

THE SPOONBILL

Volume XXVI, No. 9
January, 1978

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

COMING EVENTS

Saturday ONC field trip to HL&P Cooling Ponds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at roadside park
Jan. 14 on I-10 just east of San Jacinto River. Bring lunch.

Saturday OG field trip to HL&P Cooling Ponds. Same directions as above.
Jan. 21

Saturday HAS field trip to Bolivar. Meet at 8:00 a.m. on Bolivar side of ferry.
Jan. 21 Bring lunch, insect repellent.

Saturday Brazosport Birders field trip to San Bernard Refuge (or Maner Lake, weather
Jan. 21 will decide). Meet at Museum on College Drive in Clute at 7:30 a.m.

Thursday OG regular meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Bayou Manor Auditorium, 4141 So. Braeswood
Feb. 2 Blvd. Remember to bring your collected aluminum.

Tuesday Photography Group regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Manor Auditorium. Col.
Feb. 7 Gerald Bench will give a demonstration of three dimensional projection.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT 1977 UTC BIRDING compiled by Jim Morgan

- 1) All species on the mainbody of the Upper Texas Coast Checklist were reported in 1977 with the following exceptions: Common Merganser, Prairie Falcon, Pomarine Jaeger and Bachman's Sparrow.
- 2) 14 Accidental/Vagrant species were reported including 3 new UTC species: Long-tailed Jaeger, Long-billed Thrasher and Virginia's Warbler. (New species subject to Checklist Committee acceptance).
- 3) 2 introduced species were reported.
- 4) Grand total of species reported = 345!
- 5) Plus 8 additional races, forms (or hybrids).
- 6) Total of all species, races and forms = 353

(Information obtained from Clearing House, American Birds, and reliable personal communication).

IT HAS BEEN A GREAT YEAR ON THE UTC by Margaret Jones

That 330 year's list total remained tantalizing (see Dec. 1977 SPOONBILL), but oh--- so close! The Masked Duck at Anahuac on Dec. 29 gave me the 329th species for the year (Margaret Anderson was out of town the last few days of the year, otherwise that duck would have been on her list too). In addition to the 329 birds, there were 7 races or forms also seen. Of those, Audubon's Warbler and Bullock's Oriols are often seen, but never before had I seen a Red-shafted Flicker in the UTC. It is interesting to note that Margaret A. saw 4 birds I didn't find: Parasitic Jaeger, Blue-faced Booby, Golden Eagle, and Western Tanager. There were five birds on my list she didn't have: Masked Duck, Swallow-tailed Kite, Hairy Woodpecker, Virginia's Warbler and Black-throated Gray Warbler. Also, there were four possible additions seen on Christmas Counts in the area I searched for and failed to find: Long-billed Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, and Roadrunner (you can't really search for a Roadrunner, you have to let him happen to you!), also Evening Grosbeak.

So, as far as I know, there were six OG members who saw more than 300 birds in the UTC this past year:

Margaret Jones	329	Ted Eubanks	312
Margaret Anderson	328	Paul Jones	310
David Dauphin	326	Jim Morgan	309

Ted and Jim keep meticulous records of the birds they see, but there was little effort on their parts to actively seek out a bird just to add to their year's lists. By birding regularly some part of every weekend, they saw the birds!

So---why don't you start today keeping a record of the birds you see in the UTC? By next December you may be surprised at the marks you've made in your checklist. See page 6 of the Dec. 1977 SPOONBILL for suggestions to help you. Me? I'm going to relax and just go birding!

AROUND AND ABOUT

** Don't forget that "A Birder's Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast" is available at our meetings or from Mary Gillette. A bargain at 10¢, it is the best checklist we have seen. Carry a few with you when out birding to give chance-met birders from other areas who are not familiar with occurrence dates of birds on our home ground. Help spread the gospel of birding on the upper Texas coast! Send 10¢ per copy plus postage to Mrs. J.M. Gillette, 5027 Longmont, Houston 77056.

** Recently we checked the status of Prairie Chickens at Ellington Air Base, where they used to be quite a nuisance until trapped and removed. Mr. Kilpatrick, manager of the base, says there are a few, but no bother now. However, their big complaint and worry are deer and gulls on the runways. Development around them is forcing the deer onto the base, and a nearby landfill attracts gulls. In the September, 1977 issue of American Birds, p. 1067, is an article citing the need of data on the seasonal distribution of North American gulls by which the potential seasonal hazard to aircraft can be predicted by the U.S. Air Force. Mr. Kilpatrick told of Prairie Chickens being seen early in the morning along Genoa-Red Bluff road north of the base. Any reader living out that way might check this out, especially now with the booming season upon us.

** In response to David Matson's report of a blue parakeet in the Medical Center, Gin Doran of the Brazos Ornithological Society dropped us a note about a blue parakeet she had at her feeder, along with a flock of house sparrows, from Sept. 19th through Oct. 20th, 1974. It was also seen at a feeder about 2 miles from her house, and by students at the A&M dairy barns about 6 miles away during that period. She was wondering if parakeets wander widely and how long they live? Does anyone know?

** The winter issue of Vista, magazine of Exxon Travel Club, has an article by Dan Guravich about the 1976 Freeport Christmas Count. It is an interesting account with some excellent accompanying photographs.

** When birding Warren Lake during the past two months, you have probably noticed a good many dead birds, mostly Snows and Blues, along the banks. When the die-off was first noted, in November, Texas Parks & Wildlife biologists rushed to the location as soon as they were alerted by department game wardens. Some carcasses were taken to A&M pathologists at once, and the others were removed and incinerated. A few continue to be seen now and then, but the major die-off seems to be over. This die-off has been attributed to a mold derivative called aflatoxin B1, which causes liver damage. Biologists theorize that the mold was present in something the birds had eaten, although the exact type of food could not be pinpointed due to the slow action of the toxin. Waterfowl losses due to this type of toxin are rare and represent no threat to humans, biologists said.

** A note we want to share from Jean Harwell: "We all have interesting experiences while birding, I'm sure. Here's our latest: On the afternoon of December 14 we were at Warren Lake - decided to drive one more time down to the other end before heading for home. We noticed a car stopping at the north end of the lake - birders getting out with binoculars, scope and cameras - out-of-state car - three young men we didn't recognize. Bill got out to say hello and offer assistance. He was quite surprised to discover that all three were from SWEDEN! They had arrived by plane that morning from Arizona. We said, "How in the world did you ever find Warren Lake?" They had Jim Lane's book!! They were hoping to find Bald Eagles there but didn't as far as we know. They were enroute to Aransas before flying back to Sweden that weekend. They had been birding 45 days starting in California with the condors - then Mexico and Arizona en route to Texas!! One spoke fluent English, one a little, and the other smiled a lot!! They were very knowledgeable birders and so enthusiastic about their experiences in this country!! We have had interesting letters this Christmas season from new birding friends we've made this past year as we helped them enjoy the birds of our area.....Birding is a wonderful way to make friends - anywhere!!"

PLACES TO GO

** Rusty Blackbirds are back in Bear Creek Park. If you've never seen a Rusty, or need one for the year, this is where to find them. Look among the flocks of blackbirds feeding on the ground, a Rusty will be easy to pick out. You can spend an interesting 30 minutes or more here just studying the differences in the blackbirds in one of the flocks: common grackles, a few great-tails, some red-wings, brown-headed cowbirds, rusties, and you may even find a Brewer's.

** The big news from the Bolivar Christmas Count was the female Masked Duck at Anahuac Russ Clapper had that one staked out for them. Here's the directions: drive Cross-road to West Line Road, turn north, drive to northwest corner of Shovelor Pond, where you will find the only large area of open water in the pond. As you approach this body of water, the rattlebeans and vegetation on your right will end, and you will see a post, about 100 yards from the road, sticking up out of the water. Drive on a bit more, until you can see a little bit behind the vegetation. The duck has seemed to prefer this area, swimming in and out of the vegetation, out near the post, then back to the vegetation. There are lots of ducks on the pond, including at least one ruddy.

** The Purple Sandpiper is still being seen at Quintana Jetty, sometimes on the rocks at the very end. While there, look around for a Kittiwake, one was reported there twice last month.

** There has been no report of the Burrowing Owl at Texas City Dike since Dec. 15th, nor of the Kittiwake. The last time we were down there, we noticed tractor marks adjacent to the rocks, in dragging the beach they had come extremely close. It may be the owl was frightened away by that, we didn't find it that day. However, the Arctic Loon was seen Dec. 26, still in the lagoon west of the levee road near the bridge. Also Red-throated Loons are being seen from the dike.

** Lapland Longspurs are being seen in West Harris County, some on Barker-Cypress Road near Clay, and some near Jack Road. Watch for them, some are reported to be in breeding plumage. For those of you not familiar with longspurs, here's a quote from the January SPOONBILL of 1977: "...look for a loose flock that will rise, fly, wheel, and when they turn will flash white bellies, then as they get close to the ground, will drop all at once. Shorebirds, and there are some out there, fly in tight flocks, and never very high as they wheel over a wet field, and blackbirds are much less disciplined in their flocks, and, of course, never flash the white". Also, when observing the Laplands, watch closely for anything different. If we get Laplands regularly every winter, why couldn't a stranger show up in their midst? Do be particularly careful though, for winter longspurs can be difficult to tell apart unless sufficiently close at hand. Even then, some experts maintain only the voice is sure identification. But who knows, another Snow Bunting may be found. A first Texas record Snow Bunting was found at the north end of Lake Livingston last month on a Christmas Count (it was later collected). That's got to be the best bird of any Texas Christmas Count in 1977.

ATTWATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN NEW CHRISTMAS COUNT by Jim Morgan

For the second year in a row I participated in Wayne Shifflet's Count in the Eagle Lake area in Colorado County. David Dauphin, my son Kevin, and I worked an area that was a 6,000 acre ranch bordering the Colorado River. Our day turned out to be most enjoyable, for me one of the most delightful birding days of the year. The tally at the end of the day showed 141 species plus forms. This was obtained by only 18 observers. Some of the better birds seen were Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Bald Eagle, Ground Dove, Ani, Red-shafted Flicker, Great-crested Flycatcher and Lazuli Bunting, plus the Colorado County specialties of White-tailed Hawk, Caracara and 62 Attwater Prairie Chickens. David and I lucked onto the Lazuli Bunting and were most surprised to find it in excellent plumage, more spring-like plumage than the field guides say the winter plumaged male Lazuli should be. Full details of this bird were submitted to Wayne Shifflet. To the best of our knowledge this is only the fourth winter record for this species in Texas and it would be the easternmost winter record for the State.

I would like to encourage OG members to participate in this count in future years. The habitat is varied and much of it is in undisturbed condition. I believe this count has the potential of being the top land-locked count in North America. Plus-- I have had great fun doing this count the past two years.

[Editor's comment: Jim puts the finger on the main reason most birders go on multiple Counts---they are fun! Naturally, since the Outdoor Nature Club--OG sponsors the Houston Count, that one has our first priority, but next year pick a second or even third Count on which to help. For Paul and I the Old River Count is our favorite "second" for we work the Cove area, made famous by Arlie Mackay. Each year on that day, we are once again made sharply aware how much that grand old man is missed.]

HOUSTON CHRISTMAS COUNT - DECEMBER 17, 1977

183 SPECIES (+ 2 forms) - 73,449 INDIVIDUALS

Area Leaders: 1-Morgan; 2-Mealy; 3-Gillette; 4-Tveten; 5-Eubanks; 6-Marrack; 7-Cureton; 8-Gordon; 9-Dauphin; 10-Nimmons; 11-Duryea

TOTALS		AREAS:										
1976	1977	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
21	45	-	-	-	-	9	7	8	2	1	7	11
3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
8	33	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	30	-
75	171	-	-	-	-	17	1	1	15	2	105	9
46	30	-	2	-	-	3	2	-	3	18	1	-
600	450	13	-	65	-	25	49	48	12	14	45	200
2000	460	-	-	30	-	88	88	10	34	20	139	140
52	29	-	-	-	-	2	2	8	-	1	13	3
14	8	2	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
188	248	5	13	14	3	5	32	50	20	16	30	60
3	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
17	15	-	-	-	-	1	2	8	-	1	1	2
60	58	-	-	-	-	2	11	30	2	2	11	-
6	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
329	382	2	-	14	1	12	200	35	28	50	13	27
125	484	-	-	-	-	10	350	15	56	12	9	31
47	36	-	-	1	-	2	2	8	4	10	5	4
208	352	-	-	36	-	45	1	29	150	68	23	2
25	10	-	-	-	-	6	1	1	-	2	-	-
1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
21	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	14	2	-
220	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-
420	17	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	9	-	-
9300	1700	11	360	-	-	6	158	175	57	1	116	35
4150	500	655	50	-	270	7	-	11	25	1	91	-
11	19	322	50	-	30	6	-	8	2	4	8	3
29	112	-	-	-	-	2	-	69	9	4	8	25
599	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	6	8	6	-
243	34	-	-	-	-	-	23	2	6	7	7	-
32	18	-	-	-	-	10	15	2	3	-	3	11
33	17	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	4	6	5
	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-
28	13	-	-	-	-	-	8	1	-	3	-	1
112	478	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	122	350	-
15	5	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
300	370	-	-	-	-	-	336	34	-	-	-	-
	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

TOTALS		SPECIES	AREAS:											
1976	1977			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1875	4855	Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	-	-	90	1196	10	3100	24	310	125
115	35	Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	-	14	12	1	2	-	-	6
58	90	Bufflehead	-	-	-	-	-	11	64	-	6	-	15	4
217	367	Ruddy Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	-	51	-	275	2
3	2	Hooded Merganser	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
100	561	Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	-	-	230	15	90	1	4	31	200
3	61	Turkey Vulture	20	4	1	6	4	-	3	-	-	2	9	-
1	1	White-tailed Kite	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
3	11	Sharp-shinned Hawk	-	2	-	1	3	3	1	1	-	1	1	-
1	6	Cooper's Hawk	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	-
109	2	Acadpiter sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
19	100	Red-tailed Hawk	22	10	3	16	3	1	22	8	-	14	10	3
24	1	Red-tailed Hawk (Harlan's)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	-
19	19	Red-shoulered Hawk	5	1	1	-	1	1	1	3	-	4	4	-
3	3	Swainson's Hawk	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	3	-	-
2	2	Rough-legged Hawk	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
15	2	Buteo sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	Bald Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
46	49	Marsh Hawk	6	19	3	2	2	1	2	5	1	5	4	5
2	1	Osprey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
163	137	Merlin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
45	56	American Kestrel	23	8	12	4	2	2	34	10	6	21	15	2
7	3	Bobwhite	24	-	-	5	1	-	2	-	-	10	15	-
2	6	King Rail	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	Clapper Rail	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
1	2	Virginia Rail	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
455	162	Common Gallinule	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	-	-	2	50	1
2	35	American Coot	-	-	-	-	-	20	1	-	54	25	10	-
716	2	Semipalmated Plover	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	-	23	75	94	40
8	707	Wilson's Plover	111	90	43	95	3	1	28	105	2	8	-	1
17	16	Black-bellied Plover	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	2	2	7	-	-
62	3	American Woodcock	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	18	Common Snipe	14	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45	0	Long-billed Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	14	11	6
59	53	Spotted Sandpiper	-	-	2	-	6	6	3	10	1	11	5	8
4	42	Willet	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	1	6	10	6
7	37	Greater Yellowlegs	-	2	5	-	-	1	4	-	-	20	2	3
7	38	Lesser Yellowlegs	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

TOTALS	1976	1977	SPECIES	AREAS:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
226	2		Yellowlegs sp.							2					
	3		Least Sandpiper						3						
302	50		Short-billed Dowitcher								50				
	181		dowitcher sp.						1				150		
3	229		Semipalmated Sandpiper			48							160		
155	151		Western Sandpiper							50	100		1		
22	105		Sanderling								2		75		
16	265		American Avocet										5		
220	90		Herring Gull			3			2	4		2	18		14
1500	2800		Ring-billed Gull		275	50	15		350	72	15	31	285	1700	130
2150	2750		Laughing Gull		40	80			60	50	110	77	850	1050	500
	1		Franklin's Gull												
2	34		Bonaparte's Gull						2	3				25	4
	500		gull sp.							500					
2	2		Gull-billed Tern						1						
180	890		Forster's Tern			3			150	1		10	197	260	175
87	198		Common Tern						6		6	2	7		175
96	180		Royal Tern			51			30	1	14	16	9	25	35
	7		Sandwich Tern						4						
43	110		Caspian Tern		3	11			31	4		2	5	28	2
117	231		Rock Dove		8	70			1	2	8	40	13	87	20
306	550		Mourning Dove		15	102	130		6	22	45	12	96	63	
	3		Ground Dove												
	1		Inca Dove												
6	7		Groove-billed Ani												
6	8		Barn Owl										4		
19	19		Screech Owl						1		2		6	7	
0	4		Great Horned Owl						1				1	2	
4	7		Barred Owl								3				
4	4		hummingbird sp.												
69	88		Belted Kingfisher		6				2	6	6	24	11	8	3
208	118		Common Flicker (yel.-shafted)	12	13	5	4		1	6	35	10	20	14	
25	20		Pileated Woodpecker	13		2	18		1	6					
68	48		Red-bellied Woodpecker	23		3	8		1				3	4	
4	2		Red-headed Woodpecker										1		
104	40		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11			7		1		9	2	5	5	
	1		Hairy Woodpecker												
15	10		Downy Woodpecker	3					1				2	2	
90	74		Eastern Phebe	36	6		11		2	1	9		6	3	

TOTALS		AREAS:										
1976	1977	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
0	5	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-
19	13	2	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	3	4	-
2	6	3	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
449	328	59	35	8	22	50	40	8	66	13	27	-
122	63	8	8	1	3	4	4	7	-	23	5	-
470	278	102	20	13	50	1	1	30	-	2	24	35
18,400	14,000	1300	4030	-	6000	3	50	300	6	38	2650	5
32	76	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
91	77	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	-
233	43	8	5	-	4	5	-	-	-	1	7	-
13,800	6000	40	5000	-	1000	1	20	1	4	5	12	-
2774	10,200	200	5000	-	4	2	4	1	-	-	3	-
32,500	12,000	8500	-	300	1700	1	1500	55	2	-	5000	-
338	371	86	29	6	55	10	23	70	20	39	33	15
5	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
127	66	4	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	1	2	-
6	24	6	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	10	2	-
1100	611	244	11	-	75	80	3	40	21	32	105	-
13	3	-	-	-	2	6	1	18	-	2	55	-
365	173	35	7	1	2	6	1	18	-	50	-	-
12	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
11	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
33	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
48	33	22	2	2	2	2	3	1	-	1	1	-
129	21	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
28	99	16	1	-	70	7	-	-	-	3	3	-
28	25	-	-	-	17	1	-	3	-	3	1	-
250	52	1	-	12	-	1	8	16	-	7	1	1
1052	627	91	11	6	55	50	1	80	4	114	215	1
18	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
34	70	22	3	3	3	20	1	1	-	10	7	-
123	140	27	-	-	5	35	1	13	-	5	54	-

SPECIES: Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, meadowlark sp., Red-winged Blackbird, Northern (Baltimore) Oriole, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Boat-tailed Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, blackbird sp., Cardinal, Black-headed Grosbeak, Painted Bunting, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Dark-eyed (Sl.-col.) Junco, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow

TOTALS	SPECIES	AREAS:										
1976	1977	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
103	46	9	3	3	6	1	1	6	-	11	6	-
	50	-	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Song Sparrow										
		Sparrow sp.										
	73,449	Total species by area:										
		84	63	61	72	109	196	100	62	132	122	47

