



THE SPOONBILL

Volume XXIV, No. 3
July 1980

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

THE CLEARING HOUSE HAS A NEW COMPILER

After five years of compiling the Clearing House, Paul Jones is retiring and passing on the job to Ted Eubanks, Jr. During those years, Paul, adhering to policies suggested by the previous compiler, Dan Hardy, and the checklist committee, and changed as experience dictated, has succeeded in firmly establishing the Clearing House as a formidably trustworthy account of observations on the UTC. His cheerful solicitation of observations helped in encouraging OG members and subscribers to contribute to the Clearing House on a more or less regular basis. The Ornithology Group is indebted to Paul for the countless thousands of hours he has willingly spent on the Clearing House on behalf of the Group.

Please send all future observations, beginning with July observations for the August SPOONBILL, to Ted Eubanks, Jr., 730 W. 42nd St., Houston 77018. (A revised Clearing House policy will be found immediately preceding the Clearing House in this issue).

"To Readers of the Clearing House:

It has been a great satisfaction to me to compile the Clearing House for the past five years. I am grateful to all observers who have made the effort to get reports to me of their sightings each month. Thanks a lot to all of you.

T. Paul Jones"

COMING EVENTS

Thursday
Aug. 7 OG regular meeting, first one after our summer hiatus. It will be good to get together again, greet old birding friends and meet new ones. Meet at 7:30 P.M., 4141 South Braeswood, Bayou Manor auditorium. The program will feature Ron Bisbee, Refuge manager of Brazoria and San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges (details below).

(We are grateful to Bayou Manor for allowing the OG to use their comfortable and convenient auditorium, and welcome any Bayou Manor residents to our meetings. We must remember to leave the auditorium in as orderly a condition as we always find it. When you leave the meetings, do your part by helping to straighten the chairs, and see there is nothing left lying around. It is not fair that the Taylors, Ed and Marian, who are instrumental in getting permissions for the OG to use the auditorium, should have to tidy up after us.)

Saturday
Aug. 30 OG field trip to Galveston and Bolivar Flats, looking for early fall migrants and shorebirds. Meet at Kempner Park, 27th and O, Galveston, at 7:30 a.m. Half-day birding (or longer for those that wish), bring lunch.

August SPOONBILL: A report on the HAS - Merlin Birding Tour to Great Britain

HAWK WATCH INFORMATION

Please send following reports to G. Donohue, P.O. Box 400, Penitas, Tx. 78576.

Spring hawk migration reports, 1980.

Designated days for Mississippi Kite watches in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Louisiana are August 23-24, and September 13-14. Please plan a watch for any of these days and send your reports to above. Kites must be migrants. Data sheets will be sent on request.

Please contact G. Donohue if you are interested in taking part in the Gulf Coast fall hawk watch on Sunday, October 5, 1980. We need watchers for all parts of the coast from dawn to noon.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN: RON BRAUN

It's still the heat of the summer, I realize, but the revival of OG activities for another year is about upon us. Our first meeting is Thursday, August 7th at Bayou Manor.

Our programs for the coming year will attempt to bring you not only information about birds but also information about birding places. In keeping with this philosophy, our August program will feature Ron Bisbee, refuge manager for Brazoria and San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges. Ron will tell us about the birdlife and habitats of these refuges, of course, but he will also discuss their management policies and problems, as well as the changing management philosophies and constraints of all of the Gulf Coast refuges, a topic of interest to all birders on the UTC.

Our schedule of field trips will be covering the local hot spots in season, in addition to providing opportunities for OGers to visit areas outside the UTC. Ted Eubanks, Jr. has agreed to attempt a repeat of his extremely popular and successful owling field trip of last March, a real treat.

Good leadership in the past has brought the OG not only a growth in membership but also a respect and prominence that extends beyond just the UTC. However, success is not without its problems. At the August meeting and throughout the year, you will have the opportunity to discuss and plan with us how we may best achieve a balance between change and manageability while continuing to maintain the traditions and the spirit of our group.

We all are well aware it will require more than just planning and discussion if we are to achieve our goals. It will also require more members taking an active part in the organization. That translates into "help in whatever way you can", whether it be volunteering for occasional or part-time typing or mailing duties with the SPOONBILL, sending in an article or Clearing House report, making a monetary contribution, bringing in your aluminum, leading a field trip, volunteering for a one-time activity, or encouraging a friend to join. We appreciate them all. The OG has indeed been fortunate to have had individuals who have spent a good deal of time and effort year after year making the organization what you want it to be. By helping out, each of us can make the whole more manageable as well as lend support and encouragement.

