blackburnian and canada warblers, and winter wrens. The long, loud, rolling trills of this tiny bird are unforgettable. There was also a blue-gray gnatcatcher. Back at the parking lot I saw foraging ravens, and a stop at a scenic overlook added cedar waxwing, red-eyed vireo, and rufous-sided towhee to the list. In the lowlands I saw barn swallow and parula warblers.

Two interesting facts about the Smokies is that there are few water birds, and, because of the ever-spreading forest, such open-country birds as bobwhite and mockingbird are less common now than before the park was established.

"OUR" UPPER COAST STATE PARKS

Two State Parks, Sea Rim, between High Island and Sabine Pass, and Galveston Island, between 13-mile road and Jamaica Beach, are in our checklist area, convenient to reach, great examples of resource management at its best, and we should all get familiar with them.

Sea Rim is a bit more difficult for the birder to get around in, but, in answer to an inquiry about casual birding, as opposed to group field trips, Bob Fish, Park Biologist at Sea Rim, had this to say:

"The back roads that we have are not normally open to the public as such, however we would be happy to make them available to birders upon request. Of course, the beach area is always open, and our lake system, mud boat trails/canoe trails, are available to those people who have small boats or canoes. The best time to visit the park depends on what you want to see. The Fall and Spring seasons usually provide some good sightings of migrants, and, of course, during the winter months we retain a good population of waterfowl".

Mr. Fish commented that he had noticed an increase in the numbers of Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned night herons this year over last. He also requested any help we could give on their preliminary checklist, so, if you visit the Park, be sure you turn in your sightings.

And those of you who were on the ONC field trip in September to Galveston Island State Park know what an added jewel we have to the park system. Pete Peltier and Bill Granberry, park superintendents, made us most welcome, told of plans for the Park and gave us a guided tour, then let us wander the trails at will. Already there are several trails (with boardwalks over the water courses), and two observation platforms, and projected are birders/photographers blinds, planting certain shrubs and trees, indigenous to the area, that will attract and harbor birds, and establishing an area that will be appealing to some birds for a rookery, and many other ideas. In fact, we gained the impression that Peltier and Granberry are chock-full of resource management ideas for this park, though right now they are involved in the "nuts and bolts" work of getting it ready to open in several months.

We must be especially grateful to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for establishing this "might be" last bastion of natural habitat in the midst of burgeoning development. In fact, David Marrack has just called to our attention a "Notice of Public Hearing" on an application of Mitchell Development Corporation for a Department of the Army permit to dredge a connecting canal, a two-loop canal system with finger canals and erect piers, bulkheads, and boat launches in West Bay and Eckerts Bayou at Stewart Road between 11 and 12 mile roads, just east of the golf course. The hearing will be conducted by the Galveston District, Corps of Engineers, at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 6, 1975, at the Main Ballroom, Holiday Inn, 600 Strand, Galveston, Texas.

FIELD TRIP REPORT by Glenn Cureton

On Saturday, September 20, 26 members and 3 guests met east of the San Jacinto River for the Ornithology Group's first major field trip of the season. We were led by Dorothy and David Lefkovits, who know the area well. Our first stop, the Baytown Civic Center, produced a brown creeper, brown thrasher, catbirds and flickers. Then it was on to the Baytown Tunnel where we saw Least Bitterns, Shovelers, Mottled and Ruddy ducks, and the Dauphin's summing eared grebes. Perhaps the highlight of the day was a group of Wilson's Phalaropes. Bayland Park didn't reveal many birds, but a lot of Turk's Cap and hummers made it a pleasant stop. Lunch and tallying were taken at Roseland Park. David Lefkovits kindly took a small group to Tri-city Beach and Cedar Point, where several hundred white pelicans were seen, making the day's total 74 species. We would like to personally thank the Lefkovits for leading our trip, and for making it an enjoyable day. We are all looking forward to the time when we can accept their kind invitation and visit them at their new home.

AROUND AND ABOUT

** Harry and Avis Brister, and Paul and Margaret Jones, attended the Texas Fish-eating Bird Conference, at Columbus, Texas, in August. A review was made of the Fish-eating Bird study from May 1974 to the present, reports were made on sampling rookeries, wildlife habitat mapping, submergent vegetation mapping, coastal zone management, act, etc. Represented were Texas P&WD, Texas A&M, Texas A&I, General Land Office, National Audubon Society, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission. Reports were made on results of the surveys made this year by the regional representatives. The four OG members were most impressed by the amount of dedicated work made evident by all these reports. These surveys, and conferences to sum up findings should, after a few years, clarify the birds' histories, and show, for one instance, whether or not the Reddish Egret is really declining, as is now believed.

** Tess Barry sent some information that shows trapping of the cowbirds in the Kirtland Warbler nesting areas seem to have shown some good results, with cowbird parasitism completely eliminated in three study areas.