SPECIES	YEAR	INDIVIDUALS	OBSERVERS	COMPARISON WITH PRIOR YEARS										
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
160	1970	200,619	55	68	60	62	51	73	95	58	74	77	106	In area
156	1971	54,320	57	87	58	68	54	77	106	62	70	73	89	10
158	1972	61,802	59	60	52	36	52	62	103	61	66	64	86	58
144 + 3	1973	94,944	63	53	68	43	91	62	109	79	70	86	86	54
63 + 1	1974	176,900	77	53	51	56	74	100	120	83	70	116	47	
170 + 1	1975	209,200	99	72	69	56	70	100	122	101	100	99	112	45
173 + 2	1976	120,288	123	74	69	79	70	106	122	101	100	99	112	45
183 + 2	1977	73,449	130	84	63	61	72	109	96	100	62	132	122	47

1977 HOUSTON CHRISTMAS COUNT by Paul Nimmons

For the third year in a row, an all-time high number of birders (130) saw the second highest number of species (183 plus two forms) ever seen on a Houston Christmas Count. On the other hand, the number of individual birds seen was down from last year and way down from 1975 (see chart). Most of this decline is due to a decline in blackbirds from 155,600 in 1975 to 67,800 in 1976 to 42,400 in 1977. But non-icteridae went from 53,600 to 52,400 to 31,000. Many observers commented on the high number of different species and the low number of individuals. Some said the woods were "dead!" On the chart, notice the comparatively low numbers of the common land birds from woodpeckers through sparrows. Almost every one is down. Robins dropped from 7,500 (not an unusually high number) in 1976 to 223 (the lowest number by far in at least eight years) in 1977

Why the decline? Several of our members have posed theories. (1) Weather too cold here. - But the weather has been warm here compared to last November and December. (2) Weather too warm here. - But warm weather here does not keep birds away if conditions are unfavorable up north. (3) Weather too warm in the North. - But the weather in the Midwest was dreadfully cold in early and mid December. The fact that the numbers of water birds are mixed is some indication that temperatures and frozen water conditions are approximately the same in the North this year as they were last year. (4) Last year's cold weather killed the birds. - If so, why did we not notice this in March, in spring migration and in fall migration? (5) The changes signify nothing. - The consistently low numbers of passerines belie this; particularly when our circle was better covered this year than last. (6) The most logical explanation is that the wild food crop in the North is very good. This could have been affected by last year's extra cold weather.

All the speculations are interesting. Hopefully, someone with knowledge and experience will come up with an answer based on empirical facts.

The real excitement of the count was in the high number of species seen. Eleven species had not been seen on any of the seven preceding counts. (1970-

1976 - the only years checked): Hooded merganser, White-tailed kite, Bald eagle, Merlin, Wilson's plover, Red-breasted nuthatch, Brown-headed nuthatch, Chestnut-sided warbler, Bay-breasted warbler, Painted bunting and Lark sparrow. The following birds had only been seen once in the preceding seven years: Greater scaup, Swainson's hawk, Sandwich tern, Horned lark, Grasshopper sparrow, Inca dove, Fish crow and Black-throated green warbler. We saw every species that can reasonably be expected, including all the sparrows, except Reddish egret, Sora, Ruddy turnstone, Long-billed curlew, Dunlin, Black skimmer and Wood thrush.

The count exceeded all expectations. The weather could not have been better. Our 130 participants should rank us about 13th in the nation in participants, and our 183 species should rank us about 8th in numbers of species seen.

If you want to be a part of our count next year, you should make your reservations early!

Houston Christmas Count Participants: Dr. Jim Alexander, Margaret Anderson, Jerry Baker, Lois Baker, Larry & Martha Ballard, LeRon Bielak, Ramon Bielak, Ed & Martha Bluestein, Earl Bogar, Larry Brown, Diane Cabiness, Chuck, Jean, Scot & Suzi Campbell, Jan & Phil Casterton, Dorothy Chandler, Mary Ann Chapman, Ben Chrisman, Lee Chu, Sandy Clay, George & Jane Clayton, Dr. James Collins, Marilyn Crane, Glenn, Penny, & Wesley Cureton, Lorne Curran, Mike Damon, David & Jan Dauphin, Stephanie Dauphin, Melba Drake, Alfred Dupree, Barbara Duryea, Bill Duryea, Noel Ellis, Ann Elston, Mark Elwonger, Janet & Ted Eubanks, Jr., Mary & Ted Eubanks, Sr., Patty Fredericks, Tony Gallucci, Peggy Gerba, Ben Gifford, Jack Gillette, Rick Goldfarb, Delton Goodin, Sarah Gordon, Mabel Graham, Irving Greenbaum, Dr. David Greene, Jane Griffith, Gloria Guess, Sharon Hackleman, Bill Hand, Tyrrell Harvey, Dr. William Harwell, David Henderson, John Hendrick, Robert Hendrick, Margo & Oscar Hibler, George Howe, Dr. Ernesto Infante, Paul & Margaret Jones, Helena Kimball, Barbara Kirby, Martha Kriechbaum, Sherry Lawrence, Cindy Lupe, Doug MacLean, Dr. David Marrack, Charlene & Jacqueline May, William Mealy, Peggy Milstead, David Mobley, Dr. Mike Modelski, Bob Moore, Charles & Polly Moore, Judy Moore, James Morgan, Paul & Phyllis Nimmons, Bob Norris, Norma Oates, Kathleen Orr, Mary Ann Payne, Noel Pettingell, Celeste & Don Peterson, Bill Pipes, Richard M. Pratt, Nell Ray, David & Ellen Red, Louise & Pat Sadler, Gwen Smith, Shirley Smith, Linda Snyder, Mary L. Taylor, Mary Tigner, John Trochet, Gloria, Michael, & John Tveten, Nick VanderSleen, Nathan Veatch, Don & Grey Verner, Pat Warner, Bennie Wehner, Glen Whitcomb, Robert Whitmarsh, Bernie & Sophie Willbanks, Edith & R.B. Willman, Sondra Williamson, Dr. Stephen G. Williams. AND MANY THANKS TO ALL OF YOU!

A REQUEST FROM CHAIRMAN DAUPHIN

David asks that the names (and addresses if possible) of all property owners who gave permission for observers to bird their private land on the Houston Count be given to him. As a matter of courtesy and for good future relations, he wants to send them written appreciation. Please call him soon.

RESULTS OF OTHER AREA COUNTS

- 205 Freeport - highlights: Long-billed Thrasher, Sage Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, Green-tailed Towhee (all western birds, you will note).
- 160 Bolivar - highlights: Masked Duck, 18 Marbled Godwits (none on Houston or Freeport Counts), Black Rail, Black-necked Stilts.
- 157 Old River - highlights: Evening Grosbeaks, Roadrunners, Merlin. (With just 20 observers getting that many species, what could this Count be with more eyes!)
- 123 Cypress Creek - highlights: 20 eagles, including one Golden, 24 assorted owls, nearly 200,000 geese, 1200 Lapland Longspurs. (In just the second year of this Count, slightly improved weather and more observers brought up the total.)

A BOOK TO CHERISH

One of the loveliest books on birding we have ever seen was given to us this Christmas: Elliot Porter's "Moments of Discovery: Adventures with American Birds". One of the so-called "coffee table books", the text by Michael Harwood is as enchanting as the delicately beautiful photographs by Elliot Porter, a master of bird photography. "The special magic of bird study and the excitement of adding to one's knowledge about birds are the 'moments of discovery' of this book". We heartily recommend this as an addition to your personal library.

A SHARED CHRISTMAS NOTE

Dee Ross, who has moved to the cold north says she went on a Count Dec. 17 on the east side of Cleveland (Ohio)--83 species including 1 Snowy Owl, 1 Carolina Wren and robins. She was going on one Jan. 1, but it was too snowy to see much. "We have several inches of snow, but it is not unbearable. It has been very cold though--wind chill -18"!!