If you can spare some time for the OG, give me a call or talk to me at one of the meetings.

Hope to see you in August.

PAST EVENTS

** Upper Texas Coast June Big Days/1960-1980...by Noel Pettingell

On June 18, 1960 Steve Williams and Paul Cornell found 111 species along a route which included the Sheldon area, Baytown, Tunnel, Morgan's Point, Seabrook, Galveston, and Houston. On June 17, 1968 Steve, Joe Farrell, and I recorded 110 species via Sheldon, Anahuac Refuge, High Island, Bolivar

Peninsula, Galveston, and Texas City Dike and 10 years later - on June 30, 1978 - Steve and I listed 109 species from Sheldon to Galveston. This year, the 20th anniversary of the all-time highest Upper Texas Coast (and Texas) June Big Day Record, we (Steve and I) decided to try once again to set a new record only this time we chose June 1st in order to provide us with a maximum chance of finding lingering migrants. Highlights of the 1980 Big Day, followed by species comparisons of the 1960, 1968, 1978, and 1980 runs, are summarized below:

NE Harris County - 5 to 9:30 A.M.

North of Sheldon Reservoir (where C.E. King and West Lake Houston Parkways converge) we heard our first species of the day, two of which were Sheldon "essentials" - Horned Owl and Chat. Other essential species were found along Ralston Rd. between 5:30 and 7:00 A.M., including Red-Shouldered Hawk, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, Pileated, Red-Bellied, and Downy Woodpeckers, Crested Flycatcher, Wood Thrush; White-Eyed, Yellow-Throated, Red-Eyed Vireos; and the following warblers: Swainson's, Parula, Kentucky, and Hooded. Garrett Rd., west of Sheldon Reservoir, was another good source of essential forest species such as Red-Headed Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Pewee, and Pine Warbler. At the Reservoir we added Wood Duck but another essential, Common Yellowthroat, was missed. In the Deussen Park area a Spoonbill flying over Lake Houston was unexpected but not as important as Black Vulture, Brown-Headed Nuthatch (Near S. entrance Rd. and power lines - same locality as May 4), Eastern Bluebird, and Painted Bunting. At Buckhorn Lake (Garrett Rd. east of Sheldon Reservoir) we found two more essentials-Anhinga and Turkey Vulture - just before 9 A.M. We decided to backtrack via Garrett Rd. to Lockwood Rd. and look for the Lark Sparrow, but instead found a Blue Grosbeak - No. 56 on our list as of 9:30 A.M.

SE Harris Co./Galveston Co. Mainland - 9:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Our next destination was the Mercury Dr. Marsh in Galena Park where we added Mottled Duck, White-Rumped Sandpiper, and Black-Necked Stilt. Shortly thereafter, at Jacinto City, we heard an Orchard Oriole singing - our one and only individual of the entire day. On the Lynchburg Ferry (Houston Ship Channel) we observed a flock of White Pelicans, Olivaceous Cormorants, Black-Crowned Night Heron, and three terns - Common, Least, and Black. A quick check of the south end of Baytown Tunnel produced nothing new so we headed down Highway 146 to Seabrook and Kemah. We decided to check for rice field habitat enroute to the Gulf Freeway (via FM518-1266-3002) hoping to add Fulvous Whistling Duck or Hudsonian Godwit, but the only species new for the list was Pied-Billed Grebe. Our last stop before the Galveston Bridge was Tiki Island (West Bay) where we found White-Faced and White Ibises along with Black Skimmer. Between 9:30 A.M. and 1:00 P.M., we had found 24 new species for a total of 80 for the day, with 7-1/2 hours of daylight remaining.....

Galveston Island - 1 to 5:30 P.M.

At 35th between Ave. O and P; where we had expected to find lingering Passerine migrants, we were shocked by a scene of utter destruction: virtually all of the large trees and shrubbery had been cleared away; thereby, eliminating one of Galveston's prime landbird habitats.

Kempner Park also lacked late migrants (although a Robin was new for the day's list) and so we headed west toward 99th St. where we found both Gallinules, Coot, and Long-Billed Curlew. Anderson Ways (8 Mile Rd.) yielded no new species for the list so we proceeded to Nottingham Ranch Rd. (11 Mile or Settegast Rd.), adding Barn Swallow enroute. Along Nottingham we found the following additions: Blue-Winged Teal, Gull-Billed Tern, White-Winged Dove; Common Nighthawk, and Dickcissel. It was 3:15 P.M. when we returned to Stewart Rd. and our list now totaled 94 species. We still needed 18 more to surpass the 1960 record with some 5 hours of daylight left. At Lafitte's Grove (east of 12 Mile Rd.) we identified a Little Blue Heron in flight and 3 Least Bitterns dead on the road. We found out later that the Boat-Tailed Grackle was seen here by others on June 1 but we missed it. At 13 Mile Rd., we added the White-Tailed Kite - probably the same bird we saw here on May 4 - but didn't see the Frigatebird which was present on May 30.

