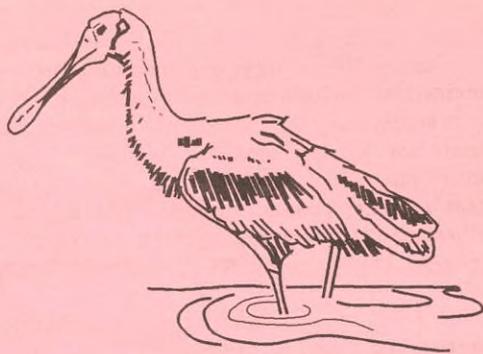


The Spoonbill

Published by the Ornithology Group, Outdoor Nature Club Houston, Texas
Judith Mueller Boyce, Editor; Don Richardson, Technical Consultant

VOLUME XLII, No. 1
January, 1993



IMPORTANT NOTICE: DUES INCREASE

At the January 11, 1993 OG meeting, the membership voted to increase OG dues from \$10 to \$12. Combined with recent ONC dues increase from \$5 to \$8, **TOTAL ONC/OG DUES WILL NOW BE \$20.00, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 1993.**

If you pay your 1993 dues promptly and your check is postmarked no later than January 31, 1993, you can still pay at the current rate of \$15 combined ONC/OG dues. **THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST ISSUE OF THE SPOONBILL IF '93' DOES NOT APPEAR ON YOUR MAILING LABEL.** Renew today, won't you?

Remember: We are soliciting drawings for a new Spoonbill logo. Also, we want to consider new ideas for a new drawing on the OG business card. Please submit your drawings to The Spoonbill Editor, Judy Boyce.

COMING EVENTS

Monday, February 1: ORNITHOLOGY GROUP MEETING. 7:30 PM, Harris County Bayland Community Park located on the north side of Bissonnet just west of Hillcroft. Due to surgery, Kelly Bryant of Texas Parks and Wildlife, had to cancel his presentation originally scheduled for this meeting. In his place, ornithologist Bob McFarlane, has agreed, even on such short notice, to present a program about the ecology of urban birds. Specializing in ornithology, Bob has a doctorate in zoology and is a consulting ecologist doing work for Galveston Bay Foundation, the Sierra Club, industry and real estate development. Bob is an active volunteer scientist and chairs

the Scientific/Technical Committee of the Galveston Bay National Estuary. His monograph on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker was published in 1992. Join us as we learn what ecological factors control the lives of our city birds. Richard Uzar will lead discussion on gull identification at the 7:00 PM Learning Corner.

Saturday, February 6: OG FIELD TRIP TO SAN BERNARD AND BRAZORIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES. We will visit two very "birdy" refuges on the Upper Texas Coast. Birds expected include ducks, geese, Sandhill Cranes, raptors and sparrows. We hope to see LeConte's and Grasshopper Sparrow. Local guides will show us their favorite spots within the two refuges. Meet our first leader, Warren Pruess, at the headquarters of San Bernard NWR at 7:45 AM. After an active morning in this refuge we will meet our second leader, Tom Morris, at 1:30 PM at the Brazoria NWR headquarters to finish out our day of birding. You may join us for one or both refuges. To reach San Bernard NWR, take Hwy. 288 south through Angleton to Lake Jackson. Turn right on FM 2004. Follow FM 2004 for about ten miles, crossing the Brazos and San Bernard Rivers, to the refuge sign. Follow the sign left for about one mile to the next refuge sign. At the second refuge sign go right onto the dirt road that leads to the refuge headquarters. Allow 1.5 hours drive time from Houston. Bring insect repellent.

Friday-Monday, February 12-15: ONC FIELD TRIP TO CHOKE CANYON STATE PARK. A weekend of camping, birding and botanizing around Choke Canyon Lake, which is located between San Antonio and Corpus Christi. If camping is not your cup of tea, motel accommodations are available in nearby Three Rivers at the Staghorn Inn, 1-512-786-3541. For camping reservations, contact Dorothy Parmesan, 622-7139.

Saturday, February 20: OG FIELD TRIP TO TEXAS CITY DIKE AND GALVESTON ISLAND. At the dike we expect to find wintering loons and ducks. In the past we have found Pacific Loon and Common Goldeneye at Texas City Dike. Galveston Island is always exciting this time of year. Meet our leader, Arch Dillard, at Texas City Dike at 7:30 AM. To reach the dike, take the Gulf Freeway (I-45 south) to the College of the Mainland/Texas City exit, FM 1764. Follow FM 1764 east (which becomes the Palmer Highway, which then becomes 9th Avenue) all the way through Texas City until it ends near the water front. Turn right at the "T" intersection and then turn right at the first traffic light. Turn left onto the dike road. On the left is a parking lot where we will meet. Call David Bradford at 855-2615 with any questions.

Wednesday, February 24: OG WEEKDAY FIELD TRIP TO WEST HARRIS COUNTY. Join this half-day trip which will focus on sparrows and hawks. Meet Gail Luckner and Winnie Burkett at the jogging trail parking lot in Bear Creek Park at 8:00 AM. From Houston take I-10 west to Highway 6. Follow Highway 6 north to Clay Road. Turn right on Clay and continue past the golf course to the jogging trail parking lot. Questions? Call Gail at 328-6236.

Monday, March 1: ORNITHOLOGY GROUP MEETING. 7:00 PM. at The Kinkaid School's Blaffer Auditorium. (The Kinkaid School is located at the second stop light west of Voss Road on San Felipe. If you are going west on San Felipe, turn left onto school grounds, park and follow signs to meeting.) Identification expert, author and artist Kenn Kaufman will present a program entitled, "Owl in a Day's Work." He will describe how he and Rick Bowers located 11 species of owls in one day. The effort was done for fun, but Kenn's program will include serious information about owls, their habits and habitats. Kenn's credentials are legendary. He began birding as a child and has made birds his life's work. Kenn is associate editor of American Birds magazine and serves on the board of directors of the American Birding Association. In addition to the book, Advanced Birding, Kenn is author and illustrator of innumerable bird identification articles. Please note that this program will be held at the Kinkaid School on San Felipe just west of Voss and will begin at 7:30 P.M., with social time at 7:00 P.M. The Kinkaid School has graciously donated the use of its facilities for this special program. A map showing directions to the Kinkaid School will be printed in the next issue of The Spoonbill.

Saturday, March 6: OG FIELD TRIP TO ATWATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN REFUGE. Details about this trip will be published in the February issue of The Spoonbill.

Saturday, March 20: ONC FIELD TRIP TO MATAGORDA ISLAND. After birding and exploring Matagorda Island, we will hear a presentation on the island's human history beginning with its first natives. If you plan to

participate, please notify Dorothy Parmesan (622-7139) by February 20 so that boat transportation can be arranged from Port O'Connor. If we do not have enough participants for a charter, ferry rides would be in the \$12-14 range.