** We, personally, wish some sort of control like that could be undertaken at Santa Ana NWR, where the cowbirds heavily parasitize the Lichenstein and other orioles. We were glad to hear last week, that the nesting Rose-throated Becards, discovered by Roger Zimmerman last spring, fledged three young, all becards, no cowbirds. When P&MJ saw the nest which was almost completed, cowbirds were hovering around, as though they were just waiting. A Lichenstein Oriole nest in the same tree was also being "cased". Wayne Shifflett, manager, also told us that Fulvous Tree-ducks had fledged there for the first time.

** On our upper Texas coast, most birders have heard enough about our four kinds of poisonous snakes, that they show caution when in the field. But several readers sent in a clipping about a real danger to birders: It reports the case of a bird watcher who was so oblivious to other forms of wildlife he was eaten by a crocodile!

** Ben Feltner did some research on the parakeet at San Luis Pass, and has identified it as a "Nanday Conure, *Nadaya Nanday*", native to Paraguay, Brazil and northern Argentina. There seems no doubt it is an escapee.

** With all the Mexican field trips being offered, you might be interested in a new newsletter, published twice a year, by John Arvin, called Mexican Birds Newsletter, which is intended "to pass along useful and interesting information from birder to birder so that our knowledge of the avifauna of this remarkable and fascinating country be expanded to our mutual benefit and pleasure". A subscription of \$4.00 a year, for 2 issues plus an initial issue at no charge. Address mail to Mexican Birds Newsletter, c/o John Arvin, Box 514, Edinburg, Texas 78539.

** Look! A real rarity! Some Sabine's Gulls (pelagic birds) were seen by a number of West Texas birders at Red Lake (on IH 20 east of Stanton). There were two adult gulls and two immatures (according to THE PHALAROPE, Midland Naturalists newsletter). There are only four previous records in Texas, and all but one of those was on the Gulf Coast.

*We all know that we can wander around the woods, or along hedgerows and make sounds like "Spsh, Spsh" and sometimes call up birds. Now, according to the August Smithsonian magazine (by way of Chuck Campbell), we can know why. "Spsh", it turns out, mimics the vocalizations of certain tropical birds with which North American birds get together at the end of their migration. The migrants, according to Dr. Neal G. Smith of the Smithsonian's Tropical Research Institute, have learned to hang around the tropical natives so that they can take advantage of local intelligence as to food sources.

** We get excited and send out Rare Bird calls when an old world visitor appears, but it seems England had some visitors this fall that sent the birders to their books and the field: Yellow-bellied sapsuckers, Tennessee warblers, Laughing gulls, a Bobolink, and a towhee, plus the Greater Yellow-legs, all birds which are rarely seen in Britain. Some of the birds were thought to have been blown off course during their annual migration to the south and taken refuge aboard ships before flying inland in search of food.

✓ ** Thanks to David Riskind, of TP&W, we have a number of checklists of various Parks, which are listed below. These will be available at the next meeting, or, if you want one before then, call the editor - 665-4197.

Checklist of the Birds of Palmetto State Park - August 1975
 Preliminary Checklist to the Birds of Eisenhower State Park - August 1975
 Birds of the Davis Mountains State Scenic Park, A Seasonal Checklist- July 1975
 A Checklist of the Birds of Palo Duro Canyon State Park - August 1975
 Checklist of the Birds of Meridian State Park - June 1975
 Cfitters of the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park - August 1975

Mr. Riskind requests that Park visitors' new and unusual sightings be reported either by letter or by BIRD SIGHTING REPORT forms available at the various park headquarters. Checklists for State Parks are compiled from sightings of many birders, and your sightings can contribute to adding to or updating them. So please send your sightings to David H. Riskind, Head, Resource Management Section, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, John H. Reagan Bldg., Austin, Texas 78701

** Also the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has available a Waterfowl ID booklet that should help birders as well as the sportsmen for whom it is intended. A 51-page booklet, it includes paintings of ducks in various stages of plumage, photos of wings, and descriptions of distinguishing characteristics. The publication is available by sending a check or money order for 71 cents to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, John H. Reagan Bldg., Austin, Texas 78701, and requesting Bulletin #51, "Waterfowl Identification in the Central Flyway".

FROM THE OG LIBRARY - Avis Brister, Librarian, 681-6456

KENTUCKY BIRDS - a review by Sarah Gordon

by Barbour, Peterson, Rust, Shadowen and Whitt

This book is a finding guide to Kentucky birds giving the physiographic regions of the state ranging from the lowest elevation in the western part to the eastern mountain region. Listed are all the birds reliably found in Kentucky, by order and by family, giving description of the bird, when and where normally found, which are nesters, etc. In addition the authors furnish a guide to bird finding areas which would be most helpful and are quite informative. Complementing the text are photographs of birds (all in color) together with some scenic areas. Among the best pictures are a number of bird photographs taken by Dirk Hagemeyer, one of OG's talented members.