Our next primary birding area on Galveston was the mudflat on the west side of Seawall Blvd. at the south jetty. It was here that we added the following 7 species to our list (Numbers 97 to 103) in only a half hour of birding (4:15 to 4:45): Semipalmated and Black-Bellied Plovers, Baird's Sandpiper, Short-Billed Dowitcher, Western Sandpiper, Avocet and Herring Gull. Enroute to the south jetty a Least Bittern flew in front of us in the direction of the Seawall Blvd. mudflat - No. 104. At the jetty we found our last 4 Galveston species: Clapper Rail, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling and Sandwich Tern. We didn't try for the Seaside Sparrow since we knew it was a resident at Bolivar Flats, our next destination....

Bolivar Peninsula - 5:45 to 10:15 P.M.

As we headed for Bolivar Flats (N. Jetty) with 108 species on our list and nearly 3 hours of daylight left, we were confident that a new UTC June Big Day record was easily within our grasp. But after over an hour of birding the flats we could find but 3 new species - Piping and Wilson's Plovers and Dunlin. We desperately searched the area for several species usually present - Oystercatcher, Snowy Plover, Ring-Billed Gull, Seaside Sparrow, Horned Lark - without success, although we did find another pair of Baird's Sandpipers. After much agonizing we reluctantly headed eastward down the peninsula needing but a single species to establish a new record. We knew we could reach Rollover Pass (Gilchrist) before dark and perhaps add Ring-Billed Gull or Knot so we decided to make this our ultimate objective. We were surprised to find the Sun Oil gates open so we decided to check it out for possible Lesser Yellowlegs and Least or Semipalmated Sandpipers. It was nearly 8 P.M. when a rather large sparrow-like bird flew across the road in front of us. We followed it on foot and flushed it again, but were unable to identify it. Then Steve triumphantly spotted No. 112, a Horned Lark! We had finally broken the long-standing Big Day record for the month with the fewest species present in the UTC area....

In an attempt to add at least one more species, we drove down toward the beach but never quite made it due to an unexpected patch of soft sand. It wasn't until nearly an hour and a half later (9:25) that we were able to free the car and head back to Galveston where we were confident of finding one more species: Barn Owl at the Medical Center. But, much to our dismay, we found that our long-standing stake-out site, the Ashbel Smith Bldg. ("Big Red") was being renovated, both inside and out, so the owls had apparently vacated the premises. Perhaps permanently....

Summary - June 1, 1980

Total Species: 112 (Noel Pettingell-112/Steve Williams-112)

Car Miles (Begin and end at 210 E. Edgebrook Dr., Houston): 289

Foot Miles: 3 Ferry Miles: 6-1/2 (Lynchburg 1/8 - Bolivar 6.4)

Party Hours: 19-1/2 (4:30 A.M. - 12 midnight)

Weather: Clear to partly cloudy with little wind in morning, SE 10-15 mph in afternoon (Galveston I.)

Temperature Range: Houston 75-91 - Galveston 76-82

<u>Expected Species Missed</u> June 1, 1980	<u>Recorded on Previous June Big Days (X)</u>		
	6/18/60	6/17/68	6/30/78
Magnificent Frigatebird	-----	-----	-----
Marsh Hawk	-----	-----	-----
Am. Oystercatcher	-----	X	-----
Snowy Plover	-----	-----	-----
Red Knot	X	-----	-----
Ring-Billed Gull	-----	X	-----
Barn Owl	-----	-----	-----
Screech Owl	-----	X	X
Boat-Tailed Grackle	-----	-----	-----
Common Yellowthroat	-----	X	-----
Indigo Bunting	-----	-----	X
Seaside Sparrow	X	X	X
	<u>6/1/80</u>		
<u>Bonus Species:</u>	6	10	8
<u>Total:</u>	112	111	109

AN INFORMATION CORRECTION FROM JOHN SMITH

In his article on Southern/Northern Bald Eagles (June SPOONBILL, 1980), John Smith, TP&W biologist, mentioned one nest was abandoned due to development. The editor, in a comment, recommended we check the Bar X nest this fall, as it is the most easily seen eagles' nest in the area. John writes to correct this: the Bar X nest was the one abandoned. "The birds left the area during late incubation or when with young chicks and returned to an empty nest. We are working with the ranch owners to keep the young from being indirectly lost again this year--we may try to make the pair move to a safe location when they arrive in October".