NEWS BRIEFS

.....**PLEASE WELCOME NEW OG MEMBERS:** Albert Gray, Jo Ann Curtis, John LaGroue, David Lindsey and Maggie Dinse of Houston, Judy Behrens of Baytown, Carlos Hernandez of Spring, Stephen Bennett of Missouri City, David and Elaine Wilson of Pasadena, and Lola Russel of Sugar Land.

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.....**OG MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 11, 1993:** For the Learning Corner, Richard Uzar facilitated the discussion on identification of Franklin's Gull and Laughing Gull. He will continue discussion on gull identification at the February 1 meeting.

Chairman Bob Honig began the business meeting with a vote on the budget for 1993. The budget was unanimously approved as presented in the December Spoonbill. A motion was made to increase OG dues by \$2.00 per year. After a lively discussion, the increase was approved, to be effective February 1, 1993. [Please see dues increase and deadline for payment notice on page one of this issue. Ed.]

Program Chair, Gail Luckner, introduced author, lifetime birder and Wings tour leader, Jon L. Dunn. Jon began his presentation by stressing that knowing the parts of birds is an important tool for identification. Using an excellent series of slides, Jon reviewed field marks, habitat and behavior of flycatchers. Jon's slides of flycatchers in the field and study skins laid side by side for comparison were particularly enlightening. Jon's presentation as a great "workshop" and his humor was much appreciated by the group. **Christine Bourgeois, Secretary.**

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.....**COLORADO FIELD TRIP, JUNE 4-13, 1993:** The time is here to reserve rooms in Estes Park, the gateway city to Rocky Mountain National Park. If you are interested in participating, please call David Bradford to make arrangements. The basic itinerary is to fly to Denver, rent a van and spend three nights in Fort Collins exploring various parks and Pawnee National Grasslands. The next three nights will be in Estes Park. The next two or three nights will be spent in Denver birding the foothills and mountains of the area. Birds of particular interest include White-tailed Ptarmigan, Williamson's Sapsucker, Lewis and Three-toed Woodpecker, Mountain Plover, Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, Chestnut-collared and McGowens

Longspur, Pine Grosbeak, Rosy Finch, Cassin's Finch and many more. Those interested please call so the correct number of rooms can be reserved. David Bradford, 855-2615.

.....**AFTER DECADES, CANADA GEESE RETURN TO RUSSIA.** An endangered species success story in the U.S. may have a Russian chapter if an effort to bring the rare Aleutian Canada Goose back to Russia is successful. After being virtually extinct in Asia for decades, the geese that once migrated between Japan and Russia will be returning, thanks to a permanent loan of 10 nesting pairs from the U.S. The Aleutian Canada Goose was once listed as endangered in the U.S., but recovery efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) brought populations back from a low of fewer than 800 in 1967 to a current estimate of 8,000 birds. The species' status in the U.S. has been upgraded to threatened. The birds sent to Russia will be the start of an extensive captive breeding program. **FWS News Release, November 18, 1992.**

.....**HELP SAVE THE ENDANGERED ATTWATER'S PRAIRIE-CHICKEN.** The Fort Worth Audubon Society is offering for sale a colorful cloth patch featuring the Attwater's Prairie-chicken. From each patch's purchase price of five dollars, FWAS will immediately forward four dollars to the official Attwater's Prairie-chicken Recovery Program at Fossil Rim Wildlife Park in Glen Rose, Texas. Working in cooperation with Texas A&M University and the Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, officials gather eggs from dwindling wild populations on the coastal plain. The eggs are then artificially incubated at Fossil Rim, and the resulting chicks are raised by captive inland Greater Prairie-chicken. Captive-raised birds will be released strategically to enhance populations and genetic diversity in the tiny areas where the birds continue to survive in the wild. Biologists believe the wild hatch in 1992 was a complete failure. The survival of the Attwater's Prairie-chicken depends entirely on the success of the recovery effort. Patches may be ordered by mail from Mike Patterson, 2205 Glade Road, Colleyville, Texas 76034-4569. Checks for \$5.35 (\$5 plus 35 cents postage) should be made payable to Fort Worth Audubon Society.

NOEL'S NICHE LOOKING BACK

By Noel Pettingell

20 YEARS AGO/FROM JANUARY 1972 SPOONBILL
Migratory Bird Hunting Stamps and First Edition Prints

The creation of the duck stamps, as the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp is popularly known, was a dramatic event in

conservation history. For decades preceding the first stamp in 1934, the nation's migratory waterfowl had been declining at an alarming rate, despite efforts of the federal government, conservationists and sportsmen to halt the birds' plummet toward extinction. The mandatory purchase by hunters of federal duck stamps was instrumental in providing funds to buy, develop and maintain refuges across the country. The finest wildlife artists in the country are selected to illustrate the stamp. For the first 15 years the design of the stamp was commissioned by the committee administering the Duck Stamp Act. In 1949, the selection of art to provide the motif for the stamp shifted from commission to an annual contest, which is now open to all interested artists. Art--in the form of superb illustrations of the birds the Act intended to conserve--has become an effective weapon in the battle to preserve North America's wildlife heritage. Today, the black and white series of duck stamp prints (1934-69) is among the most sought after and select art collection of migratory birds in the world...Only 30 complete sets are known to exist.



ORNITHOLOGY GROUP HOUSTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

by P.D. Hulce

Despite extensive fog and occasional showers in the morning, the 54th consecutive (and 59th in all) Houston CBC produced some exceptional sightings and the highest species total in seven years. Fifty-four participants scoured the Baytown area quite thoroughly and observed an excellent total of 99,920 individuals of 167 species of birds.

Amazingly enough, the Barrow's Goldeneye seen on the 1991 count and was seen on count morning flying out of the count circle, exactly as last year. Equally impressive, however, was the discovery of three Long-eared Owl roosting in the pine trees along Cedar Bayou, south of I-10. These birds were also discovered the day before the count by David Dauphin fairly close to his home by Cedar Bayou. On count day, it required the use of a canoe to relocate these birds, some five miles from their previous roost. The only previous record for this species on the Houston CBC was in 1959, when six individuals were found roosting together.

As if this weren't enough, three new species were also added to the cumulative list of the Houston CBC. Birders in Area 1 spotted an immature Yellow-headed

Blackbird in a large field of mixed blackbirds; a Roadrunner, a very rare resident of Baytown, was spotted in Area 2; and a white-winged gull species, most probably a Glaucous Gull, was observed in Area 10.

The Brown Pelican continued its resurgence in our area, being seen for the fifth year in a row, following a nearly continuous absence for some 30 years. It is indeed heartening to see the Brown Pelican apparently repopulating the waters of the UTC.

Other uncommon birds seen on the count included Peregrine Falcon, White-tailed Hawk, two Ruby-throated Hummingbird, five Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Kingbird, an Empidonax species, Nashville, Prairie and Yellow-throated Warbler, House Finch and Black-headed Grosbeak.