Kentucky is a land of beauty, particularly in spring and autumn. This book is recommended for those who are traveling to or through Kentucky - or for just interesting reading by nature devotees.

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, October 2, 1975

Harry Brister, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to another exciting evening with the Ornithology Group.

There being no corrections or additions to the minutes of the August Meeting as published in THE SPOONBILL, the minutes were accepted as published.

Accepted as read was the Treasurer's Report for the period August 1 through September 30, 1975. It showed a balance on hand as of August 1, of \$741.35, income of \$127.10, expenses of \$219.86, leaving a balance on hand of \$648.59. The Treasurer announced that two boxes, one containing old records, the other old checklists, are on their way to being stored at Bayou Manor. Mrs. Gillette also reported she had received an acknowledgment of OG's memorial to Arlie McKay, and a letter from the publisher of Jim Lane's books saying that the "Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas" has been sold out but that Jim hopes the new revision will be ready sometime this winter. Jim is also revising his Southern California Guide.

Friends of Hazel Nichols, who is particularly active in TOS, are advised that she fell and broke an ankle. The break is a bad one and recuperation will be lengthy. It was suggested that some of us might want to send her a card.

The Secretary reported that the old records at Bayou Manor have been checked to see if we have had a Bulk 3rd class postal permit in the past. This research turned up nothing, so the ONC Treasurer has been requested to check the individual entries in the books during the 1960's. A search of the Club's safe deposit box revealed no permit. So we are still following up on this project. Maxine Davis said she mailed out 212 copies of THE SPOONBILL the last time, 12 more than is required to qualify us for the minimum mailing under a bulk 3rd class permit.

Gladys Galbreath announced she had mailed out 16 publicity notices, using the publicity list compiled by Mary Marrs.

Avis Brister called attention to the lists of books in our library, one list covering the books given to us from Edna Miner Fielding's collection, the other listing books donated by everyone else. Julia Bradley reviewed briefly a book she had particularly enjoyed, entitled "Birds" and written by Lois and Lewis Darling, with a forward by Roger Tory Peterson. The authors explained that the book was written "for those who want to go beyond the identification stage." However, it is written for the layman, Julia says, but is technical enough to hold one's interest. "Try it, you'll like it," was her closing comment.

Re the Christmas Count, Paul Nimmons relayed that we were #17 out of 1083 and #4 in Texas last year, a commendable feat considering the fog. He requested those interested in participating in this year's count, to be held Saturday, December 20, to get in touch with whichever of the 11 leaders you plan to accompany, or if you have no preference, to get in touch with him instead. Area leaders were asked to contact those who they think will be going with them so that we will know where we stand.

Our membership Chairman counted 64 present, including two new members and a dozen guests. Our Chairman expressed the hope that the new people and the visitors would find their way back to our December meeting.

Bill Mealy ran through his plans and costs (approximately \$220) for the proposed trip by bus to Mexico February 21-29, and signed up a number of people toward the maximum of 36.

Paul Nimmons related his itinerary for a two-weeks' trip, August 13-29, to California and the Pacific Northwest, costing approximately \$570 but not including meals. This would be a combination plane and automobile trip. Paul also accepted reservations and stated that he would like to hear from everyone interested by October 15 for sure. A \$50 deposit will be required. Paul suggested that a copy of Arnold Small's "Birds of California" would be a worthwhile addition to our library.

Preceding Marilyn Crane's showing a number of slides of birds to be found at Welder possibly on our upcoming field trip, Mr. Brister asked us to suggest a title for Marilyn, who has agreed to give us a 10-minute slide review similar to this one in advance of future field trips. Harry tentatively used the term "Educational Director".

In addition to Marilyn's presentation, Jim Beatty showed his slide of Norma Oates on the recent tour to Alaska. Dirk Hagemeyer treated us to some puzzling closeups of a vireo photographed and recorded in South Dakota. Dirk made it easier for us by playing the songs of the Bell and Warbling Vireos as well. The consensus was that the bird of uncertain identity, wing-bars, very faint eye stripe, but with a faint incomplete eyering also, was a Bell's Vireo, which normally does not nest there.

The Chairman displayed the plaque to be presented to Dow Chemical for their assistance with the latest checklist. He also showed a copy on paper to be given to the Brannons of Smith Woods.

Gene Blacklock, curator at Welder Wildlife Refuge, then reviewed the history and some current projects underway at the Refuge and followed this explanation with a series of color slides depicting the plant and animal life, particularly birds, that utilize the various ecosystems to be found there. He also brought along some explanatory brochures. Mr. Blacklock added that he looked forward to seeing us on the refuge on our October field trip.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Louise Rogers

CLEARING HOUSE, September, 1975

(How to read the C-H-----Name of bird: (how many), date, location, observers)

Grebe, Eared: (2)1,4,6,(3)9,(10)14,18,21,(13)26, Baytown Tunnel, (1)17, Anahuac Refuge, D&JD; (10)20,Baytown Tunnel,OG.