THE STRICKLINGS OFFER ASSISTANCE IN PLANNING A CENTRAL AMERICAN BIRDING TRIP

A Spectacled Owl and a Common Potoo in broad daylight, 19 species of Antbirds, 3 species of Barbets, 9 different Trogons (including the Resplendent Quetzal on a nest), 9 parrots, 28 Hummers, 4 Manakins, the Azure-Hooded and Silver-Throated Jays, 41 species of Tanagers and 27 Warblers (six of which were lifers). Such is a sampling of birds we saw on a six week trip to Panama, Costa Rica and Guatemala. The one week stopover in Guatemala was for the rare Atitlan Grebe, the Ocellated Turkey and a few others.

We left Houston for Panama on March 19, 1980. We headquartered at Panama City for a week to bird the foothills, Pacific slopes and the famed Pipeline Road, then a week in Colon for the Atlantic side and the equally-famed Achote Road. The three weeks in Costa Rica were spent in the dry Pacific Northwest headquartered at Canas, the tropical Caribbean lowlands, headquartered at Finca la Selva, the Monteverde cloud forest headquartered at Hotel Montana, the high-high highlands near San Jose and the foothills near the Panama border at Finca Las Cruces. In Guatemala we spent our time at Tikal and Lake Atitlan. We returned to Houston May 1, 1980.

The secret to birding is getting assistance from people who know the area then doing your own homework. We do appreciate all of those people who helped us and to show our appreciation we will be glad to assist anyone else as best we can.

Nancy & Jerry Strickling
7726 Meadowglen
Houston, Tx. 77063
(713) 780-2345

HISTORY OF THE LITTLE THICKET NATURE SANCTUARY....Part 4

(This part deals with the history of the land and early plans for the Sanctuary).

Charles W. Hamilton offered to have his lawyer check the deeds and appurtenant title papers. Through the courtesy of Mr. Louis Desjardins an aerial photograph was acquired which made a study of property lines much easier. By using this map it was discovered that a part of the tract of land was not included in the first deed given to Mr. Helser on May 31, 1950, so a correction deed dated September 19, 1950 was made and recorded. It states, "Whereas a part of the land intended to be conveyed was, through error, omitted from the description and in order to correct such error this correction deed is being executed in lieu of the deed herein mentioned." One of these tracts of 85/100 acres was acquired by Mr. King in 1941 from J.T. and Lizzie Martin when the right-of-way of the highway was changed. The other tract was 10-1/2 acres that had been purchased from E.R. and Lela Debney in April, 1931 but the deed had not been recorded.

At the time of the first deed Mrs. Park had filed a copy of her husband's will, probated in Trinity County Oct. 5, 1948, showing her to be his sole heir. He, Ernest W. Park, had been the sole heir of J.T. King. Tract #1 of the estate comprised 223 acres which Mr. King had bought from C.D. and H.L. Lovett in 1905. Tract #2 comprising 175.7 acres had been bought from W.D. Cleveland in 1906, but in 1919 had been sold to Bettie and Vance Offut along with a "mouse colored mare mule named Kate", another named Jack, and a third named Tod as well as forty head of livestock including cows and

calves marked with his brand JK. However, in January, 1922, Mr. King bought back the land from Bettie and Vance Offut, as well as Kate, Jack and Tod and the 40 head of livestock with their offspring remaining. He also acquired Tract #3 of 45.23 acres from the Offut's.

The Club Yearbook for 1950-51 had this to say of the Little Thicket: "The tract comprises 454 acres near Evergreen, Texas in the famous Big Thicket, on the headwaters of the San Jacinto River. Though not wholly primeval, it is rich in scientific and historical values. There are picturesque hills and ravines, park-like glades, thickets, many springs, and two ever-flowing brooks. Vegetation and birdlife are abundant.

"Long range plans are based upon study of similar preserves elsewhere. These include an open lake, marked nature trails, and essential measures for protection of the Sanctuary and for the safety and comfort of visitors. Development and use of the preserve will proceed as necessary funds become available."

In the fall of 1950 a new magazine appeared in Houston. It was published by the Museum of Natural History and had as its purpose the "furthering of knowledge of the natural sciences and of stimulating interest in the conservation of our natural resources." In this magazine the editor, Robert Vines, presented to his readers the Outdoor Nature Club and its Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary as a very worth-while project.