CLEARING HOUSE December, 1977

- (How to read the C-H: Species: Location--(how many) date, observers) (For reports of Christmas Count sightings only, Counts will be shown by initial(s), followed by number of individuals in parentheses--date of occurrence will be omitted. Here are the dates of Counts reported: Houston (H) Dec. 17; Freeport (F) Dec. 18; Old River (OR) Dec. 27; Bolivar (B) Dec. 28; Cypress Creek (CC) Jan. 1; Buffalo Bayou (BB) Jan. Field notes on unusual or accidental species observed on the Counts are not included here, since they were submitted to and accepted by the compilers. Complete reports for Old River and Bolivar Counts were not received. --CH Editor)
- Loon, Common: Texas City Dike--(20-30)3,A, (3)15,JH; Offats Bayou--(1)31,R&KA; H(45), F(7).
- LOON, ARCTIC: Texas City Dike: (1)15,JH, (1)16,P&MJ, (see notes--prior reports)
- Loon, Red-throated: H(1).
- Grebe, Horned: Texas City Levee--(4)3,A (see notes), (4)15,JH (see notes), (1)16,P&MJ (prior report); Warren Lake--(4)4,OG (see notes); Anahuac NWR--(2)29,D&JD (see notes); H(33); F(2); CC(1).
- Grebe, Eared: Warren Lake--(10)4,OG, (1)24,TE, (1)27,JT; Texas City Dike--(1)24,R&KA; W.Galveston--(4)30,R&KA; H(131); F(82); CC(1).
- Grebe, Least: Anahuac NWR--(1)29,D&JD (see notes).
- Grebe, Pied-billed: W.Galveston--(2)11,JH, (1)24,30,31,R&KA; Ft. Bend Co.--(2)3,A, (10)26,M; H(30); F(144); CC(7); BB(1).
- Pelican, White: Warren Lake--(40)4,OG, (10)11,TE, (33)14,J&BHa, (34)23,(48)27,JT; Bolivar--(10)15,JH, (28)25,JT, (2)31,R&KA; Texas City Dike--(20)15,JH, (1)24,R&KA; H(450); F(25); CC(71).
- Pelican, Brown: Galveston--(1)19,MA,MJ, (1)24,R&KA (prior reports); B(1).
- Gannet: F(3).
- Cormorant, Double-crested: Ft. Bend Co.--(4)3,A, (35)26,M; Texas City Dike--(n/c)3,A, (15)15,JH; Warren Lake--(25)4,OG, (15)23,JT, (10)24,TE, (20)27,JT; Bolivar--(30)25,JT; H(460); F(161); OR(22); CC(30).
- Cormorant, Olivaceous: Cedar Point--(10)3,G,P&WC; Bolivar--(1)25,JT; H(29); OR(1).
- Cormorant, species: F(83); CC(6).
- Anhinga: Ft. Bend Co.--(6)3,A, (8)26,M; H(8); F(12).
- Heron, Great Blue: Ft. Bend Co.--(6)3,A, (5)26,M; H(248); F(306); OR(1); CC(61); BB(1)
- Heron, Green: H(3); F(7).
- Heron, Little Blue: W.Galveston--(4)24,R&KA; Ft. Bend Co.--(4)26,M; H(15); F(49); OR(15); CC(6).
- Egret, Cattle: Ft. Bend Co.--(7)3,A, (10)26,M; Warren Lake--(30)26,A&WE; H(58); F(31); OR(4); CC(94).
- Egret, Reddish: Galveston Co.--(1)15,JH, (1)24,R&KA; Bolivar--(1)25,JT; B(1); F(13).
- Egret, Great: W.Galveston--(6)11,JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(2)3,A, (5)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(10)8,JH; H(382); F(315); OR(22); CC(38); BB(4).
- Egret, Snowy: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (20)26,M; H(484); F(165); OR(45); CC(4).
- Heron, Louisiana: Brazoria Co.--(2)8,JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)26,M; H(36); F(47); OR(3).
- Night Heron, Black-crowned: W.Harris Co.--(3)14,J&BHa; Maner Lake--(1)16,P&MJ; Galveston--(2)24,R&KA; H(352); F(152); OR(1).
- Night Heron, Yellow-crowned: W.Galveston--(2)24,R&KA; H(10); F(3); CC(1-count week).
- Night Heron, species: F(12).
- Bittern, American: W.Galveston-- (2)1,JH, (1)28,(1)31,G&JC; Surfside--(1)16,P&MJ; Anahuac NWR--(2)29,G,P&WC; H(2); F(4).
- Stork, Wood: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A (see notes).
- Ibis, White-faced: Ft. Bend Co.--(40)26,M; F(169)
- Ibis, White: Ft. Bend Co.--(8)3,A, (80)26,M; Chambers Co.--(2)10,WC; W.Galveston--(9)30,R&KA; H(17); F(22).
- Swan, Whistling: Brazoria Co.--(5)14,Jennifer Backo (fide DD, see notes); Chambers Co.--(6)Nov.-Dec., Joe Lagow (fide DD).
- Goose, Canada: Warren Lake--(50)4,OG, (500)11,TE; Ft. Bend Co.--(15)26,M; H(21); F(226); CC(686); BB(6).
- Goose, White-fronted: Warren Lake--(100)4,OG, (1,500)11,TE; Ft. Bend Co.--(25)26,M; H(17); F(138); CC(7,525).
- Goose, Snow: Warren Lake--(10,000)4,OG, (5,500)24,TE; Galveston Co.--(100)8,JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(125)26,M; H(1,700); F(30,617); OR(1,300); CC(133,375); BB(650).
- Goose, Snow (Blue phase): Ft. Bend Co.--(50)26,M; H(500); F(2,365); CC(27,903); BB(150)
- Goose Ross': Warren Lake--(4)4,OG, (2)11,P&MJ, (2)27,JT (prior reports); Anahuac NWR--(1)26,Russ Clapper (fide DD); F(7); CC(6); BB(1).
- Mallard: Warren Lake--(30)4,OG, (40)11,(300)24,TE; Ft. Bend Co.--(300)26,M; H(19); F(221); CC(485); BB(1).
- Duck, Mottled: H(112); F(152); CC(13); BB(1).
- Duck, Gadwall: Warren Lake--(15)4,OG,(10)11,(75)24,TE; Ft. Bend Co.--(60)26,M; H(52); F(80); CC(144).
- Pintail: Ft. Bend Co.--(1,000)26,M; Warren Lake--(30)4,OG, (50)11,(500)24,TE; Galveston: (20+)24,R&KA; H(34); F(638); CC(1,268); BB(1).
- Teal, Greenwinged: Galveston--(n/c)15,JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(600)26,M; Warren Lake--(200)11,(200)24,TE; H(18); F(576); OR(26); CC(2,400).

- Teal, Blue-winged: Galveston--(n/c)15, JH; Ft. Bend Co.(30)26, M; Warren Lake--(10)4, OG; H(17); F(60); CC(n/c-count week).
- Teal, Cinnamon: Warren Lake--(1)11, TE, (1)14, J&BHa; CC(2).
- Teal, species: H(10).
- Wigeon, American: W.Galveston--(5)1, JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(50)3, A, (250)26, M; Warren Lake--(2)4, OG, (10)11, (30)24, TE; H(13); F(607); CC(309).
- Shoveler, Northern: Warren Lake--(1)4, OG, (2)11, (10)24, TE; Galveston--(n/c)15, JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(40)26, M; H(478); F(1,485); OR(92); CC(496); BB(4).
- Duck, Wood: Ft. Bend Co.--(50)26, M; H(5); F(21); CC(18).
- Redhead: Warren Lake--(20)4, OG, (25)11, TE; Freeport--(2)10, L&MB; F(19); B(3); CC(n/c-count week).
- Duck, Ring-necked: Ft. Bend Co.--(10)3, A, (400)26, M (very carefully counted); Freeport--(4)10, L&MB; Warren Lake--(30)24, T&JE; H(1); F(80); CC(45); BB(2).
- Canvasback: Ft. Bend Co.--(45)16, P&MJ; Warren Lake--(50)24, T&JE; Brazoria Co.--(100+)30, G&JC; H(370); F(380); CC(71).
- Scaup, Greater: Texas City Dike--(10)15, JH (no field notes), (2)10, L&MB (see notes); Mercury Dr.--(2)16, WC (see notes); H(1); F(4).
- Scaup, Lesser: Ft. Bend Co.--(10)3, A, (20)26, M; Texas City Dike--(8)3, A; H(4,855); F(2,454); CC(10); BB(20).
- Goldeneye, Common: Bolivar--(1)19, MA, MJ; W.Galveston--(4)24, R&KA, (1 male)29, (1 female)30, G&JC; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)26, M; Anahuac NWR--(2)29, G, P&WC; H(35); F(67); B(1); BB(1).
- Bufflehead: W.Galveston--(1)1, JH; Maner Lake--(8)16, P&MJ; Texas City Levee--(1)16, P&MJ; H(90); F(14).
- Scoter, White-winged: Bolivar--(2)19, MA, MJ (no field notes).
- Scoter, Surf: B(2).
- Scoter, Common: (4)19, MA, MJ (no field notes); B(1).
- Scoter, species: Bolivar--(30)19, MA, MJ (no field notes).
- Duck, Ruddy: W. Galveston--(6)1, JH; Warren Lake--(20)4, OG, (2)11, TE, (25)24, T&JE; Mercury Dr.--(150)10, JMo; H(367); F(225); CC(10).
- DUCK, MASKED: Anahuac NWR--(1)29, P&MJ (see notes), (1)30, D&JD (see notes); B(1).
- Duck, species: CC(1,032).
- Merganser, Hooded: Ft. Bend Co.--(4m, 2f)3, A, (5)26, M; Mercury Dr.--(3)16, WC; W.Galveston--(4m, 4f)27, G&JC; H(2); F(11).
- Merganser, Red-breasted: Texas City Dike--(3)3, A; W.Galveston--(7)16, P&MJ; Bolivar--(40-50)19, MA, MJ; Galveston--(3)24, R&KA; H(561); F(63).
- Vulture, Turkey: Ft. Bend Co.--(4)3, A, (300)26, M; Brazoria Co.--(3)8, JH; H(61); F(158); OR(7); CC(10); BB(60).
- Vulture, Black: Brazoria Co.--(2)8, JH; Clute--(2)10, W; Ft. Bend Co.--(2)26, M; F(83); BB(8).
- Kite, White-tailed: Chambers Co.--(1)29, P&MJ; Pearland--(4)31, B&EW; H(1); F(23); CC(1) BB(2).
- Hawk, Sharp-shinned: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3, A; Houston--(10)30, G, P&WC (yard), (1)24, WC (White Oak Bayou); Dow Nature Trail--(1)24, S&TC; H(11); F(3); OR(1); CC(1), BB(1).
- Hawk, Cooper's: Houston--(1)14, PC (Arboretum); H(6); F(6); CC(1).
- Accipiter, species: H(2).
- Hawk, Red-tailed: E. Harris Co.--(9)3, A; Ft. Bend Co.--(3)3, A, (2)26, M; Brazoria Co.--(2)8, JH; Warren Lake--(2 *kriderii*)11, TE; H(100); F(154); OR(3); CC(193+3 *kriderii*) BB(16).
- Hawk, Red-tailed (Harlan's): H(1); F(1); CC(2).
- Hawk, Red-shouldered: Ft. Bend Co.--(2)3, A, (15)26, M; Brazoria Co.--(2)8, JH; H(19); F(58); OR(1); CC(5); BB(2).
- Hawk, Swainson's: Bolivar--(1 adult, 1 imm.)15, JH (no field notes); H(3); F(1).
- Hawk, White-tailed: F(1).
- Hawk, Rough-legged: (1)23, JT (no field notes); H(2); BB(1).
- Hawk, Ferruginous: F(1); CC(1).
- Buteo, species: H(2).
- Eagle, Golden: Warren Lake--(1)Nov. 27, Rick Goldfarb et al (see notes); CC(1).
- Eagle, Bald: Warren Lake--(4)4, OG, (8)11, TE, (6)11, JMo, (2)23, (1)27, JT; F(1); CC(19); OR(2).
- Hawk, Marsh: W.Galveston--(2)1, JH, (1)24, R&KA; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3, A, (1)26, M; Brazoria Co.--(5)8, JH; Bolivar--(3)15, JH; H(49); F(162); CC(149); BB(2).
- Osprey: Quintana--(1)10, L&MB; H(1); F(2); OR(1).
- Caracara: F(1).
- Falcon, Peregrine: Double Bayou: (1)29, Jonell & Art Buckels (no field notes); Galveston: (1)31, R&KA (see notes); F(1).
- Merlin: H(1); F(4); OR(1); CC(1).
- Kestrel, American: W.Galveston--(3)1, JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(4)3, A, (10)26, M; Brazoria Co.--(3)8, JH; Bolivar--(4)15, JH; H(137); F(201); OR(4); CC(173); BB(11).
- Bobwhite: Ft. Bend Co.--(26)3, A, (25)26, M; W.Harris Co.--(30)14, J&BHa; H(56); F(101); CC(177).
- PHEASANT, RING-NECKED: Anahuac NWR--(1)29, G, P&WC (prior reports)
- Crane, Sandhill: W.Harris Co.--(110)4, OG; Brazoria Co.--(20)8, JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(60)26, M; F(522); CC(223); BB(1).