Pelican, White: (250)20,Cedar Point, OG

Cormorant, Olivaceous: (200+)1,4,6,14,18,(300+)26,Baytown Tunnel,D&JD

Anhinga: (2)18,Baytown Tunnel, D&JD

Frigatebird, Magnificent: (1)August 12,San Luis Pass,DM

Heron, Green: (6)3,Galveston,(3)12,W. Harris Co.,J&BH

Egret, Cattle: (1,000+)12,W. Harris Co., (600 in one field),J&BH

" , Reddish, (30)3,Galveston,Bolivar,J&BH

Nightheron, Black-crowned: (3)13,Shell land,NE of Bolivar,WB&AFT

" , Yellow-crowned: (5)13,NE of Bolivar,WB&AFT; (1)20,Anahuac Refuge,J&CM,W&GC
Bittern, Least: (1)26,Galveston,DD; (1)20,Anahuac Refuge,J&CM,W&GC; (2)20,Baytown Tunnel,OG

Stork, Wood: (6)3, Baytown Tunnel,P&MJ; (7)1,(1)9,(7)14,Baytown Tunnel,D&JD; (3)20, Chambers Co.,J&CM,W&GC; (1)20,San Jacinto River, (1)20,Trinity Bay,OG; (17)27,W. Harris Co.,JM,W&GC

Spoonbill, Roseate: (64)3,Baytown Tunnel,(100+)25-28,Galveston,P&MJ; (50)27,Galveston Island State Park,ONC; (50+)3,Bolivar,J&BH; (25+)1,4,(50+)6,14,18,21,Baytown Tunnel, (35+)27,Galveston,D&JH

Goose,Canada: (1)14,Warren Lake, JM,W&GC - see notes

" ,White-fronted: (2)14,Warren Lake, JM,W&GC - see notes

" , Snow (Blue phase): (1)14,Warren Lake,JM,W&GC - see notes

Treeduck, Black-bellied: (2)20,corner of Clay Road & Brittmore,W&DB - see notes

Mallard: (2)4,6,9,14,21,Baytown Tunnel, D&JD - see notes

Pintail: (35)27,Cypress Creek,JM,W&GC

Teal, Blue-winged: (5)3,Bolivar,J&BH; (5,000+)all month,E.Harris,W.Chambers counties, D&JD

Shoveler, Northern: (6)21,(100+)26,Baytown Tunnel,D&JD; (50)20,Baytown Tunnel,OG

Canvasback: (2)9,14,18,21,26,Baytown Tunnel,D&JD - see notes

Duck, Ruddy: (7)3,Baytown Tunnel,P&MJ; (8)1,(3)4,14,(1)9,(4)18,(8)21,(9)26,Baytown Tunnel,D&JD; (2)20,Baytown Tunnel,OG

Kite, Mississippi: (3)13,Bolivar,WB; (1)28,Bellaire,P&MJ; (1)16,20,Hunters Creek Village,J&BH

Hawk, Sharp-shinned: (2)20,(1)29,Bolivar,TBJ,MF,ER; (1)27,Hempstead Rd. at 34th,JM, W&GC; (1)20,Anahuac Refuge,J&CM,W&GC