A phenomenal total of over 49,000 gulls were tallied by Richard Uzar and Bob Luckner by the landfill in Area 7, close to the mouth of Cedar Bayou. Area 3 leader, Jim Day, managed to get eleven observers out in the field for the second year in a row. He also does a great job arranging publicity and media coverage for the count. Thanks for a great job, Jim.

Special thanks are due to the generosity of several organizations that allow us access to excellent birding areas on their property. Houston Lighting and Power, Chevron and numerous other businesses and private individuals are an important reason that, despite severe urbanization, the Houston CBC continues to be among the top CBC's in the country. In 1991, the Houston CBC was ranked 26th out of 1599 counts in the United States and Canada.

As always, the spirit and backbone of the count are due primarily to our outstanding and dedicated area leaders. It is due to their knowledge and enthusiasm that the census of all of the farflung corners of the count circle is thorough and accurate year after year. Sincere thanks to each and every one of them, and to all participants who ensure the success of the senior CBC of the Upper Texas Coast. I hope to see every one of you back next year.

One final, negative note from this year's count, however, concerns notes and documentation. Seventeen species of birds were reported on this year's count that required documentation. Three of these species were submitted with no documentation, an additional five species had extremely marginal and sometimes illegible notes, and one of these last five even neglected to list the name of the bird being described. In addition, several areas neglected to turn in figures for party hours and miles. The Houston CBC is in the unenviable position of being the opening act for the Freeport CBC the next day and of necessity, the Houston countdown dinner is an abbreviated affair at best, with insufficient time to hear oral accounts of these rarities or

even to ensure that legible notes were submitted for all required species. Everyone, including me, wants to get home and try to rest up for Freeport the next day. To ensure the maximum accuracy, and thereby the credibility of this oldest of area counts, Richard Uzar and I each request that if you must submit notes on a bird for the next Houston CBC, please be as legible as possible and include as much information as you possibly can concerning the actual bird that you observed in the field. A small micro-cassette recorder can be an invaluable aid for dictating notes in the field, while the bird is actually present, and the notes can be easily transferred to paper later. Let's make a serious effort to ensure the credibility of the Houston CBC, as second to none.



INLAND ENCOUNTERS WITH GULL-BILLED TERNS

by Winnie Burkett

On December 27, 1992 at 1:30 PM, while driving to Brazos Bend State Park, I noticed two light-colored birds flying over a plowed field adjacent to Route 1642 across from the Rosharon Post Office in Rosharon, Texas. I checked out these birds with my binoculars. One was a Ring-billed Gull and the other was a Gull-billed Tern.

A thorough investigation of the field with my telescope turned up 20 Gull-billed Terns and five Ring-billed Gulls. Ten of the terns were flying around the field at four to six feet off the ground, like they were feeding. The other terns were sitting on the ground. All terns were in winter plumage. One gull was harassing a tern and the other gulls were sitting on the ground. The gulls were all adults. When I went by the field again at 4:00 PM, one tern was in the air and all the other terns and gulls were on the ground.

On January 1, 1993, I again checked the Rosharon field and found 25 Gull-billed Terns and no gulls. Ten of the terns were roosting on the ground, the rest were flying around the field.

I have always seen Gull-billed Terns in ones and twos in saltwater marshes. I was surprised to see a "flock" at an inland location. The bird books I have at hand mention coastal Texas as a wintering site for these terns but always refer to them as "birds of the salt marsh."

If anyone else has had inland encounters with Gull-billed Terns I would be interested in hearing about them. Winnie Burkett, 919 Layfair Place, Friendswood, Texas 77546. 713/992-5640.

FREEPORT CHRISTMAS COUNT

by Jim Morgan

On Sunday, December 20, 1992, 160 observers recorded 163,542 individuals of 214 bird species on the 36th annual Freeport Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by Houston Audubon Society. The species total matched the count average for the last 15 years. The total is also one higher than that accounted for at the countdown dinner. This is because Red Knot was missed during the latter tally.

The most unusual species on this count were Least Tern, Calliope Hummingbird and an *Oporornis* species warbler. Other good sightings included White-winged Dove (2), Eastern Kingbird, Bewick's Wren, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Prairie Warbler, *Pyrrhuloxia* (3), Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Painted Bunting. It was anticipated that this count would be part of the widespread invasion of *Pyrrhuloxia* noted this winter on the UTC.

It was satisfying to once again record Red Knot (2), Groove-billed Ani (11) and Fox Sparrow on this count. These three species have been difficult to find on the Freeport CBC during the past five years.

The success of the Freeport CBC, measured by the large number of participants and high species totals, can be attributed to the many people and organizations that support our efforts every year. The count's ten area leaders, the "hummingbird patrol," the jetty parties and participants who come not only from the greater Houston area but from around the state, all contribute to Freeport's success. Numerous landowners graciously allow access to their property on count day, and without their cooperation the Freeport CBC would be severely hampered.

Once again, three organizations deserve special mention in the success of the Freeport CBC. The Houston Audubon Society sponsors the count and helps with publicity. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service organizes the marsh buggy and airboat censuses on the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, and staff biologist and Assistant Manager, Mike Lange, participates as an area leader. The Dow Chemical Company continues to host the countdown dinner as well as allowing access to many of their properties on count day, where considerable habitat is to be found.

I join my two co-compilers, Tom Collins and Victor Emanuel, in thanking all individuals and organizations that helped make this season's Freeport CBC a fun and successful count. If you are looking forward to participating next year, the count will be held on Sunday, December 19, 1993 (the recommendation of OG Chairman Bob Honig, notwithstanding!).

KINGSVILLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

by Paul Palmer

This is being written 22 December 1992 and is subject to minor modifications depending on feeder watcher reports that may come in later. The count was conducted as scheduled and, I am happy to report, produced better-than-expected results. We recorded 152 total species, seven short of our all-time high. The total number of birds counted was 48,492, our all-time record high. Twenty-six people counted in the field and at least ten persons spent some time at feeders.

The weather wasn't great and a date conflict with the Corpus Christi (Flour Bluff) count cost us some of our regular sector leaders. Despite that we achieved better than average results, including seven species never before on the count. Those species are: Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Osprey, Aplomado Falcon, Green Kingfisher, Black Phoebe, Cliff Swallow and Chihuahuan Raven. One of those species, Green Kingfisher, was not even on the county checklist; two are listed as accidentally occurring (Black Phoebe and Chihuahuan Raven); and the Aplomado Falcon has not been known to occur in the county since 1949.

Efforts to relocate and photograph the Aplomado Falcon have so far been unsuccessful. The observers were unable even to determine if the bird was banded. It almost certainly is one of the "hacked" birds, rather than a naturally occurring wild bird. The Black Phoebe was easily found, and the Green Kingfishers presumably are on winter territory.