Minutes of the last meeting of the year 1950 show that the Executive Board passed the following resolution: "That the President and such other officers of the Club as may be required, have full authority to execute, for and in the name of the Outdoor Nature Club, a promissory note and Deed of Trust and any other documents necessary to complete the purchase of property in San Jacinto County, Texas, in accordance with the will and purposes of the Club."

AROUND AND ABOUT

** Staging Posts in the North Sea (Oil & Gas Journal--March 31, 1980)

Nature is quick to adapt to the changing pace of modern life, as workers on the hundred or so drilling and production platforms in the North Sea can testify.

Steel and concrete structures set in deep and shallow water attracted large numbers of fish - much to the chagrin of fishermen, who in theory are prevented by safety regulations from approaching the structures too closely.

In Europe's bird community the word soon got around that man had installed convenient staging posts for anyone undertaking long-distance flights across the stormy North Sea. Human visitors to rigs often are amazed at the number of types of birds that can be seen on a platform - often more than the large and small seabirds that might be expected on an offshore structure. To those who have been brought up with the quite unjustified idea that the oil industry delights in despoiling the environment it comes as a shock to see the interest shown by offshore crews in their feathered visitors. Crew members often go to great lengths to record the comings and goings of the offshore bird community.

There are few offshore platform notice boards that don't have a list of the species that have flown in. Some lists show fairly rare visitors - Peregrine falcons, redbreasted flycatchers, and herons. It's not just the rarities that are of interest. The offshore ornithologists have recorded wrens, robins, song thrushes, and kestrels. Many birds on migratory flights arrive on the platforms exhausted. They undoubtedly would have died at sea if the chance to rest hadn't been available.

Under the auspices of eight offshore operators, the bird watchers have formed themselves into the North Sea Bird Club. By setting up a formal organization backed by offshore operators, the bird watchers will be able to supplement the work already undertaken on the migration patterns of land birds by British Petroleum Ltd.'s nature club from Forties Field. Observations from members of the club will be sent to Prof. George Dunnet at Aberdeen University's zoology department where they will be collated and analyzed - a service Dunnet undertook for BP scheme. The same computer program is being shared by the Nature Conservancy Council's Birds at Sea Project funded

by a £15,000 grant from the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association.

Professional ornithologists rate the establishment of the offshore observatories as one of the most important developments in bird-watching world in many years.

** Sooty Tern is barred from US (English newspaper June, 1980)

An American seabird, a Sooty tern, found exhausted, helpless and 6,000 miles off course in an English gravel pit, cannot be sent back to America without a special permit. It could then face 30 days in quarantine.

Mr. Cliff Christie, who runs the Banbury Bird Hospital, Oxfordshire, where the tern is recovering from exhaustion, said: "There is no question it comes from Florida. It has been positively identified. It has made a full recovery and unless it goes home very soon it could become unwell again."

** Cleaning Up the Countryside (TP&W Magazine, July, 1980)

For better understanding of our scavengers, the turkey vulture and black vulture, this excellent article is recommended reading. Man has not always understood the helpful purpose of the vultures' eating habits, and at one time, ranchers, who believed vultures were responsible for spreading livestock diseases killed thousands of the birds in "buzzard traps." Populations of both vultures are declining, the turkey vulture moderately and the black vulture drastically, for food is no longer as abundant. Ranchers destroy dead livestock now instead of leaving it to be cleaned up by vultures, and hunters do not leave as many dead or mortally wounded game animals. City dumps are more sanitary than they used to be, and there are fewer open-air butchers' shops in southern cities. Despite their unfavorable reputation, vultures serve their purpose in keeping the landscape clean. Ugly in appearance and habits, the vultures nevertheless are remarkably efficient birds. Behavior, eating habits, and comparison between the two vultures are well explored in this article.

CLEARING HOUSE POLICY 7/1/80

(You will note some changes in the CH policy as outlined below, the result of discussions between the outgoing compiler, Paul Jones, the new compiler, Ted Eubanks, and the expanded Records Committee. Fewer species will require notes, but emphasis will be placed on more complete field notes on species requiring them).