- Hawk, Red-shouldered: (1)13, High Island, DM et.al.; (2)14, Baytown Civic Center, D&JD
 " , Broad-winged: (1)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (12)16, Memorial Bend, (10)18, same, WB;
 (12-15)20, Bellaire, P&MJ; (1)13, High Island, DM et.al.; (200+)14, (50+)21,
 San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, (50+)20, Baytown, (10,000+)22, Exxon Research
 Center-Baytown, D&JD; (1)12, W. Harris Co., (6)16, (10)20, (50)21, Hunter's Creek
 Village, J&BH; (40)21, White Oak Bayou, WC
 " , Swainson's: (1)21, (72)22, Exxon Research Center-Baytown, D&JD
 " , White-tailed: (1)August 13, Gulf Freeway at Friendswood exit, on a pole (unusual
 location), DM
 " , Marsh: (1)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (2)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT; (3)20, Anahuac Refuge, J&CM,
 W&GC
 Osprey: (1)20, 26, 29, Bolivar, TBF et.al.; (1)28, W. Galveston, PJ; (1)27, Galveston Island
 State Park, ONC; (2)28, San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, D&JD
 Kestrel, American: (4)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (1)26, W. Galveston, P&MJ; (1)21, (5)28, San Jac-
 into Battlegrounds Park, (8)22, (2)24, (1)26, Exxon Research Center-Baytown,
 D&JD; (2)27, Jack Road, JM, W&GC; (1)27, White Oak Bayou, (1)28, downtown, WC
 Rail, King: (3)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 " , Clapper: (4)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 Sora: (1)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 Gallinule, Purple: (1)6, 21, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD
 " , Common: (9)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (3)1, (4)4, (5)6, (3)9, (2)14, (5)18, 21, 26,
 Baytown Tunnel, (7)13, High Island, D&JD
 Oystercatcher, American: (4)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT; (5)3, (2)14, Bolivar, J&BH; (3)26, Bolivar,
 P&MJ; (2)26, (4)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF, ER; (3)7, Bolivar, WB, DB
 Plover, Semipalmated: (5)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (1)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT; (8)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 " , Piping: (20)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (1)7, Bolivar, W&DB; (2)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT; (NC)
 25-28, Galveston & Bolivar, P&MJ; (12)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 " , Snowy: (1)20, 26, (2)29, Bolivar, TBF et.al.; (3)26, Bolivar, P&MJ
 " , Wilson's: (1)7, Bolivar, W&DB; (1)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT
 " , Black-bellied: (30)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (40)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 Turnstone, Ruddy: (10)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF
 Snipe, Common: (1)12, W. Harris Co., J&BH
 Curlew, Long-billed: (8)3, Galveston, Bolivar, J&BH
 Sandpiper, Upland: (3)14, Warren Ranch Road, JM, W&GC
 " , Spotted: (1)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 Yellowlegs, Greater: (1)26, E. Galveston, P&MJ
 " , Lesser: (1)26, E. Galveston, P&MJ
 Knot, Red: (1)25, Galveston, P&MJ; (30)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (20)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 Sandpiper, Pectoral: (1)12, W. Harris Co., J&BH
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: (2)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: (2)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF.
 " , Western: (15)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF
 Godwit, Marbled: (12)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (2)7, Bolivar, W&DB; (3)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT
 Avocet, American: (2)20, Bolivar, TBF, ER; (1)1, (2)4, (4)6, (2)9, 21, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD;
 (35)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 Phalarope, Wilson's: (8)20, 21, Baytown Tunnel, D&JD; (5)20, Baytown Tunnel, OG
 Tern, Gull-billed: (1)27, Galveston Island Park, ONC
 " , Forster's: (1)14, Warren Lake, JM, W&GC
 " , Least: (100)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 " , Royal: (500+)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 " , Caspian: (4)14, Warren Lake, JM, W&GC
 " , Black: (100+)3, Bolivar, J&BH
 Dove, Ringed Turtle: (2)19, Bellaire, P&MJ; (1)21, Merchant's Park, WC
 " , Inca: (2)7, Bolivar, W&DB; (3)14, Baytown Civic Center Park, D&JD
 Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: (1)20, Bear Cr. Park, J&BH
 ANI, GROOVE BILLED: (1)20, Bolivar, TBF, ER; (1)29, Nottingham Ranch Road, TBF, MF -see notes
 Owl, Barn: (1)20, Bolivar, TBF, ER
 Chuck-Will's-Widow: (1)26, 29, Bolivar Flats; (1)13, High I., WB, AFT, DM et.al.
 Whip-Poor-Will: (1)26, Bolivar (farmyard), P&MJ, Father Pinicelli - see notes
 Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: (1-2)20-30, yard, GC; (1)14, Warren Lake, JM, W&GC; (1)9, 10, 26,
 25, White Oak Bayou, (1)19, West End Baptist Church, WC
 Kingfisher, Belted: (5)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC; (1)3, High Island, (1)14,
 San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, D&JD; (5)3, Galveston, Bolivar, (1)12, W. Harris
 Co., J&BH; (2)August 16, W. Galveston, W&GC
 Flicker, Common: (2)1, 14, 20, 28, Baytown Civic Center Park, (1)26, Exxon Research Center-
 Baytown, D&JD; (2)20, Baytown Civic Center, (1)20, Bayland Park, OG; (1)28,
 White Oak Bayou, WC
 Woodpecker, Pileated: (2)28, Baytown Civic Center, D&JD; (2)12, 20, Bear Cr. Park, J&BH
 " , Red-headed: (1)1, 14, 28, Baytown Civic Center Park, (2)7, (3)13, White Memori-
 al Park, (1)6, San Jacinto Battlegrounds Park, (1)all month, Exxon Research
 Center-Baytown, D&JD
 Kingbird, Eastern: (150)20, Bolivar & High Island, TBF, ER
 " , Western: (2)14, Baytown Civic Center Park, D&JD