- Rail, King: H(3); F(1); CC(2).
 Rail, Clapper: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A; W. Galveston--(7)24,R&KA (on "Rail" road): H(6); F(34); OR(2).
 Rail, Virginia: H(2); F(3).
 Sora: OR(1).
 Rail, Yellow: F(3).
 Rail, Black: B(1).
 Gallinule, Common: H(2); F(2); CC(1-count week).
 Coot, American: Ft. Bend Co.--(6)3,A, (30)26,M; W. Galveston--(10+)24,30,R&KA; H(162); F(4,027); CC(18); BB(2).
 Jacana: Maner Lake--(12-2a,10)16,P&MJ.
 Oystercatcher, American: Texas City Dike--(1)3,A; Bolivar--(1)15,JH, (8)25,JT; W. Galveston--(1)16,P&MJ, (1)24,R&KA; Galveston--(1)24,R&KA.
 Plover, Semipalmated: Bolivar--(50)27,JT; H(35); F(23).
 Plover, Piping: Bolivar--(3)15,JH, (35)25,JT; Galveston--(7)24,R&KA; F(8).
 Plover, Snowy: Bolivar--(2)15,JH, (3)27,G&JC, (8)27,JT; F(2).
 Plover, Wilson's: H(2); OR(1).
 Killdeer: Ft. Bend Co.--(12)3,A, (80)26,M; H(707); F(1,290); OR(50); CC(571); BB(105)
 Plover, Black-bellied: Bolivar--(10)15,JH; Galveston--(2)24,(4)30,R&KA; H(16); F(100).
 Turnstone, Ruddy: W. Galveston--(2)1,JH; Bolivar--(1)15,JH, (1)25,JT; Galveston--(15)24,R&KA; F(28).
 Woodcock, American: Houston--(1)19,(2)24,WC (White Oak Bayou), (1)27,PC (Arboretum); Ft. Bend Co.--(3)26,M; H(3); F(39); CC(1-count week); BB(2).
 Snipe, Common: W. Harris Co.--(60)4,OG, (1)11,(50)24,TE; Ft. Bend Co.(13)26,M; Anahuac NWR--(4)29,P&MJ; H(18); F(151); OR(1); CC(53); BB(1).
 Curlew, Longbilled: Texas City Dike--(9)3,A, (1)15,JH; W. Harris Co.--(25)11,TE, (16)11,P&MJ; Galveston--(1)24,R&KA; F(65); CC(258).
 Whimbrel: F(1).
 Sandpiper, Spotted: W. Galveston--(1)16,P&MJ; Galveston--(1)24, (2)31,R&KA; H(53); F(32)
 Sandpiper, Solitary: F(2); B(1).
 Willet: Bolivar--(16)25,JT; Galveston--(10+)24,30,31,R&KA; H(42); F(131).
 Yellowlegs, Greater: W. Galveston--(5)1,JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)26,M; H(37); F(140); OR(1); CC(3); BB(3).
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: W. Galveston--(2)1,JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(2)26,M; H(138); F(79); OR(8).
 Yellowlegs, species: H(2); BB(3).
 Knot, Red: W. Galveston--(27)27,(33)30,G&JC; F(8).
 Sandpiper, Purple: Quintana Jetty--(1)10,L&MB, (1)20,G,P&WC (prior reports); Surf-side Jetty--(1)17,S&TC (prior reports); F(1).
 Sandpiper, Least: Bolivar--(25)25,JT; H(3); F(156); CC(49); BB(2).
 Dunlin: Bolivar--(300)25,JT; F(320); CC(1).
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: Texas City Dike--(1)3,A; H(50); F(123).
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: Chambers Co.--(55)29,P&MJ (identified by call); F(10); CC(131).
 Dowitcher, species: H(181); F(622); OR(8); CC(48).
 Sandpiper, Stilt: B(1).
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: H(229); F(7).
 Sandpiper, Western: Bolivar--(20)25,JT; H(151); F(155); CC(13); BB(1).
 Godwit, Marbled: Texas City Dike--(1)15,JH; W. Galveston--(3)27-31,G&JC; B(18).
 Sanderling: Galveston--(20)24,R&KA; Bolivar--(150)25,JT; H(105); F(186).
 Peep, species: F(1,525); CC(60).
 Avocet, American: Mercury Dr.--(90)10,JMo; W. Harris Co.--(10)14,J&BHa; Bolivar--(n/c)15,JH; Galveston--(9)24,R&KA; H(265); F(119); CC(4).
 Stilt, Black-necked: B(4).
 Jaeger, species: F(2).
 Gull, Glaucous: Bolivar--(1)3,D&JD (see notes), (1)7,MA,MJ (see notes)
 Gull, Herring: Bolivar--(3)25,JT; H(90); F(199).
 Gull, Ring-billed: Bolivar--(n/c)15,JH, (20)25,JT; Ft. Bend Co.--(30)26,M; H(2,800); F(2,422); OR(8); CC(8); BB(4).
 Gull, Laughing: Bolivar--(150)25,JT; H(2,750); F(1,520).
 Gull, Franklin's: Warren Lake--(1)11,JMo (see notes), (1)11,TE (see notes)
 Gull, Bonaparte's: Bolivar--(3)19,MA,MJ, (12)25,JT; H(34); F(29); CC(4).
 Gull, species: H(500); F(150).
 Kittiwake, Black-legged: Quintana--(1)10,L&MB (see notes); F(1)
 Tern, Gull-billed: Anahuac NWR--(3)29,G,P&WC; H(2); F(9); B(1).
 Tern, Forster's: Bolivar--(60)25,JT; H(890); F(140); CC(2).
 Tern, Common: Bolivar--(2)25,JT; H(198); F(9).
 Tern, Royal: Bolivar--(8)15,JH, (50)25,JT; H(180); F(35); OR(1).
 Tern, Sandwich: Bolivar--(3)25,JT; H(7); B(1).
 Skimmer, Black: Galveston--(200)24,R&KA; Bolivar--(1)25,JT; F(4).
 Dove, Rock: Ft. Bend Co.--(9)3,A; Bellaire--(8)30,PJ; H(231); F(123); CC(54); CC(100).
 Dove, White-winged: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A.
 Dove, Mourning: Ft. Bend Co.--(30)26,M; Bellaire--(4)30,PJ; H(550); F(595); CC(552); BB(4).
 DOVE, RINGED-TURTLE: Bellaire--(7-8)5,P&MJ (prior reports); BB(13)(Bellaire)
 Dove, Ground: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)20,WC; H(3); F(15); CC(55).
 Dove, Inca: Galveston--(19+)all month,R&KA (yard); H(1); F(4); CC(11); BB(4).

Roadrunner: OR(2).

Ani, Groove-billed: W.Harris Co.--(1)14,J&BHa.

Owl, Barn: W.Galveston--(1)29,G&JC; H(8); F(2); OR(2); CC(3).

Owl, Screech: H(19); F(5); OR(2); CC(9); BB(3).

Owl, Great Horned: W.Harris Co.--(1)23,JT; H(4); F(11); CC(1); BB(1).

Owl, Burrowing: Texas City Dike--(1)3,A, D&JD (prior reports), (1)15,JH(see notes)

Owl, Barred: Ft. Bend Co.--(4)27,M; H(7); F(25); OR(1); CC(3); BB(4).

Owl, Short-eared: W.Harris Co.--(1)11,TE; W.Galveston--(2)29,30,G&JC; (2)30,R&KA (see notes); F(5); CC(7).

Chuck-will's-widow: Houston--(1)13,PC (arboretum - see notes).

Whip-poor-will: W.Harris Co.--(1)11,P&MJ (see notes).

Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: Lake Jackson--(1)12,SC (no field notes); F(1).

Hummingbird, Rufous: Lake Jackson--(1)12,SC; F(11); BB(2).

HUMMINGBIRD, ANNA'S: F(1).

HUMMINGBIRD, BUFF-BELLIED: Houston--(1)Nov.13, WC (see notes), (1)3-31,G,P&WC (yard - see notes), (1)11,JMo (Cureton yard); BB(1).

Kingfisher, Belted: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)13,A, (5)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(1)8,JH; Galveston--(1)15,JH, (1)24,31,R&KA; H(88); F(70); OR(4); CC(11); BB(1).