In addition to the seven new species, the count produced record-breaking or record-equalling numbers for twenty other species. Notable records are 28 Least Grebe, 1429 Black-bellied Whistling Duck, 44 Harris' Hawk, 114 Crested Caracara, 168 Wild Turkey, 23 Vermilion Flycatcher, 93 Great Kiskadee, 345 Green Jay, 252 Loggerhead Shrike, 207 Cardinal and 484 *Pyrrhuloxia*. All those birds would be considered desirable species; unfortunately the count also set records for two much less desirable species: 14,520 Great-tailed Grackles and 11,293 Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Thanks to the initiative of Bob Harrison and Anse Windham, access was gained to some private ranch properties. Arrangements were also made to include the FCC Monitoring Station grounds, the B-Bar-B Ranch, the Kingsville Naval Air Station and those properties of Texas A&I University within the count circle. Thanks to all the participants for your efforts. Thanks once again to The Kingsville Bird and Wildlife Club for their continued support. And a special thanks for those great birders who come from far away places to help with our count when they could just as well stay warm and dry at home. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

ATTWATER CHRISTMAS COUNT

by Winnie Burkett

If the measure of a Christmas Count's success is how much the participants enjoyed themselves, then this year's Attwater Count was a great one. All groups showed up at the Sportsman's Restaurant in Eagle Lake with comments like "Super Day!" "Great Day!" and "We had some really good birds!" What a difference from last year's wash-out.

December 23rd started off slow because of dense fog, but by 10 AM the fog had lifted and visibility was good. The rest of the day was overcast and warm. The good weather helped the 44 count participants find 206,828 birds of 161 species. Three species new to the count were seen: Caspian Tern (2), Black-headed Grosbeak and Rusty Blackbird (7).

There were several unusual sightings. Two Peregrine Falcon were seen. A Peregrine had been seen on only one other Attwater Count. Three Black-necked Stilt were found and they have only been seen on two other counts. Least Grebe have been seen on four other Attwater Counts, but it was nice to have the ones that spent the fall in Pintail Marsh stay around long enough to be counted. Several species were seen in unusually high numbers, particularly gulls and terns. 350 Bonaparte's Gull were seen, the previous high number on a count was only 17 and that was last year. 425 Ring-billed Gull is lower than the all-time high of 556 seen in 1990, but well above the count average of 97. 310 Forster's Tern were found and the previous high for them was 29 in 1976. 2157 Western Sandpiper was considerably higher than the previous high of 305 seen in 1988, and 193 LeConte's Sparrow were found, up from a high of 80 in 1987.

One sad note was that for the first time ever on an Attwater count no Attwater's Prairie-chicken were seen. This was probably because of the fog as prairie chickens are usually seen in the morning. The population of prairie chickens on the refuge has steadily declined in recent years and they need a few years of "normal" weather to give them a better chance at reproductive success.

I want to thank all count participants as midweek counts are not convenient for everyone and I know some participants actually took the day off from work so they could help. I didn't hear anyone actually complain about missing work. I would also like to thank the Attwater refuge personnel for their cooperation and help.

The 1993 Attwater Christmas Count will be held on Wednesday, December 22. If you like looking at waterfowl, raptors and lots and lots of sparrows, join us.

GALVESTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

by Arch Dillard

Again the Galveston count was held on the day after Christmas. Getting out an adequate number of observers required many phone calls. In the end we had 48 participants, which was a somewhat better turnout than last year. The weather was good, not windy or cold, but leaden clouds, mostly without rain!

The species total of 168 was considerably better than last year's 152. I do not believe that this represents any real increase, but is a reflection of improved coverage due to the increased number of participants and to better weather conditions. With good weather and good coverage, I believe we can break 170 next year.

This year we had two advance articles in the Galveston Daily News and several spot announcements on the Galveston radio station KGBC. The Moody ranch was opened on the west end of the island and Union Carbide allowed access to their ponds on the mainland, yielding many ducks. The Coast Guard Station permitted access on the east end.

Northern Pintail and Eared Grebe have dwindled almost to zero. Until just a few years ago we saw these species in great numbers. This is tragic. Bronzed Cowbird are on the increase unfortunately (32 seen).

Because Galveston Island is devoid of woodlands, almost all of our woodland birds are found in residential areas. Two hummingbirds and several bluebirds and crows were reported for the first time.

As usual seabirds and shorebirds are a special contribution of the Galveston count. One Greater Black-backed Gull and one Lesser Black-backed Gull were seen, and several Pacific Loon (Offats Bayou) and Northern Gannet. Other birds of special note were Pine Siskin, Groove-billed Ani, Whimbrel, Western Kingbird and American Redstart. The usual Roseate Spoonbill, Reddish Egret, Clapper Rail, ibises and herons were very evident.

As always, we had a nice countdown party at Hill's Pier 19 restaurant at the end of the day.



ANAHUAC NWR - DECEMBER 9, 1992

by Buddy Hollis

On December 9, I led the OG weekday field trip to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge where the main target was waterfowl. The day began badly. About 5:00 AM it rained about as hard as I've ever seen it rain. At eight, when the field trip was supposed to start, no one had shown up, but about ten minutes later two hardy folks arrived. We had a field trip! The rain finally stopped around nine and we ended up finding a total of 62 species.

At Shoveler Pond we saw many ducks of the common wintering variety. There were thousands of geese in the air. We also picked up House Wren and an American Bittern "freezing." After several minutes, the bittern relaxed, fished and generally gave us really good looks.

At the willows, we spotted three Gray Catbirds and several Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. John Whittle took us to a wet field with a shallow lake where several Sprague's Pipits flushed. There were dozens of Short-billed Dowitcher calling and many Common Snipe.

The most interesting sighting of the day came as I was leaving the refuge. A Great Blue Heron caught some kind of large rodent near the road and flew into a field with it. After dashing it on the ground several times and holding it under water for over a minute, he finally managed to swallow it. Some feat.

CLEARING HOUSE

December, 1992

Editors: Phyllis and Tony Frank

A total of 201 species were reported for the month. Interesting sightings this month included five hummingbird species, Masked Duck, American Redstart, Chuck-will's-Widow and Pyrrhuloxia.

Many thanks to everyone who submitted reports and documentation. Reports are due by February 3rd, but early reports are welcomed. The CH format remains the same this month. The listing uses the following format: bird name, early late dates, reports/total and summary by county or detailed listing. The format of the county summary is as follows: county designation - number of reports/number of birds. The detailed listing format is as follows: county-(number of birds) day, observer code. Very rare birds are underlined. Birds with no previous record on date or vagrant status appear in bold. Birds new to the checklist are capitalized and underlined. Please remember to submit notes on all those good birds. And with all the reminders completed - on to the birds.