Phoebe, Eastern: (2)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (1)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 Flycatcher, Empidonax species: (2)25, 27, (1)26, White Oak Bayou, WC
 " , Yellow-bellied: (3)14, Baytown Civic Center Park, D&JD
 " , Olive-sided: (1)26, (2)28, (1)29, Bolivar, Galveston, TBF, et.al.; (1)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (1)13, Galveston, PJ, D&JD
 Lark, Horned: (1)7, Bolivar, W&DB; (2)13, Bolivar, WB, AFT
 Swallow, Tree: (3)7, Bolivar, W&DB; (4)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 " , Bank: (2)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC; (3)20, Anahuac Refuge, J&CM, W&GC
 " , Rough-winged: (100)20, Anahuac Refuge, J&CM, W&GC; (12)27, Jack Road, JM, W&GC
 " , Barn: (2)27, Galveston Island State Park; (1)7, Bolivar, W&DB
 Martin, Purple: (40)10, White Oak Bayou, WC
 Crow, Fish: (1)9, #3 Exxon Lagoon - Baytown Tunnel, D&JD - see notes
 Nuthatch, Red-breasted: (1)24, Galveston, near country club (1)26, yard, JH - see notes
 CREEPER, BROWN: (1)20, Baytown Civic Center, OG - see notes
 Catbird, Gray: (1)28, 29, Bolivar, TBF et.al.; (2)26, Galveston, P&MJ; (1)20, Bear Creek Park, J&BH; (1)27, Cypress Creek, JM, W&GC; (1-3)23, 26, White Oak Bayou, (2)24, (1)28, City Hall, WC
 Thrasher, Brown: (1-2)23, 27, White Oak Bayou, (1)28, City Hall, WC; (2)27, Cypress Creek, JM, W&GC; (15)26, Bolivar, TBF&ER; (8)26, Galveston (Kempner Park), (10)26, Bolivar, P&MJ
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: (4)12, (50+)20, Bear Creek Park, J&BH; (20)26, Bolivar, TBF, ER.
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: (2)29, Nottingham Ranch Road, TBF, MF
 Vireo, Yellow-throated: (1)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 " , Solitary: (1)28, Bolivar, TBF, MF - see notes
 " , Red-eyed: (1)26, 29, Bolivar, TBF, MF
 " , Philadelphia: (1)26, Bolivar, TBF, ER
 Warbler, Black-and-White: (1)7, White Oak Bayou, (3)28, City Hall, WC; (1)28, 29, Bolivar, Galveston, TBF, MF; (1)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (2)26, Galveston, P&MJ
 " , Prothonotary: (4)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (1)13, High Island, D&JD
 " , Tennessee: (1)26, Bolivar, TBF, ER
 " , Nashville: (1)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (1)27, Galveston State Park, ONC
 " , Northern Parula: (2)26, Bolivar, TBF, ER
 " , Yellow: (1)26, Bolivar, TBF, ER
 " , Magnolia: (1)26, Bolivar, P&MJ
 " , Black-throated Green: (1)26, 29, Bolivar, TBF, MF, ER
 " , Bay-breasted: (1)28, Bolivar, TBF, MF
 " , Prairie: (1)25, yard, Memorial Bend, WB - see notes
 Waterthrush, Northern: (1)13, Shell land, E. of Galveston, WB; (1)7, White Oak Bayou, WC
 Yellowthroat, Common: (1)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC
 Warbler, Wilson's: (1)20, (2)26, 28, (1)29, Bolivar, TBF et.al.; (6-8)26, Bolivar, P&MJ; (2)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC; (1)13, (3)26, White Oak Bayou, WC
 " , Canada: (1)19, 26, 28, Bolivar, High Island, TBF et.al.; (1)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (1)20, Bear Creek Park, J&BH
 Redstart, American: (1)20, 28, 29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (1)26, Galveston, P&MJ; (1)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC; (1)28, Baytown Civic Center, D&JD
 Oriole, Northern: (5)26, (3)28, (2)29, Bolivar, TBF et.al.; (1)13, Bellaire, P&MJ; (1)20, Bear Creek Park, J&BH
 Tanager, Summer: (1)13, High Island, WB, AFT
 Grosbeak, Rose-breasted: (1)28, High Island, TBF, MF
 " , Blue: (2)13, High Island, D&JD
 Bunting, Indigo: (10)19, (2)26, Bolivar, TBF, ER; (5)10, (1)23, White Oak Bayou, WC
 Dickcissel: (4)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC; (10+)7, Anahuac Refuge, D&JD
 Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: (2)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF - see notes
 " , Seaside: (10)29, Bolivar, TBF, MF; (3)13, High Island, WB, AFT; (12)27, Galveston Island State Park, ONC; (2)13, High Island, (3)27, Galveston, D&JD

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS

DB - David Burkett; WB - Winnie Burkett; GC - Glenn Cureton; WC - Wes Cureton; D&JD - David & Jan Dauphin; MF - Marie Feltner; TBF - T. Ben Feltner; JH - Jane Hamilton; J&BH - Jean & Bill Harwell; HH - Holly Hobart; P&MJ - Paul & Margaret Jones; DM - David Marrack; CM - Charlene May; JM - Jackie May; ER - Elaine Robinson; AFT - Audubon Field Trip; ONC - Outdoor Nature Club Field Trip; OG - Ornithology Group Field Trip

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES

Geese: See at close range on near shore of lake. Canada: brown body, black neck and head, white chin strap. White-fronted: brown body, white on forehead and around beak. Blue: dark body, white neck and head. Fed together. Wings drooped slightly, making us wonder at first if they were not wounded; but after observation, it seemed more likely that the heat caused the drooping. No geese were seen at Warren Lake on August 29, or September 27. 7x50, 10x50 binoculars; 30x telescope. --Wes Cureton