- (1) Report all species observed in the UTC checklist area (Brazoria, Chambers, Ft. Bend, Galveston, Harris and Jefferson counties).
- (2) Species must be listed in AOU order (see UTC checklist), and in Clearing House format...Species: Location--(number) date, observers. Deviations will not be accepted.
- (3) All submittals must be received by the CH editor no later than the 3rd of the subsequent month. The CH editor is Ted L. Eubanks, Jr., 730 W. 42nd, Houston, Texas, 77018, 694-2242.
- (4) The Clearing House is intended as a record of all facets of the avifauna of the UTC. Please send observations of all species, even the most common ones. Common and abundant species will be summarized as to relative abundance monthly.
- (5) Fieldnotes will be required on the following species. Those sightings that are not accompanied by fieldnotes as required will be considered undocumented and will be treated as such by the Records Committee.
 - (a) Species that have no frequency status on the checklist on the date recorded (shown by blank space on bar graph), and vagrant species (2 to 10 valid records, shown by single large dots on bar graph). These species will be CAPITALIZED in the Clearing House.

- (b) Species that have never been recorded before in the UTC checklist area, and accidental species (single valid record, designated by A following name of species on checklist.) These species will be published in the Clearing House under the Special Report heading pending acceptance of the sighting by the Records Committee (T. Ben Feltner, Jim Morgan, Noel Pettingell). If accepted as valid, the sighting will be published in the main body of the Clearing House as to the date recorded, and will be CAPITALIZED and underlined.
- (c) Field notes can be submitted as documentation for any observed unusual behavior, location or habits of any species observed in the UTC.
- (6) All documentary fieldnotes should be submitted to the Clearing House in the following format. Deviations will not be accepted. Remember: fieldnotes should always be written in the field at the time of the sighting and before a field guide is consulted.
- a. Species.
 - b. Location.
 - c. Date.
 - d. Time of observation, including duration.
 - e. Description (Describe in detail all parts of the plumage including all diagnostic characteristics; however, report only what was actually seen in the field).
 - f. Voice, if heard.
 - g. Behavior.
 - h. Habitat.
 - i. Distance (range from closest to farthest).
 - j. Optical Equipment.
 - k. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and observer).
 - l. Previous experience with the reported species and similarly appearing species.
 - m. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by e, f and g above. Explain.
 - n. Documentation (photographs, sketches, specimens, where applicable).
 - o. Observers who participated in this sighting.
 - p. Other observers who independently identified this bird.

CLEARING HOUSE, June, 1980

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made in the six counties comprising the upper Texas coast; Jefferson, Chambers, Galveston, Harris, Ft. Bend, and Brazoria. Sightings made outside this area are not included in the CH. How to read the CH: Species: Location--(how many) date, observers. Those common species which can be readily identified and are widely distributed in the UTC will also be listed, followed by number of reports, with lowest and highest numbers seen in parenthesis, i.e. (1-42). If any of these species is reported in unusual habitat or numbers that will be noted separately. You will note some dates underlined, this will denote a late date, or possibly an early date. An underlined location denotes unusual location or habitat.

Grebe, Pied-billed: Hale Ranch--(5)1,B
 SHEARWATER, CORY'S: Pelagic--(1)29, MH (see notes)
 Pelican, White: Anahuac NWR--(5)6, SCA.
 Cormorant, Olivaceous: Anahuac NWR--(1)6, SCA.
 Anhinga: Hale Ranch--(30)1, B
 Frigatebird, Magnificent: Galveston--(1)May 17, CSu; (1)May 30, NP;
 (1)11, MAu; Texas City--(1)15, MRO.
 Great Blue Heron: 2 reports (1-7)
 Heron, Green: 3 reports (1-10)
 Heron, Little Blue: 1 report (40)
 Egret, Cattle: Hale Ranch--(250-75 nests)1, B; Chambers Co--(100)30, SCA.
 Egret, Reddish: Bolivar--(6)22, CSu.
 Egret, Great: 8 reports (2-10)
 Egret, Snowy: 3 reports (2-20)
 Heron, Louisiana: 3 reports (5-20)
 Night Heron, Black-crowned: 4 reports (1-15)
 Night Heron, Yellow-crowned: Hale Ranch--(15-6 nests)1, B; Houston--
 (1), 1, 3, 10, 24, ES.