Loon, Common 13-13 1/1 JE-(1)13,JW
Grebe, Pied-bill 5-29 10/68 BR-1/6 CH-4/26 FB-2/27
HA-1/2 JE-2/7
Gannet, Northern 22-22 1/2 BR-(2)22,PDH

Pelican, Amer Wht 2-29 13/1218 BR-1/106 CH-2/13
FB-1/6 GA-5/1005 HA-3/68 JE-1/20
Pelican, Brown 2-23 6/211 CH-1/1 GA-4/207 HA-1/3
Corm, Dbl-crested 2-29 12/4349 CH-1/3000 FB-2/98
GA-5/1084 HA-3/150 JE-1/17
Corm, Neotropical 2-23 6/16 CH-2/3 GA-2/6 HA-1/2 JE-1/5
Anhinga 12-29 4/6 CH-1/1 FB-2/4 JE-1/1
Bittern, American 9-9 1/1 CH-AN(1)9,JW
Heron, Great Blue 2-29 16/151 U-2/40 BR-1/4 CH-3/32
FB-2/14 GA-5/45 HA-1/5 JE-2/11
Egret, Great 2-29 18/275 U-2/85 BR-1/5 CH-3/75
FB-2/21 GA-4/63 HA-2/7 JE-4/19
Egret, Snowy 2-29 15/178 BR-1/3 CH-3/17 FB-2/16
GA-4/107 HA-2/20 JE-3/15
Heron, Little Blu 2-29 9/21 BR-1/1 CH-2/7 FB-2/7
GA-2/3 JE-2/3
Heron, Tricolored 5-29 10/24 BR-1/1 CH-3/7 FB-2/7
GA-2/5 HA-1/2 JE-1/2
Egret, Reddish 2-23 3/3 BR-BW(1)5,WP; GA-(1)2,JW;
GA-(1)23,JW
Egret, Cattle 2-27 7/146 U-1/55 CH-1/2 GA-2/9
HA-2/79 JE-1/1
Heron, Grn-backed 28-28 1/1 FB-BB(1)28,DM
Nt-Heron, Blk-crn 5-28 9/100 BR-1/17 CH-2/18 FB-1/6
GA-2/2 HA-3/57
Nt-Heron, Yel-crn 5-5 1/5 BR-BW(5)5,WP
Ibis, White 2-29 11/6506 BR-1/2 CH-3/5700
FB-2/265 GA-3/535 HA-1/1 JE-1/3
Ibis, White-faced 2-23 9/1751 U-1/25 BR-1/25 CH-3/995
GA-1/50 HA-1/31 JE-2/625
ibis, sp. 11-11 1/12 HA-1/12
Spoonbill, Roseat 2-23 5/12 BR-1/2 CH-2/4 GA-1/5 JE-1/1
Whsl-Duck, Fulvs 6-29 3/59 FB-2/57 HA-1/2
Whsl-Duck, Blk-bd 5-29 5/1958 BR-1/158 FB-2/1100 HA-2/700
Goose, Gr Wht-frn 5-29 9/3158 U-2/1700 BR-1/45
CH-3/1125 FB-2/210 HA-1/78
Goose, Snow 2-29 12/70825 U-2/63500 BR-1/3038
CH-3/2335 FB-2/1600 GA-1/250 HA-1/50
JE-2/52
Goose, Ross' 9-11 2/2 CH-AW(1)9,JW; HA-WHC(1)11,B
Goose, Canada 5-29 8/1229 U-1/100 BR-1/59 CH-3/550
FB-2/20 HA-1/500
Duck, Wood 6-29 4/17 FB-2/14 HA-2/3
Teal, Green-wing 5-28 10/8867 BR-1/3106 CH-4/3695
FB-1/45 GA-1/20 HA-2/2000 JE-1/1
Duck, Mottled 5-29 9/89 BR-1/8 CH-3/44 FB-1/2
HA-1/2 JE-3/33
Mallard 5-13 3/22 BR-1/20 JE-2/2
Pintail, Northern 5-29 9/3356 BR-1/1480 CH-4/456
FB-2/20 HA-2/1400
Teal, Blue-winged 5-29 8/233 BR-1/28 CH-3/63 FB-2/120
JE-2/22
Teal, Cinnamon 5-5 1/2 BR-BW(2)5,WP
Shoveler, Northrn 5-29 12/7143 BR-1/4571 CH-4/1065
FB-2/92 HA-3/1304 JE-2/111
Gadwall 5-29 9/2445 BR-1/2052 CH-4/221
FB-2/140 HA-1/30 JE-1/2
Wigeon, American 5-29 6/179 BR-1/16 CH-2/7 FB-2/155 GA-1/1
Canvasback 5-29 6/1409 BR-1/4 CH-1/3 FB-2/700
HA-1/2 JE-1/700
Redhead 12-12 1/20 CH-(20)12,EL
Duck, Ring-necked 5-29 4/189 BR-1/6 CH-1/25 FB-2/158
Scaup, Greater 12-13 2/10 JE-(6)12,JW; JE-(4)13,JW
Scaup, Lesser 2-29 12/1873 BR-1/137 CH-4/460
FB-2/155 GA-3/106 HA-1/15 JE-1/1000
Bufflehead 13-13 1/100 JE-(100)13,JW
Merganser, Hooded 22-25 2/26 BR-(25)22,PDH; CH-(1)25,DD
Merganser, Red-br 2-23 4/60 GA-2/16 HA-1/35 JE-1/9
Duck, Ruddy 6-29 8/2095 CH-4/81 FB-2/13 HA-1/1
JE-1/2000
Duck, Masked 26-29 3/1 BR-BB(1)26,PDH; FB-BB(1)29,DBM;
Vulture, Black 11-29 7/142 CH-2/25 FB-2/101 HA-2/6 WA-
1/10
Vulture, Turkey 2-29 14/357 U-2/80 BR-1/3 CH-3/45
FB-2/204 GA-2/13 HA-2/6 JE-2/6
Osprey 9-25 6/7 CH-2/2 GA-2/2 HA-2/3