Black-bellied Treeduck: 2 seen flying at the corner of Clay Road and Brittmore by Winnie and David Burkett both with 7x35 binoculars. We noted brown neck and chest and black belly and wings; also saw long legs, saw white on the top of the wings of one as they came down in a field by the side of the road.--Winnie Burkett

Mallard: Presume they are same birds seen last month. Mottled orange bill, mottled brown coloring, dark crown and line through eye, blue speculum-bordered front and back with white; seen up to 50 yards, 20-60x telescope.--David & Jan Dauphin

Canvasback: Female had flat head, long, wedged black bill; light under neck and below; grayish back and sides, white belly, unmottled buffy chest, mottled brown head. Male had red, flat head; long, wedged, black bill; gray back, black breast. Seen at 20-100 yards, 20-260x telescope.--David & Jan Dauphin

GROOVE BILLED ANI: (Sept.20) This bird was heard only. Its distinctive 3 note call was heard repeatedly from dense Salt Cedar while it was apparently mobbing* a Barn Owl. Both observers agreed that the strength of tone and unbroken repetition ruled out an imitator (i.e. Mockingbird). This observer has heard hundreds of Groove-billed Anis in Mexico and is convinced of its validity as a new early record.--T.Ben Feltner

Fish Crow: First time I've seen bird in Baytown area. Bird was wading in 1 to 3 in. of water and feeding. Crow-like appearance. Bird was flushed by a Great Blue, flew directly overhead at about 10 feet high and gave the distinctive fish crow car sound. Bird landed about 50 feet away and obligingly carred again. Confirmed call with Peterson Series record. -- David Dauphin

Whip-Poor-Will: Bird perched on bare limb 50-60 feet away, in good light. It was grayish, no trace of tawny brown; viewed through 7x35, and 7x50, also 20x Baiscope; When bird turned its head toward us, we could see the throat was very dark grayish, or blackish. It lacked the white throat of the Nighthawk, and was smaller, and lacked the tawny brown color of the Chuck-wills-Widow, so, in spite of the fact it was perched in a tree instead of on the ground, we concluded it was indeed the Whip-Poor-Will. There were three observers, Father T. Pinicelli of N.J. & Paul & Margaret Jones

Red-breasted Nuthatch: I sighted the bird Sept. 24, Galveston, near country club, in oak tree, 25 ft. away--white stripe above eye and black stripe through eye and red breast in full view. We watched him for 10-15 minutes as he crept up and down a tree branch and trunk. We feel we only heard his call when he was moving down. On Sep.25 I again sighted a Red-breasted Nuthatch at my home in Galveston on the trunk of a climbing rose bush growing on a fence in my yard--watched him from my back porch no more than 20 feet away. I feel this might be news as these are the only ones I have ever seen on the Island during my 15 years of birding here.--Jane Hamilton

BROWN CREEPER: At Baytown Civic Center we were working in a grove of large pine and gum trees. I became interested in a bird call I can describe only as a "Whinny". I wandered off from the group to pursue the call and discovered it was being made by the Brown Creeper. It was, of course, behaving in the usual manner of going from bottom to the top of a tree trunk, but before flying on to another tree he would hold himself out from the tree and utter this single note call in a rapid manner, thus I call it a "whinney".--Paul Jones

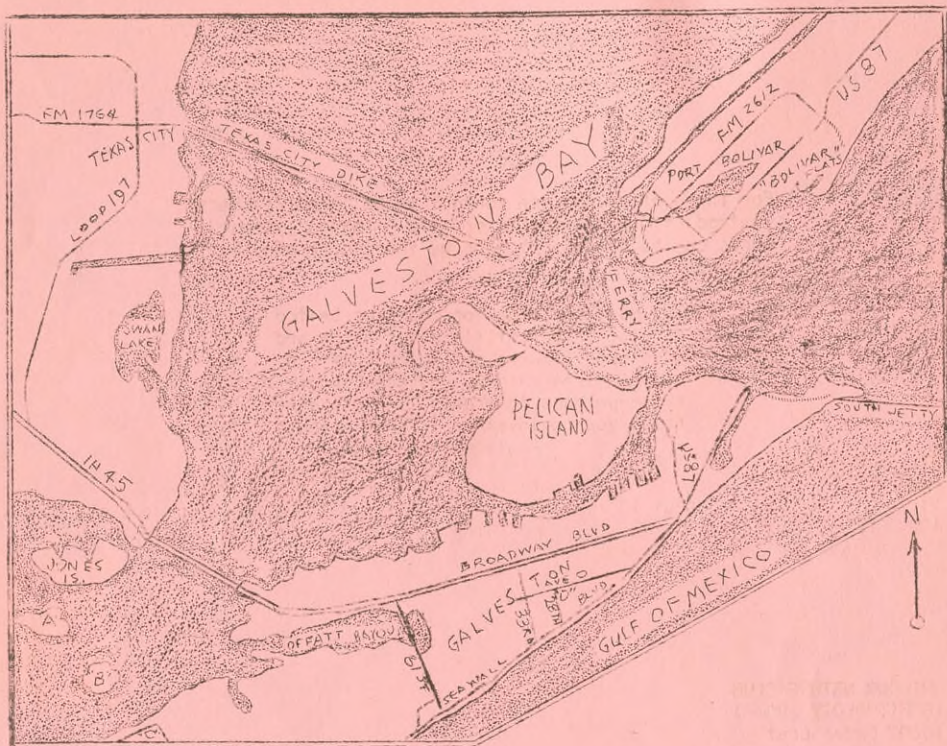
Solitary Vireo: Squeaked in to about 8 feet. Blue-gray cap and strong white spectacles readily seen, 2 white wingbars, yellow wash on sides of white underparts, strong vireo bill, length about 5 1/2 inches. Observed a minute or more. Observer has seen this bird on several prior occasions.--T. Ben Feltner