Flicker, Common (Yellow-shafted): Galveston--(1)all month,R&KA (yard); Pearland: (2) all month,B&WE (yard); Ft. Bend Co.--(2)8,JH; Bellaire,(2)30,PJ; H(118); F(95); OR(7); CC(95); BB(17).

Flicker, Common (Red-shafted): F(1); CC(2).

Woodpecker, Pileated: Ft. Bend Co.--(10)26,M; H(20); F(52); BB(4).

Woodpecker, Red-bellied: Ft.Bend Co.--(2)3,A, (10)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(3)8,JH; Bellaire--(1)30,PJ; H(48); F(78); OR(1); CC(42); BB(5).

Woodpecker, Red-headed: H(2); F(3).

Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: Galveston--(1)all month,R&KA (yard), (1)12,JH; Ft.Bend Co.--(10)26,M; H(40); F(57); OR(1); CC(18); BB(5).

Woodpecker, Hairy: Brazoria Co.--(2)8,JH; H(1); F(3).

Woodpecker, Downy: Brazoria Co.--(1)8,JH; Ft.Bend Co.--(2)26,M; W.Harris Co.--(2)26, A&WE; H(10); F(17); CC(7); BB(9).

Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: W.Harris Co.--(2)4,OG (no field notes).

Phoebe, Eastern: Ft. Bend Co.--(4)3,A, (30)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(1)8,JH; W.Harris Co.--(1)27,JT; H(74); F(128); OR(7); CC(42).

PHOEBE, SAY'S: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A (prior reports).

Empidonax, species: F(7).

Pewee, Eastern: H(1).

Flycatcher, Vermilion: Ft. Bend Co.--(4)3,A, (7)26,M; W.Harris Co.--(1)14,J&BHa; Big Slough--(1)30,G&JC; Pearland--(1)all month,B&EW (yard); F(11)

Lark, Horned: Bolivar--(10)15,JH; H(2); F(66); CC(1).

Swallow, Tree: H(1).

Swallow, Rough-winged: Anahuac NWR--(9)29,P&MJ.

Jay, Blue: Ft. Bend Co.--(10)26,M; Bellaire--(15)30,PJ; H(194); F(38); OR(25);CC(93); BB(49).

Crow, Common: Ft. Bend Co.--(12)3,A, (30)26,M; H(190); F(1,115); OR(2); CC(51);BB(49).

Crow, Fish: H(3).

Chickadee, Carolina: Ft. Bend Co.--(4)3,A, (25)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(20)8,JH; Bellaire --(8)30,PJ; H(163); F(321); OR(29); CC(67); BB(11).

Titmouse, Tufted: Brazoria Co.--(10)8,JH; Ft.Bend Co.--(20)26,M; Bellaire--(2)30,PJ; H(40); F(138); CC(9); BB(9).

Nuthatch, Red-breasted: H(2); BB(3).

Nuthatch, Brown-headed: Houston--(4)24,JMo (yard); H(1); BB(2).

Creeper, Brown: Brazoria Co.--(1)8,JH; Houston--(5)13,14,PC (Arboretum); H(2); B(4); CC(3).

Wren, House: W.Harris Co.--(2)4,OG, (2)11,TE; Ft.Bend Co.--(2)26M; H(33); F(34); OR(3); CC(13).

Wren, Winter: W.Harris Co.--(1)4,OG; Houston--(1)19,WC (White Oak Bayou); Ft.Bend Co.--(2)26,M; H(8); F(4); CC(3).

Wren, Carolina: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (12)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(1)8,JH; H(51); F(52); OR(9); CC(17); BB(1).

Wren, Long-billed Marsh: Maner Lake--(1)16,P&MJ; Ft.Bend Co.--(1)26,M; H(5); F(10); OR(21 in one marsh); CC(n/c-count week).

Wren, Sedge (Short-billed Marsh): High l.--(1)7,MA,MJ; Ft.Bend Co.--(1)26,M; H(22); F(30); OR(2); BB(1).

Mockingbird: Ft. Bend Co.--(2)3,A, (8)26,M; Bellaire--(12)30,PJ; H(304); F(235); OR(10); CC(104); BB(27).

Catbird, Gray: W.Harris Co.--(1)4,OG; Ft.Bend Co.--(8)26,M; H(10); F(13); OR(1);BB(1).

Thrasher, Brown: Galveston--(2)1-16,R&KA (yard); Ft.Bend Co.--(2)3,A, (15)26,M; H(123) F(151); OR(6); CC(73); BB(5).

THRASHER, LONG-BILLED: Dow Nature Trail--(1)20,SC et al, (1)26,TC (see notes); F(2).

Thrasher, Sage: Chambers Co.--(1)mid-Dec.,Russ Clapper (fideDD); Brazoria Co.--(1)19, A (see notes); F(1).

Robin, American: Galveston--(1-5)1-16,R&KA (yard); Ft.Bend Co.--(60)26,M; H(223); F(1,008); CC(2,449); BB(30).

Thrush, Wood: F(4).

- Thrush, Hermit: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (15)26,M; W.Harris Co.--(1)27,JT; H(15); F(17); OR(3),CC(3).
 Bluebird, Eastern: Ft.Bend Co.--(6)3,A, (14)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(30)8,JH; H(26); F(6).
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: Ft.Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (15)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(2)8,JH; W.Galveston--(1)30,R&KA; H(103); F(272); OR(29); CC(30).
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: H(7).
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (35)26,M; H(309); F(320); OR(30); CC(83); BB(11).
 Pipit, Water: W.Harris Co.--(40)4,OG, (45)24,T&JE; Brazoria Co.--(1)8,JH; Ft.Bend Co.--(40)26,M; H(106); F(330); OR(1); CC(111); BB(4).
 Pipit, Sprague's: Ft.Bend Co.--(1)3,A (no field notes); W.Harris Co.--(7)4,OG (no field notes); Freeport--(1)10.L&MB (no field notes); H(2); F(21); CC(13).
 Waxwing, Cedar: W.Harris Co.--(2)4,OG; Ft.Bend Co.--(60)26,M; H(148); F(41); CC(220); BB(300).
 Shrike, Loggerhead: Ft.Bend Co.--(5)3,A, (10)26,M; H(302); F(241); CC(201); BB(11).
 Starling: Ft.Bend Co.--(15)26,M; H(1,042); F(976); CC(883); BB(141).
 Vireo, White-eyed: Houston--(1)11,26,27,PC (Arboretum); W.Harris Co.--(1)27,JT; H(3); F(5).
 Vireo, Solitary: W.Harris Co.--(1)4,OG; (1)14,J&BHa; Ft.Bend Co.--(2)26,M; H(2); F(28) CC(7); BB(2).
 Warbler, Black-and-white: F(4).
 WARBLER, PROTHONOTARY: Lake Jackson--(1)8,JH (no field notes).
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: Ft. Bend Co.--(3)3,A, (5)26,M; H(63); F(42); OR(8); CC(34); BB(2).
 Warbler, Nashville: H(1); F(2).
 Warbler, Yellow: F(1).
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle): Galveston--(1)all month,R&KA (yard); Ft.Bend Co.--(15)3,A, (200)26,M; Brazoria Co.--(50)8,JH; Bellaire--(8)30,PJ; H(896); F(225); OR(27); CC(150); BB(508).
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's): CC(2).
 Warbler, Black-throated Green: H(2).
 WARBLER, CHESTNUT-SIDED: H(1).
 Warbler, Bay-breasted: H(1).
 Warbler, Pine: W.Harris Co.--(1)4,OG; H(35); F(1); BB(2).
 Warbler, Palm: W.Galveston--(6)31,G&JC; H(5); F(4).
 OPORORNIS, species: F(1).
 Yellowthroat, Common: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)26,M; W.Galveston--(1)29,G&JC; H(13); F(86); OR(15); CC(1); BB(1).
 Warbler, Wilson's: Clute--(3)10,W; Ft.Bend Co.--(3)26,M; Houston--(1)19,WC (White Oak Bayou); Anahuac NWR--(1)29,G,P&WC; H(6); F(25).
 Sparrow, House: Bellaire--(50+)30,PJ; H(328); F(158); OR(10); CC(966); BB(227).
 Meadowlark, Eastern: Ft. Bend Co.--(8)3,A, (30)26,M; H(63); F(873); F(873); CC(529).
 Meadowlark, Western: CC(1).
 Meadowlark, species: H(278); F(200); OR(5); CC(461); BB(40).
 Blackbird, Red-winged: Ft. Bend Co.--(200+)3,A, (600,000)26,M (estimated from density charts); Bellaire--(100's)30,PJ; H(14,000); F(11,874); OR(16); CC(6,856); BB(6).
 Oriole, Northern (Baltimore): Clute--(1)10,W (see notes); H(1).
 Oriole, Northern (Bullock's): Houston--(1)22, Richard & Maxine Davis (yard - see notes)
 Blackbird, Rusty: Chambers Co.--(1)29,P&MJ; H(76); F(8); CC(61); BB(70).
 Blackbird, Brewer's: W.Harris Co.--(20)11,TE, (20)24,T&JE; H(77); F(52); CC(861); BB(18).
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: H(1); F(34); B(60).
 Grackle, Great-tailed: Bellaire--(50+)30,PJ; H(43); F(1,034); CC(5); BB(42).
 Grackle, Common: Ft.Bend Co.--(20)26,M; Bellaire--(100's)30,PJ; H(6,000); F(2,298); OR(10); CC(139); BB(16).
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: Ft. Bend Co.--(2)26,M; H(10,200); F(411); CC(20,950); BB(100).
 Blackbird, species: H(12,000); F(2,775); OR(15,000); CC(17,000).
 Cardinal: Galveston--(2)all month, R&KA (yard); Ft.Bend Co.--(10)3,A, (40)26,M; Bellaire--(12)30,PJ; H(371); F(414), OR(50); CC(268); BB(27).
 PYRRHULOXIA: F(1).
 Grosbeak, Black-headed: H(2); F(3).
 Grosbeak, Evening: OR(2).
 Bunting, Indigo: F(4).
 Bunting, Painted: H(1).
 Finch, Purple: Houston--(1)10,PC (Arboretum), (2)19,WC (White Oak Bayou); Bellaire--(1)29,PJ; H(66); F(8); CC(11).
 Siskin, Pine: Houston--(20)19,(60)24,WC (White Oak Bayou), (2)26,PC (Arboretum), (3)31,G&JC(yard); Ft.Bend Co.--(4)26,M; Chambers--(50)29,P&MJ; Bellaire--(40)30,PJ; H(24); F(11); CC(195); BB(27).
 Goldfinch, American: Ft. Bend Co.--(2)3,A, (200)26,M; W.Harris Co.--(20)4,OG; Brazoria Co.--(50)8,JH; Chambers Co.--(200)29,P&MJ; Bellaire--(12)30,PJ; H(611); F(455); OR(24); CC(489); BB(85).
 Spinus, species: Houston--(1)29,JMo (yard - see notes).
 TOWHEE, GREEN-TAILED: F(1).