Kite, Blk-shouldr 2-23 9/37 BR-1/4 CH-2/14 GA-3/14
 HA-1/1 JE-1/2 WA-1/2
 Eagle, Bald 6-29 3/3 CH-(1)25,DD; FB-BB(1)29,DBM;
 HA-(1)6,BH
 Harrier, Northern 2-29 12/129 U-2/70 BR-1/6 CH-4/39
 FB-1/1 GA-1/10 JE-3/3
 Hawk, Sharp-shin 9-23 4/6 CH-2/3 JE-1/1 WA-1/2
 Hawk, Cooper's 6-28 4/7 U-1/3 FB-1/1 HA-1/1 WA-1/2
 accipiter, sp. 11-11 1/2 U-1/2
 Hawk, Red-shouldr 2-29 11/30 U-1/10 CH-2/4 FB-2/9
 GA-3/3 HA-1/1 JE-1/1 WA-1/2
 Hawk, White-tail 11-29 4/11 FB-2/2 JE-1/6 WA-1/3
 Hawk, Red-tailed 2-29 18/417 U-2/150 BR-1/1 CH-4/182
 FB-2/12 GA-4/35 HA-2/6 JE-3/31
 Hawk, Ferruginous 6-11 2/2 WA-(1)6,BH; WA-(1)11,B
 Caracara, Crested 9-11 3/7 CH-1/1 HA-1/3 WA-1/3
 Kestrel, American 2-29 18/280 U-2/55 BR-1/4 CH-3/132
 FB-2/8 GA-4/59 HA-2/7 JE-4/15
 Merlin 12-27 3/3 BR-(1)22,PDH; CH-(1)27,PDH;
 JE-(1)12,JW
 Falcon, Peregrine 9-28 4/5 BR-BW(1)20,PDH; CH-(1)9,JW;
 CH-(1)28,PDH; HA-(2)18,X
 Bobwhite, Northern 5-23 3/12 BR-1/1 CH-1/10 HA-1/1
 Rail, Yellow 20-20 1/2 BR-BW(2)20,PDH
 Rail, King 11-12 2/3 CH-(1)12,EL; HA-WHC(2)11,B
 Moorhen, Common 5-29 8/332 BR-1/8 CH-3/76 FB-2/234 JE-
 2/14
 Coot, American 5-29 8/487 BR-1/43 CH-3/143 FB-2/260
 JE-2/41
 Crane, Sandhill 5-29 3/188 BR-1/153 FB-2/35
 Plover, Blk-belli 2-25 6/1253 GA-4/1251 HA-1/1 JE-1/1
 Plover, Snowy 2-2 1/10 GA-BF(10)2,JW
 Plover, Semipalm 2-25 3/23 GA-1/10 HA-1/3 JE-1/10
 Plover, Piping 2-12 2/26 GA-(2)12,JW; GA-(5)12,EL
 Killdeer 2-29 13/599 U-2/150 BR-1/7 CH-3/277
 FB-1/10 GA-1/10 HA-2/6 JE-3/139
 Oystercatcher, Am 2-23 4/17 BR-1/8 GA-3/9
 Stilt, Black-neck 2-23 7/164 CH-1/50 GA-2/90 HA-2/7 JE-2/17
 Avocet, American 2-23 3/4050 GA-3/4050
 Yellowlegs, Great 2-25 5/13 U-1/6 BR-1/1 GA-2/3 HA-1/3
 Yellowlegs, Less 2-11 3/51 U-1/60 GA-1/10 HA-1/1
 Willet 2-23 7/473 BR-1/2 CH-1/3 GA-4/437 JE-1/31
 Sandprr, Spotted 13-25 3/13 HA-2/2 JE-1/11
 Curlew, Long-bill 2-23 7/74 U-2/27 CH-2/3 GA-3/44
 Godwit, Marbled 2-23 3/157 GA-3/157
 Turnstone, Ruddy 12-12 1/3 GA-(3)12,EL
 Knot, Red 12-12 1/1 GA-(1)12,EL
 Sanderling 2-23 4/1083 GA-4/1083
 Sandprr, Western 2-25 6/2119 CH-1/500 GA-3/1550
 HA-1/66 JE-1/3
 Sandprr, Least 6-25 6/113 CH-2/18 HA-3/94 JE-1/1
 Dunlin 2-23 5/2150 CH-1/1000 GA-3/1125 WA-1/25
 Dowitcher, S-bill 2-23 5/339 CH-1/200 GA-3/130 JE-1/9
 Dowitcher, L-bill 6-23 4/2300 U-1/1200 CH-2/1000 HA-1/100
 dowitcher, sp. 5-5 1/27 BR-1/27
 Snipe, Common 6-23 3/47 CH-2/37 HA-1/10
 Jaeger, Parasitic 2-2 1/520 GA-(520)2,JW
 Gull, Laughing 5-25 11/1785 BR-1/42 CH-1/100
 GA-4/1300 HA-3/301 JE-2/42
 Gull, Bonaparte's 2-12 2/32 GA-BF(2)2,JW; GA-(30)12,EL
 Gull, Ring-billed 2-23 11/869 BR-1/14 CH-2/21 GA-4/785
 HA-3/44 JE-1/5
 Gull, Herring 2-23 4/9 BR-1/3 GA-3/6
 Tern, Caspian 9-23 8/61 CH-2/2 GA-3/33 HA-1/2 JE-2/24
 Tern, Royal 2-23 5/721 GA-4/720 JE-1/1
 Tern, Sandwich 2-2 1/3 GA-(3)2,JW
 Tern, Common 2-23 3/7 GA-2/6 JE-1/1
 Tern, Forster's 2-23 7/1214 GA-4/1185 HA-1/25 JE-2/4
 Skimmer, Black 2-23 4/440 GA-4/440
 Dove, Rock 1-25 8/300 U-1/15 GA-1/15 HA-5/260
 JE-1/10
 Dove, Mourning 1-23 14/397 U-2/180 BR-1/17 CH-3/149
 GA-2/4 HA-3/28 JE-3/19
 Dove, Inca 1-18 4/25 GA-1/1 HA-3/24
 Ground-Dove, Comm 6-27 4/10 CH-(4)27,PDH; HA-(3)6,BH;
 HA-WHC(2)11,B; HA-(1)18,G
 Owl, Barn 11-12 2/2 GA-(1)12,EL; WA-(1)11,B
 Screech-Owl, East 1-18 2/2 HA-(1)1,X; HA-(1)18,G
 Owl, Great Horned 18-18 1/1 HA-(1)18,G
 Owl, Barred 6-28 2/7 FB-BB(6)28,DM; HA-(1)6,BH
 Chuck-wills-widow 25-25 1/1 GA-HI(1)25,DD
 Hummer, Buf-belly 2-2 1/1 GA-HI(1)2,JW
 Hummer, Ruby-thrt 1-15 1/1 HA-(1)1-15,GM
 Hummer, Blk-chind 1-15 2/2 HA-(1)1-15,MB; HA-(1)8,X
 Hummer, Brd-taild 8-12 1/1 HA-(1)8-12,GM
 Hummer, Rufous 1-31 2/2 HA-(1)1-12,GM; HA-(1)1-31,BD
 Kingfisher, Belted 2-27 18/93 U-1/3 BR-1/2 CH-4/42
 GA-5/27 HA-3/8 JE-4/11
 Wdpeckr, Red-head 6-25 3/4 CH-2/3 HA-1/1
 Wdpeckr, Red-bell 1-29 10/67 CH-3/14 FB-2/38 HA-4/10 WA-1/5
 Sapsuck, Yel-bell 5-29 8/44 BR-1/1 CH-1/6 FB-2/19
 HA-3/10 WA-1/8
 Wdpeckr, Lddr-bck 23-23 1/1 CO-(1)23,PDH
 Wdpeckr, Downy 6-28 6/35 CH-1/6 FB-1/24 HA-3/4 WA-1/1
 Flicker, Northern 11-28 8/32 U-1/8 CH-2/11 FB-1/8
 GA-2/2 HA-2/3
 Wdpeckr, Pileated 12-28 3/10 CH-2/4 FB-1/6
 Phoebe, Eastern 6-29 12/154 U-2/45 CH-4/43 FB-2/56
 GA-2/3 HA-2/7
 Flycatcher, Vermiln 5-28 5/8 BR-BW(1)5,WP; BR-BW(2)20,PDH;
 BR-SB(1)22,PDH; FB-BB(2)28,DM; HA-(2)18,G
 Flycatcher, Ash-thr 23-27 3/3 CH-(1)27,PDH; CO-(1)23,PDH;
 FB-(1)26,PDH
 Flycatcher, Ss-tail 9-9 1/1 CH-(1)9,JW
 Lark, Horned 2-2 1/11 GA-(1)12,JW
 Swallow, Tree 12-28 2/22 FB-BB(2)28,DM; JE-(20)12,JW
 Swallow, N R-wing 28-28 1/1 FB-BB(1)28,DM
 Swallow, Barn 28-28 1/2 FB-BB(2)28,DM
 Jay, Blue 1-29 10/86 U-1/10 CH-1/15 FB-2/19
 GA-1/5 HA-4/36 JE-1/1
 Crow, American 1-29 10/269 U-2/110 CH-2/32 FB-2/108
 HA-3/16 JE-1/3
 Chickadee, Carol 6-29 9/155 CH-3/45 FB-2/35 HA-3/15 WA-
 1/10
 Titmouse, Tufted 6-28 4/94 CH-1/16 FB-1/64 HA-1/10 WA-1/4
 Creeper, Brown 6-23 2/2 CO-(1)23,PDH; HA-BC(1)6,BH
 Wren, Carolina 1-29 9/90 CH-2/25 FB-2/52 HA-4/12 WA-1/1
 Wren, Bewick's 6-18 3/5 HA-BR(1)6,BH; HA-(1)18,G;
 WA-(3)11,B
 Wren, House 1-28 9/27 CH-2/8 FB-1/4 HA-5/13 WA-1/2
 Wren, Winter 25-28 2/3 FB-BB(2)28,DM; GA-HI(1)25,DD
 Wren, Sedge 6-11 2/3 HA-BR(2)6,BH; HA-WHC(1)11,B
 Kinglet, Gold-crn 12-25 2/3 CH-(1)12,EL; CH-(2)25,DD
 Kinglet, Ruby-crn 1-29 13/308 U-2/90 CH-2/18 FB-2/151
 GA-4/28 HA-3/21
 Gnatcatch, Blu-gra 1-29 12/112 CH-2/4 FB-2/81 GA-3/13
 HA-4/9 WA-1/5
 Bluebird, Eastern 6-29 8/246 CH-3/41 FB-2/156 HA-2/9 WA-
 1/40
 Thrush, Hermit 2-28 8/42 CH-1/2 FB-1/28 GA-3/6 HA-3/6
 Robin, American 6-29 8/12475 U-2/475 CH-1/25
 CO-1/10000 FB-2/1505 HA-2/470
 Catbird, Gray 2-20 3/5 CH-AW(2)9,JW; GA-HI(2)2,JW;
 GA-(1)20,MO
 Mockingbird, N 2-29 15/165 U-2/55 CH-3/29 FB-2/24
 GA-4/30 HA-2/21 JE-2/6
 Thrasher, Brown 1-28 8/41 FB-1/16 GA-2/13 HA-4/9 WA-1/3
 Pipit, American 6-28 3/187 CH-1/12 FB-1/125 HA-1/50
 Pipit, Sprague's 9-29 7/33 BR-1/6 CH-3/18 FB-2/4 JE-1/5
 Waxwing, Cedar 6-28 5/197 FB-1/100 HA-4/97
 Shrike, Loggerhed 2-29 18/286 U-2/75 CH-3/118 FB-2/10
 GA-5/35 HA-2/8 JE-4/40
 Starling, Euro 1-28 13/2157 U-1/200 CH-1/500
 FB-1/1 GA-3/350 HA-4/591 JE-3/515
 Vireo, White-eyed 11-28 2/4 FB-BB(3)28,DM; WA-(1)11,B
 Vireo, Solitary 6-28 7/26 CH-1/1 FB-1/16 GA-2/5 HA-3/4
 Warb, Orange-crn 1-28 7/74 U-1/6 FB-1/33 GA-1/6 HA-4/29
 Warb, Yellow-rump 1-29 14/1115 U-1/120 CH-4/298
 FB-2/343 GA-2/20 HA-4/329 JE-1/5
 Warb, Pine 6-28 7/41 CH-1/10 FB-1/19 GA-1/2
 HA-3/9 WA-1/1
 Warb, Palm 22-22 1/1 BR-SB(1)22,PDH