Prairie Warbler: Seen in the trees in our yard. It was in the yard for over an hour feeding in the trees. Observed with 7x35 binoculars. Was probably a female because it had the yellow around eye but no eye stripe. Noted wingbars and black streaking on sides. Very familiar with Prairie Warblers.--Winnie Burkett

Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Two birds in company of Seaside Sparrows feeding in open Salicornia on Bolivar Flats. Observed for several minutes. Although both birds were adult there was considerable plumage variation. Both individuals exhibited strong gray cheek patches surrounded by warm buffy ochre; on one bird (male?) the warm color extended all the way to the under belly without fading. Both birds exhibited back stripes of nelsoni race and were discernably smaller and more delicate looking than Seaside Sparrows which fed with them. 8x40 binoculars at 30-40 feet. I have observed this bird on many prior occasions. Light excellent; early morning direct sunlight. --T. Ben Feltner

No details on following: Merlin: (2)20, Anahuac Refuge, TBF, ER

* Mobbing in this instance means harassing. Dan Hardy says when you hear birds, particularly Blue Jays, making a fuss, track it down, you will probably find an owl in the woods near them.



MAP OF TEXAS CITY DIKE, EAST GALVESTON, AND BOLIVAR

("A" is North Deer Island, "B" is South Deer Island, "C" is Sportsman's Road, "D" is Kempner Park area).

From this map you can see the close relationship between the Texas City Dike, the south jetties on the eastern tip of Galveston Island, and the western tip of Bolivar Peninsula.

On approaching Galveston on IH 45, exit at Bayou Vista to frontage road, and scan the marsh on the right. Sometimes this can be very rewarding, with spoonbills, herons, nighthawks, egrets, and an occasional rail in evidence. Return to the highway at the second entrance. After crossing the Causeway exit at the first opportunity, and follow frontage road, scanning, at each opportunity, Offatts Bayou, which, in season, can produce loons, mergansers, and an occasional frigatebird overhead. Return to Broadway past 61st st., if you are not going to bird west Galveston.

For spring migrants there is no place like Kempner Park and the neighboring Hutchings-Sealy home. This is on Avenue O between 28th and 29th streets. You may walk completely around the home, but please stay outside the fence. On 33rd st., between Avenue O and N 1/2 is the Menard House. You may bird from the alley on the south side and the small street on the north, as well as from the sidewalk on 33rd.

Proceeding toward the east end of Galveston, past Stewart Beach, from the seawall, scan the lagoon paralleling the road. In proper season, loons, mergansers, occasional ducks, etc., can be seen. Upon reaching the end of the seawall, turn right, and follow the road to the beginning of the jetties. Most of the time you can drive around on the flats east of the jetties, and get close looks at gulls, terns, shorebirds, and hope for the very occasional Blue-faced Booby, Purple Sandpiper, or Jaeger!

Upon returning to the seawall, drive along on top of the ramp, and scan the marshes to the right as you return to the ferry road.

On the map you will note you can reach Bolivar Flats by proceeding to the second intersection of FM 2612 and Hwy 87, turn right toward beach, then right again at beach, and drive as far as you can. T. Ben Feltner, who birds this area extensively, says this is the best birding you can find anywhere on the coast of Texas.

After returning through Galveston, take Loop 197 to Texas City, turn right on FM 1764 to Holiday Inn, turn right, then left onto the Dike. You will have five miles of good birding ahead of you on both sides of the Dike.

For those of us who are content to be "Bird-watchers" instead of ornithologists or avid "listers", these words can be of comfort when we tend to be awed by the experts:

"You must not know too much, or be too precise or scientific about birds and trees and flowers and water craft; a certain free margin, and even vagueness--perhaps ignorance, credulity--helps your enjoyment of these things...."

--Walt Whitman (1861)

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