- Towhee, Rufous-sided (Eastern): Ft. Bend Co.--(2)26,M; W. Harris Co.--(1)27, JT; H(3); F(2); CC(2); BB(2).
- Towhee, Rufous-sided (Spotted): F(1); CC(1).
- Sparrow, Savannah: Ft. Bend Co.--(5)3,A, (20)26,M; W. Harris Co.--(10)4, OG, (200)11, TE; Texas City Dike--(4)15, JH; Pelican I.--(1)31, R&KA; H(173); F(644); OR(1); CC(886); BB(6).
- Sparrow, Grasshopper: H(1); F(7).
- Sparrow, LeConte's: W. Harris Co.--(1)4, OG; W. Galveston--(1)27, G&JC; H(4); F(107); CC(1).
- Sparrow, Henslow's: Dow Nature Trail--(1)20, SC, et al, (1)26, TC (see notes); H(1); F(1)
- Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: H(2); F(5); B(2).
- Sparrow, Seaside: H(2); F(16); OR(40); B(6).
- Sparrow, Vesper: Ft. Bend Co.--(2)3,A; W. Harris Co.--(5)11, TE; H(33); F(24); CC(60).
- Sparrow, Lark: W. Harris Co.--(2)27, JT; H(1); F(3); CC(2).
- Junco, Dark-eyed (Slate-colored): Ft. Bend Co.--(6)26,M; H(21); F(7); CC(6).
- Sparrow, Chipping: Houston--(3)all month, WC (White Oak Bayou); W. Harris Co.--(4)4, OG; (6)27, JT; Brazoria Co.--(10)8, JH; Ft. Bend Co.--(30)26,M; H(99); F(1); CC(16); BB(7).
- Sparrow, Field: Cedar Point--(1)3, WC; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (2)26,M; W. Harris Co.--(1)4, OG; H(25); F(4); OR(1); CC(2); BB(2).
- Sparrow, Harris: W. Harris Co.--(1)11, TE; H(1); CC(28).
- Sparrow, White-crowned: W. Harris Co.--(15)11, P&MJ, (20)11, TE; H(52); F(15); OR(11); CC(57); BB(2).
- Sparrow, White-throated: Ft. Bend Co.--(30)3,A, (200)26,M; W. Galveston--(1-10)all month, R&KA (yard); W. Harris Co.--(25)4, OG, (20)11, TE; H(627); F(230); OR(32); CC(303); BB(51).
- Sparrow, Fox: W. Harris Co.--(1)4, OG; Ft. Bend Co.--(1)26,M; H(5); F(2); OR(1); CC(32); BB(4).
- Sparrow, Lincoln's: Ft. Bend Co.--(1)3,A, (15)26,M; W. Harris Co.--(1)11, TE; H(70); F(87); OR(4); CC(29); BB(5).
- Sparrow, Swamp: W. Harris Co.--(1)11, TE; Ft. Bend Co.--(30)26,M; H(140); F(186); OR(9); CC(32); BB(13).
- Sparrow, Song: W. Harris Co.--(1)4, OG; (1)11, TE; Ft. Bend Co.--(10)26,M; H(46); F(42); OR(14); CC(27); BB(7).
- Sparrow, species: H(50).
- Longspur, Lapland: CC(1,194).

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS December, 1977

MA - Margaret Anderson; R&KA - Richard M. & Kathleen Alexander; L&MB - Larry & Martha Ballard; G&JC - George & Jane Clayton; S&TC - Sherry & Tom Collins; G,P&WC - Glenn, Penny & Wesley Cureton; D&JD - David & Jan Dauphin; A&WE - Anne & Willard Elson; T&JE - Ted, Jr. & Janet Eubanks; JH - Jane Hamilton; J&BHA - Jean & Bill Harwell; P&MJ - T. Paul & Margaret Jones; JMo - Jim Morgan; JT - John Trochet; B&EW - Bob & Edith Willman; A - Party of MA, P&MJ; M - Party of TE, JMo; OG - Ornithology Group field trip; W - Party of L&MB, Shirley Wright.

CLEARING HOUSE FIELD NOTES December, 1977

ARCTIC LOON: Smaller loon seen with common loons 100 yards out from dike; concur with description in December SPOONBILL. --Jane Hamilton

Horned Grebe: Grebes with flattish dark head cap, white face and "chin" with white extending almost all around neck under head cap; white neck slightly longer and thicker looking than nearby eared grebes; more white showing on body below wings. Distance: 30' to 30 yds. 7x35, 7x50 binocs. --Margaret Jones

Seen about 100 ft. out from dike, concur with description in December SPOONBILL. --Jane Hamilton

Two birds seen in East Bay at 50', poor light, 10x50 binocs. Small; dark gray, white neck and cheek patch and white below, black ending at eye level, dark on back of neck, slightly crested looking. --David Dauphin

Four small grebes observed on Warren Lake; birds closely resembled eared grebes except for conspicuous white cheek patches and necks; observed from as close as 250 yds. in excellent light with 20x telescopes for 30 minutes by many observers. --Ted Eubanks, Jr.

Least Grebe: One bird seen from car in north side canal at Shoveler Pond. Distance was 30' in poor light with 10x50 binocs. Smaller than Pied-billed, very dark gray, very thin dark bill, yellow eyes, dark on rump, whitish under throat. --David Dauphin

Wood Stork: Large white bird with longish heavy bill, slightly curved. Bill was very light in color, almost white, indicating immature bird. Head had no feathers, and was grayish. Trailing edge of long wings was black. Terminal of tail was black. Legs long and gray. Observed both perched and flying at distances of about 20-30 yards. --T. Paul Jones

Whistling Swan: All white, very large birds, seen in flight, flying more rapidly than geese, larger than Canada geese, flying with long neck extended. --Jennifer Backo (fide DD).

Greater Scaup: When birds were flying primaries showed a white band all the way to the wing tip. Seen up to 30 yards with 7x50 binocs. --Wesley Cureton

MASKED DUCK: Seen in open water at a distance of about 100 yards with 7x50 and 7x35 binocs. Small, brownish, about the size of a ruddy duck, white wing patch, two facial stripes on buffy face. Swam into weeds abter 15-20 seconds viewing. Russ Clapper, who found the bird the day before, drove up with two more observers and watched the bird for several minutes swimming in and out of the "rattle beans". --Margaret Jones

Seen in poor light from 100-125 yards with 10x50 binocs and 15-60x telescope. Female, small, stiff-tailed, ruddy duck sized bird. Appeared dark brown with lighter brown head. Dark tail, dark cap, dark line through eye, dark line from bill to beyond cheek below the eye. Large white wing patches seen as the bird raised and flapped in the water. --David Dauphin

Golden Eagle: Immature bird observed at Warren Lake, 11/27/77 at 7:45 a.m. by Rick Goldfarb and Barbara Hoffer. This extremely tame bird was observed on a telephone pole with a 20x telescope for 20 minutes at less than 30 yards. Bird then flew directly overhead and perched on next pole. It was unmistakable, with white wing patches, broad white tail band with terminal dark brown band, prominent aquiline bill and golden neck feathers. Could approach bird close enough to observe its tongue with my binocs. Reported two weeks previously by Dr. & Mrs. George Clayton, however, then seen at some distance. --Rick Goldfarb

Peregrine Falcon: Perched on the upper ledge of the U.S. National Bank across Market Street from the Hutchins-Sealy Bank in downtown Galveston. Single adult bird. Probably same bird that has wintered in this spot the past two years. Last seen by me 4/2/77 in same perch. According to a bank employee it was also present in winter of 1976-76. Observed from parking lot of Hutchins-Sealy Bank with 7x35 binocs. in good light. --Richard M. Alexander

Glaucous Gull: Location: on beach between Gulf Haven and Shorty's Piers. Size: Larger in every way than nearby Herring gulls. Description-- Head was more massive than Herring gull; bill was large, heavy, pink all the way from base to black tip; eye was dark with light eye ring; ^{bill} legs were longer and thicker looking than Herring; wings were longer than tail by at least one inch; color--overall impression of much less than snow white; front of head and face slightly "smudged" (not streaked); back of head and shoulders were white - no freckling or "speckling"; tips of primaries were white; breast and belly mottled, whitish on creamy white; rump and undertail were "freckled", end of tail was white. Time of observation was 15 minutes. Distance--10-25 feet standing, up to 50 feet flying. (Flew out low over water, then returned to beach). Light--cloudy. Binocs--7x35, 8x40. Conclusion: First winter bird because eye still dark, not yellowish and feathers were mottled white, not "white-white". --Margaret Jones

Bird seen at 50 yards with 10x50 binocs in good light, while standing with Laughing, Ring-billed and Herring gulls. Drove up and flushed all birds but Glaucous and observed it standing on beach at less than 10'. Light pink bill with broad dark tip-band at end of bill, flesh colored legs and feet, dark brown eye. Bird was a dirty, but almost white, with some light buffy mottling that was scattered throughout, long dark tail tipped in white. --David Dauphin

Franklin's Gull: Small gull observed on the shore of Warren Lake; closely resembled a Laughing gull except for black wing-tips bordered by single white lines across primaries; observed in excellent light for 5 minutes with 20x telescope from as close as 250 yards. --Ted Eubanks, Jr.