Warb, Blk-and-wht 14-28 3/3 FB-BB(1)26,PDH; FB-BB(1)28,DM;
HA-(1)14,X
Redstart, Amer 26-26 1/1 FB-BB(1)26,PDH
Yellowthroat, Com 6-28 5/17 CH-1/3 FB-1/10 HA-3/4
Warb, Wilson's 25-28 2/12 FB-BB(10)28,DM; GA-HI(2)25,DD
Cardinal, Northrn 1-29 11/194 U-1/25 CH-2/14 FB-2/96
GA-1/5 HA-4/48 JE-1/6
Pyrrhuloxia 6-23 3/5 CO-(2)23,PDH; HA-(2)6,BH;
HA-WHC(1)11,B
Grosbeak, Blk-hed 19-23 2/2 CO-(1)23,PDH; HA-(1)19,PDH
Towhee, Rfus-side 18-18 2/2 HA-(1)18,X; HA-(1)18,G
Sparrow, Chipping 6-28 4/112 FB-1/45 HA-2/27 WA-1/40
Sparrow, Field 6-27 3/12 HA-2/6 WA-1/6
Sparrow, Vesper 6-29 4/60 U-1/15 FB-2/10 HA-1/35
Sparrow, Lark 23-23 1/12 CO-(12)23,PDH
Sparrow, Savannah 2-29 9/611 U-1/300 BR-1/51 CH-3/80
FB-1/6 GA-1/5 HA-2/169
Sparrow, Grasshop 20-20 1/1 BR-BW(1)20,PDH
Sparrow, Le Conte 6-11 2/28 HA-BR(25)6,BH; HA-WHC(3)11,B
Sparrow, Fox 11-23 2/15 CO-(12)23,PDH; WA-(3)11,B
Sparrow, Song 6-28 9/48 CH-2/10 FB-1/2 HA-4/33
JE-1/1 WA-1/2
Sparrow, Lincolns 5-28 6/94 U-1/20 BR-1/2 FB-1/14 HA-3/58
Sparrow, Swamp 2-28 8/56 U-1/10 BR-1/6 CH-2/6
FB-1/22 GA-1/1 HA-2/11
Sparrow, Wht-thrt 1-28 9/202 U-1/40 FB-1/40 GA-2/6 HA-
5/116
Sparrow, Wht-crn 6-28 6/36 U-1/15 FB-1/2 HA-4/19
Sparrow, Harris' 6-27 5/33 U-1/10 CO-1/13 HA-3/10
Junco, Dark-eyed 1-23 5/25 CO-1/12 HA-3/11 WA-1/2
Blackbird, Red-wg 5-25 8/6664 U-1/200 BR-1/25 CH-2/5400
HA-3/1009 JE-1/30
Meadowlark, East 2-23 12/370 U-2/50 BR-1/57 CH-3/247
GA-2/5 HA-2/9 JE-2/2
meadowlark, sp. 11-11 1/40 U-1/40
Blackbird, Rusty 27-27 1/30 HA-BC(30)27,DD
Blackbird, Brewer 11-23 3/81 CH-2/11 WA-1/70
Grackle, Gr-tail 2-29 11/4194 CH-2/700 FB-2/45
GA-2/3025 HA-4/324 JE-1/100
Grackle, Bt-tail 9-28 3/3 CH-2/2 FB-1/1
Grackle, Common 6-25 7/6830 CH-3/4500 HA-3/1830 WA-1/500
Cowbird, Brn-head 2-12 5/4503 U-1/1000 CH-2/1002
GA-1/1 HA-1/2500
blackbird, sp. 5-11 2/13000 U-1/10000 BR-1/3000
(Oriole, Bullock) 1-12 1/1 HA-(1)1-12,GM
Finch, House 18-18 1/11 HA-(11)18,G
Finch, Purple 18-28 2/7 CH-(6)28,PDH; HA-(1)18,G
Siskin, Pine 11-11 1/1 WA-(1)11,B
Goldfinch, Amer 1-28 7/265 CH-1/30 FB-1/48 GA-1/12
HA-4/175
Sparrow, House 11-23 4/98 HA-3/92 JE-1/6