Small gull standing on beach at Warren Lake. Almost complete black hood, silver gray back and white underparts, white stripe separating gray wings. When wings flapped, white stripe separating gray wings and black wing tips was clearly seen. Viewed at a distance of 100 yards with 20-45x telescope for 2 minutes. --Jim Morgan

Black-legged Kittiwake: Bar on back of neck with wing pattern different from Bonaparte's. Much darker on tips and forewing. Range 30 to 50 yards - light good - observed with 8x50 binocs. Probably the same bird that was seen on the Freeport CBC on the 18th. --Larry Ballard

Burrowing Owl: Martha Micks, John and I were out on the Texas City Dike "pishing" along between the 11th and 12th posts back from the rest room, having no luck. We were just beyond the 12th post when Faye Humphrey drove up on the other side of the road. She had come from Lake Jackson to find the owl. We asked her to drive down to the restroom, turn around and count back to be sure we were in the right place. She was on her way back when she spotted him on top of a large rock between 9th and 10th post. She jammed on her brakes so fast that she accidentally blew her horn, which did not disturb him in the slightest, and we all stood around and viewed him for some time. --Jane Hamilton

Short-eared Owl: Seen flying low over marsh and pastures near end of 8 Mile Rd. at 5:15 p.m. Observed for 5 minutes with 7x35 binocs as close as 100'. Alternately flapped wings and glided with wings above horizontal. Large buffy area apparent dorsally near end of wings. No sounds uttered. Ears not visible. Body length approximately 15". Estimated wing span: 30". --Richard Alexander (Accompanied by an excellent sketch. --C-H Ed.)

Chuck-will's-widow: Large goatsucker seen flying within 5 feet of me along about 3 p.m. It lit about 15 feet in front of me on sloping bank but was gone before I could get binoculars on it. Light brown in color with white on tail, noticeably larger than nighthawk. --Penny Cureton

Whip-poor-will: Grayish goatsucker, smaller than Chuck-will's-widow, no white wing nor tail patches. Flew across in front of car; viewing time 4-5 seconds. --Margaret Jones.

HUMMINGBIRD, BUFF-BELLIED: Bob and Margaret Simmons described to me this hummingbird seen in their yard at 5902 High Star. They reported seeing a red beak, green head and gorget, buff colored belly, and rufous colored tail. They saw the bird for about 15 minutes, during which it fed at shrimp plant flowers and perched on a wire. --Wesley Cureton

While working in our yard at about 11:30 a.m. I heard what I immediately knew to be a Buff-bellied hummingbird. The sound: a clicking cricket-like noise, came from a yaupon thicket growing in our yard. I returned into the house to wait at a window and was soon rewarded by a confirming view of an adult buff-bellied hummingbird. It fed almost exclusively on blooming shrimp plants, only occasionally feeding on a Turk's Cap blooming nearby. The feeder, to date, has been ignored. The noted field characteristics are: a red bill with a dark tip, a brilliant emerald green gorget, a buff belly, rufous wings and a long notched rufous tail. The bird has been seen by Margaret Anderson, Margaret and Paul Jones, Norma Oates, Noel Pettingell, et al. --Glenn Cureton

THRASHER, LONG-BILLED: We went back to see if we could find the bird my group saw on the Christmas Count. We found it about 30' from where it had been Sunday. It was standing on top of a ridge that paralleled a clear path we were on. The ridge had dense, tangled undergrowth but the bird was clearly visible through an opening in the brush. It was a slender, long tailed bird about the size of a brown thrasher. The cheek was grey with no contrast to the rest of the head. The head, back of neck, back and wings were grey brown; almost dirt colored. There were two light wingbars. There was no hint of rufous. We could not see the tail. The eye was bright yellow, the bill entirely black from base to tip, long and slightly curved. The breast, throat and belly were white with distinctly black, heavy streaking. We ruled out the brown thrasher because of the complete lack of rufous on the upper parts, the black bill and the black streaking. Three of us had seen a long-billed before and we all agreed that this bird was a long-billed. --Sherry Collins plus Paula Haddox, Shirley Wright, Anne Atkins, Sandy Dillard.

Sparrow, Henslow's: First observed as we flushed it from one clump of grass to another. Finally landed on a dead branch on the ground. The bird stood there without moving while we moved to within 15' and circled it for about 5 minutes observing it. The head was large and had a bronzy green tinge. A dark rusty stripe went down the center of the crown and another dark stripe down the side of the crown. The face had a greenish tinge. A dark stripe extended from the eye back. The eye was dark. A buff yellow whisker mark extended toward the throat. The throat was white with fine, dark streaks. The breast had a buff yellow band which also had fine black streaks. The belly was white. The back was dull brown. The wings were rich rufous, contrasting strongly with the head and back. There were very dark splotches on the feather tips of the wings. The tail was notched and relatively short. --Sherry Collins, plus Paul Haddox, Shirley Wright, Ann Atkins, Sandy Dillard.

[When submitting required field notes on observations, please remember to describe the bird as well as tell of any unusual circumstances re the sighting. --C-H Editor]

A NEW PLACE TO LOOK FOR THE GLAUCOUS GULL

Information was received too late to be included in Places to Go section on a Jan. 7 sighting of the Glaucous gull. He was seen at Texas City Dike sitting on the sandy beach near the "Burrowing Owl" area. Quite unafraid, he allowed observers to approach within 8 or 10 feet. Description seems to indicate this is the same bird that was seen on Bolivar peninsula in December.

MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING, ORNITHOLOGY GROUP, 5 January 1978

The OG convened on 5 January in the Bayou Manor auditorium for the first meeting and seminar of 1978. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dauphin at 7:30 p.m. Under old business, Dauphin reported that the OG had sent a memorandum to the ONC last month for Bernice Hardin. The OG has received no response from Texas Parks and Wildlife (TP&W) concerning an inquiry into the possibility of moving the resident Greater Prairie Chickens from the rapidly developing Spaceland Airport area. Dauphin said he would write TP&W another letter concerning the OG's inquiry. Keith Arnold (Texas A&M ornithologist) wrote thanking the OG for agreeing to supply checklists for the 1979 AOU convention in College Station. The OG received a letter from George Mitchell Interests saying they would "push" to see that the Old House area on Galveston Island is restored. This area, long favored as a migrant trap by UTC birders, was recently damaged by the installation of a pipeline. Jack Gillette reported that the Golden Crescent Nature Club in Victoria is interested in having OG members present birding programs for their group. If interested, contact Jack. Under new business, Dauphin reported that several rare birds had been reported in the UTC during December. The chairman asked that all Houston Christmas Count participants send him a list of property owners that gave OG'ers permission to bird their land during last month's count. The OG will send them a letter of appreciation. Chairman Dauphin reported that all UTC Christmas Counts, with the exception of Freeport, had set new records. [Houston's 1977 Count has been exceeded only once. --Ed.] Dauphin thanked all participating OG members for helping make these counts successful. Marilyn Crane introduced the two guest speakers for the evening's seminar on duck identification. They were Jim Clem and Jim Neaville of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. A film produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Watching Wild Wings", was shown, followed by a selection of duck slides by members. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Eubanks, Secretary

ROSTER ADDITIONS

Elizabeth T. Anderson, 12802 Westbranch Ct., Houston 77072	495-7230
Mrs. Ben (Muri) Chrisman, 1726 Tannehill, Houston 77008	864-6771
Mrs. A.J. (Mary) Dodson, 12315 Mossycup, Houston 77024	464-3982
Willard Elston, 724 International Blvd. #F51	683-0780
Mrs. Peggy Gerba 5806 Green Craig, Houston 77035 (Reinstated)	723-3870
William G. Hand, 350 Knipp Rd. Houston 77024	468-0705
Mrs. John (Shirley) Roman, 201 Wilcrest, #811, Houston	789-6745
Tyrrell D. Harvey, 205 Live Oak, Baytown 77520	422-5357
John C. Hatch, 9818 Sageplum, Houston 77089	485-9728
Charles L. Jensen, 715 Diamond Leaf, Houston 77079	467-3938
Miss Helen E. Via, 4422 Goldfinch, Houston 77035 (Reinstated)	721-2630
Mrs. Videlle Wilson, 55 Tiel Way, Houston 77019	522-4072

New Subscribers:

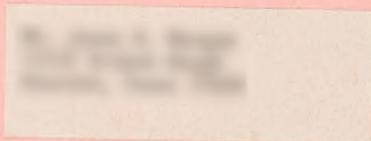
Glynn M. Irby, PO Box 637, Clute, 77531	1-265-2555
Mrs. Doyle R. (Diane) Wise, Rt. 2, Box 634, Alvin 77511	925-3904

OOPS! AN OMISSION CORRECTED AT THE LAST MINUTE

The Buff-bellied hummingbird listed in the Clearing House is still being seen (as of Jan. 8). The Curetons are glad for anyone to come by to see the bird, but ask that you call before coming. The phone number is 864-1807, and the address is 6623 Grove-wood.

ORNITHOLOGY GROUP
(Outdoor Nature Club)
c/o Mrs. Richard Davis
10602 Cedarhurst
Houston, Texas 77096
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Names for Reference:

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Treasurer: Mary Gillette, 5027 Longmont, Houston, Texas 77056	626-1755
SPOONBILL: Margaret Jones, 4902 Fern, Bellaire, Texas 77401	665-4197
Clearing House: T. Paul Jones, 4902 Fern, Bellaire, Texas 77401	665-4197
Rare Bird & Unusual Bird Alert: David Dauphin	422-7536
Change of address: Maxine Davis, 10602 Cedarhurst, Houston, Texas 77096	723-8559