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 200831

LIST OF OBSERVER CODES: Jim Morgan, Bob Behrstock, Gretchen Mueller (B); Barbara Darr (BD); Bob Honig, Maggie Dinse, Geneva LaVern (BH); David Bradford, Derek Muschalek (DBM); Derek Muschalek, Jim Day (DD); Derek Muschalek (DM); Mark Elwonger, Geneva LaVern (EL); Gail Luckner (G); Gretchen Mueller (GM); John Whittle (JW); Gretchen Mueller, Bob Behrstock (MB); M. L. & Ellen Owens (MO); P. D. Hulce, etal (PDH); Warren Pruess (WP); P. D. Hulce (X)

LIST OF LOCATION CODES: Anahuac NWR (AW); Brazos Bend St. Park (BB); Bear Creek Park (BC); Bolivar Flats (BF); Barker Reservoir (BR); Brazoria NWR (BW); High Island (HI); Rollover Pass (RP); San Bernard NWR (SB); Texas City Dike (TCD); West Harris County (WHC); Warren Lake (WL); Yacht Basin Road (YBR)

LIST OF COUNTY CODES: Brazoria (BR); Chambers (CH); Colorado (CO); Fort Bend (FB); Galveston (GA); Harris (HA); Jefferson (JE); Upper Texas Coast (U); Waller (WA)

Masked Duck - D. Muschalek December 29, 1992

Small brownish duck with a buffy orange head; black eyeline; dark line in cheek and black crown. Brown back with golden speckles. Small brownish bill; distinct white patch observed in secondaries when bird flew or preened. Overall a small duck with two bold horizontal stripes on head; a black crown and a brown body with golden spots on sides and back. Used 20X scope for 35 minutes.

Merlin (Falco columbarius suckleivi) - P.D. Hulce December 22, 1992

"Black" Merlin. Initial impression was grackles based on color. On closer approach, it flew and showed long pointed falcon wings and a medium long tail that was not keel-shaped. Seen from behind, this bird was black, not glossy jet-black, but a sootier, flatter black. The tail was black with 2 or 3 barely discernible dark gray bars. Head was black, with no trace of a buff of white supercilium, or any face pattern. Underparts were very heavily streaked with black on a buff or off-white breast. Appeared slightly stockier than kestrel, but not as jerky of skittish acting. A very distinctive, black bird. Viewed perched and flying from 50 feet to out-of-sight in good light with 10X40 binoculars and 45X scope. Good light. Observed in AM and PM.

Chuck-Will's-Widow - D. Muschalek December 27, 1992

A very large goatsucker roosting on a stick on ground at Smith Oaks Sanctuary. Reddish-brown plumage tones; buffy throat with a narrow white line below throat. Some black streaks on sides. When bird flew it had rounded wings and no white bars were present. Saw for 25 minutes at close range.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird - J. Whittle December 2, 1992

A hummingbird larger than a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The top of the head was a bright green with a bright green iridescent marking on the left chin and upper breast, but the right side was essentially white. Otherwise the undersides appeared white, but off-white on the belly. At rest, the underside of the tail was a dull brown with a reddish tint to it. The wings (primaries) at rest were a medium brown. The basal one-half of the bill was pinkish red-especially the lower mandible- the outer one-half was dark.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - Gretchen Mueller December 8 & 12, 1992

First observed at a feeder and subsequently perched nearby for several minutes. Rich buffy flanks. Head and back fairly dark green. Belly white. Outer tail feathers tipped in white and bright rufous at base. Central tail feathers dark green. Bill straight, black and fairly long. Gorget beginning to form was a bright rose red. Second sighting was from a distance of three feet for two minutes. Optics 10X Elites. Bright sunny day.

American Redstart - P.D. Hulce December 26, 1992

Small, light warbler seen with Myrtles, Chickadees, a Black-and-white Warbler. Olive gray upperparts, mostly white underparts, light yellowish-orange wash on sides. Basal half of outer retrices was this same yellowish-orange color, as was a single wingbar. Bird fanned tail prominently. Observed with 10X40 binoculars, 20 to 30 feet. South side of Brazos Bend St. Park.

Black-headed Grosbeak - P.D. Hulce December 19, 23, 1992

Observed at two different locations. A chunky, cardinal-sized bird. Very distinct striped head pattern. Striking orange and black bird. Brown crown with light center stripe. Whitish-buff supercilium. Dark eye line above auriculars, narrow whitish collar below. Smooth, medium ocher-orange breast, sides, flanks, upper belly. No streaking. Black back, ocher-orange rump. Wings dark black with two spotty wingbars, some white in primaries. Large, gray conical bill. Tail dark with some white.

House Finch - G.D. Luckner December 2-31, 1992.

Observed daily at feeder in yard. Slender, medium-sized finch, noticeably larger than nearby American Goldfinches. Male generally grayish-brown with deep, dusky red forehead and brow; unmarked gray-brown cap, lores, and auriculars. Black eye; dull brown conical bill. Throat and breast deep, dusky red. Buffy brown belly and flanks and whitish undertail coverts, all streaked with dark gray brown. Uniformly dark gray-brown wings with narrow, buffy wingbars; flight feathers and upperwing coverts very narrowly edged with buff. Streaked gray-brown back lightly

washed with dusky red. Deep, dusky red rump. Tail unmarked dark gray-brown above and below. Dull brown legs and feet. Most of the birds had squarish tails, but several showed a slight notch. Female similarly described but lacking any red in plumage.

ADDITIONAL NOTES Documentation was received on Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Two additional observers submitted reports on Masked Duck at Brazos Bend.
Editors: Phyllis and Tony Frank

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