- Bittern, Least: Hale Ranch--(7)1,B; Galveston--(1)(3 dead on road)1,P;
 (1)11,MAU; Anahuac NWR--(1)12, 23, 26, SCA; McFaddin Marsh--(1)20, SCA.
 Stork, Wood: Hale Ranch--(23)1, B.
 Ibis, White-faced: 5 reports (1-10).
 Ibis, White: Arcola--(360-about 50 imm.)1, Vic Emmanuel; 4 additional
 reports (2-100)
 Spoonbill, Roseate: 6 reports (2-60)
 Whistling Duck, Black-bellied: Hale Ranch--(15)1, B.
 Whistling Duck, Fulvous: Winnie--(1)16, (2)30, SCA.
 Duck, Mottled: McFaddin Marsh--(2)25, SCA.
 Teal, Blue-winged: Chambers Co.--(2)25, SCA.
 Duck, Wood: Hale Ranch--(20)1, B; Sheldon Reservoir--(3)1, P; Lake
 Jackson--(1), 13, MRo
 Vulture, Turkey: 4 reports (4-30)
 Vulture, Black: 3 reports (2-40)
 Kite, White-tailed: Galveston--(1)1, P; Hale Ranch--(5)1,B.
 Kite, Mississippi: Richmond--(7)1, TE, JMo; Lake Jackson--(1) all month,MRo;
 (1)14, 18(2)16, (3)19, L&MB.
 Hawk, Red-tailed: Lake Jackson--(1)3, MRo.
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: Hale Ranch--(15)1, B; E.L. Moore Sanctuary--(1)1, ES;
 Lake Jackson--(1)5, 18, MRo.
 Hawk, Swainson's: Houston--(1)2, 23, J&NS; (1)7,ES; Brazoria Co.--(1)29, MAU.
 Hawk, Marsh: Mykawa Rd.--(2 adult-3 imm.)8,MH; McFaddin Marsh--(1)20,SCA.
 Osprey: Anahuac NWR--(1)11, SCA (see notes).
 Falcon, Peregrine: Hale Ranch--(1)1, B (see notes).
 Bobwhite: 3 reports (1-5)
 Rail, King: 5 reports (2-4)
 Rail, Clapper: 3 reports (1)
 Gallinule, Purple: Galveston--(1)1,P; Hale Ranch--(5)1,B; Anahuac NWR--(6)
 6, (1)12, 19, (4)17, (2 adults & 5 young)23, SCA.
 Gallinule, Common: Hale Ranch--(75-many young)1, B; Anahuac NWR--(1)17, SCA.
 Coot, American: Hale Ranch--(5)11, B.
 Oystercatcher, American: Bolivar--(3)22, CSu.
 Plover, Wilson's: Anahuac NWR--(1)6, SCA; Bolivar--(4)22, CSu.
 Killdeer: Anahuac NWR--(3 nests w/4 eggs each)16,SCA; 2 additional reports
 (1-15).
 Plover, Black-bellied: Bolivar--(10)22,CSu.
 Turnstone, Ruddy: Bolivar--(5)22, CSu.
 Curlew, Long-billed: Bolivar--(1)22, CSu; Anahuac NWR--(1)19, 23, 25, (5)
 30, SCA.
 Willett: 3 reports (2-20)
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: McFaddin Marsh--(2)20, SCA; Anahuac NWR--(8)26, SCA.
 SANDPIPER, BAIRD'S: Bolivar--(1)1,P; Galveston--(2)1,P (see notes)
 Sandpiper, Least: Bayou Manor--(2)4, SW (see notes).
 Dunlin: Bolivar--(2)1,P (see notes).
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: Bolivar--(6)1,P;(2)22,CSu (see notes); Galveston--
 (15)1, P (see notes)
 Sandpiper, Western: Bolivar--(40)1,P; Galveston--(15)1,P (see notes).
 Godwit, Marbled: Bolivar--(1)22,CSu (see notes).
 Sanderling: Bolivar--(20)22,CSu.
 Avocet, American: Bolivar--(100)1,P; (6)22,CSu; Galveston--(8)1,P.
 Stilt, Black-necked: Freeport--(20 w/1 nest & 1 chick), May 31,C
 Anahuac NWR --(300)26, SCA.
 Gull, Ring-billed: Bolivar--(2)22, CSu.
 Gull, Laughing: 4 reports (6-100)
 Tern, Gull-billed: Anahuac NWR--(2)6, SCA.
 Tern, Forster's: 4 reports (4-20)
 Tern, Least: Anahuac NWR--(1)19, 23, SCu; Bolivar--(10)22, CSu (see notes)
 Tern, Royal: 4 reports (1-260)
 Tern, Sandwich: Bolivar--(100)22, CSu.
 Tern, Caspian: Bolivar--(6)22,CSu.
 Tern, Black: 9 reports (1-55)
 Skimmer, Black: Bolivar--(2)22, CSu.
 Dove, Mourning: 3 reports (1-8)
 Dove, Ringed Turtle: Bellaire--(4-6) all month, P&MJ.
 Dove, Inca: 5 reports (1-10)
 Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: Hale Ranch--(15)1,B; Bellaire--(1)7-18, P&MJ.
 Owl, Barn: Hale Ranch--(3 w/2 young in nest)1, B; Winnie--(2)1, SCA;
 High Island--(1)22, SCA.
 Owl, Screech: Lake Jackson--(2 & 1 young)24, MRo.
 Owl, Barred: Hale Ranch--(2)1,B; Lake Jackson--(1)6,7,8,MRo.
 Nighthawk, Common: Anahuac NWR--(6)6, SCA; Houston--(1)21,PJ.
 Swift, Chimney: 4 reports (3-55).

Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: Hale Ranch--(13)1,B; Lake Jackson--(1)4-6, 14, 17, MRo.
 Kingfisher, Belted: Hale Ranch--(3 w/ young)1,B; Lake Jackson--(1)7, (2)10, MRo.
 Flicker, Common (Yellow-shafted): Memorial Park--(1)5,JMo.
 Woodpecker, Pileated: 2 reports (1-6).
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 2 reports (1-10).
 Woodpecker, Downy: 2 reports (2-15).
 Kingbird, Eastern: 2 reports (4-10).
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: Houston--(1)11,ES.
 Flycatcher, Great-crested: Hale Ranch--(3)1,B; Lake Jackson--(1)1,4,15, (2) 5, 6, MRo; E.L. Moore Nature Sanctuary--(1)1,ES.
 Flycatcher, Acadian: Hale Ranch--(15)6,B; Sheldon Reservoir--(1)1,P.
 Pewee, Eastern: Bear Creek Park--(3)21,C.
 Swallow, Barn: Anahuac NWR--(8)6,(3)26,SCa.
 Swallow, Cliff: Sugarland--(10)1,TE,JMo.
 Martin, Purple: Houston--(N/C)all month, J&NS (see notes)
 3 additional reports (3-6).
 Jay, Blue: 3 reports (1-4).
 Crow, Common: Hale Ranch--(20)1,B.
 Chickadee, Carolina: 3 reports (1-60).
 Titmouse, Tufted: 3 reports (1-60).
 Nuthatch, Brown-headed: Deussen Park--(6)1,P; Houston--(1)19,JMo.
 Wren, Carolina: Hale Ranch--(15)1,B; Bellaire--(1)28,PJ.
 Wren, Marsh: McFaddin Marsh--(2)20,SCa.
 Mockingbird: Winnie--(1 adult feeding fledgling)29,SCa; 4 additional reports (1-6).
 Robin, American: Galveston--(1)1,P; Houston--(3 adult & 4 Imm.)7,(10)8,MH; (1 Imm.)14,NP.
 Thrush, Wood: Bear Creek Park--(2)21,C.
 Bluebird, Eastern: Lake Jackson--(2 & 3 juveniles)4-7,(1)10, MRo.
 Starling: 2 reports (1-70).
 Vireo, White-eyed: Hale Ranch--(25)1,B; Lake Jackson--(2)6,(3)7,(5)21,MRo.
 Vireo, Yellow-throated: Hale Ranch--(2)1,B.
 Vireo, Red-eyed: Hale Ranch--(3)1,B; Memorial Park--(1)15,MH.
 Warbler, Prothonotary: Hale Ranch--(8)1,B.
 Warbler, Swainson's: Hale Ranch--(1)1,B.
 Warbler, Northern Parula: Hale Ranch--(25)1,B; Bear Creek Park--(3)21,C.
 Yellowthroat, Common: Hale Ranch--(1)1,B.
 Warbler, Hooded: Hale Ranch--(1)1,B; Memorial Park--(1)15,MH.
 Warbler, Canada: E.L. Moore Nature Sanctuary--(1)May 23,SW.
 Redstart, American: Hale Ranch--(6)1,B (see notes)
 Sparrow, House: 4 reports (8-21).
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 1 report (3).
 Blackbird, Red-winged: Anahuac NWR--1 nest w/3 eggs)13,(1 fledgling)13, SCa; 3 additional reports (40-100)
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: Hale Ranch--(1)1,B; Anahuac NWR--(2)6,(1 nest w/3 eggs)13,SCa; McFaddin Marsh--(30)20,SCa.
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 4 reports (2-100).
 Grackle, Common: 4 reports (6-20).
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 1 report (15).
 Tanager, Summer: Hale Ranch--(2)1,B.
 Cardinal: 4 reports (2-75).
 Grosbeak, Blue: Sheldon Reservoir--(1)1,P.
 Bunting, Indigo: Hale Ranch--(4)1,B.
 Bunting, Painted: Lake Jackson--(1)all month,MRo; Hale Ranch--(40)1,B.
 Sparrow, Henslow's: Mykawa Rd.--(1)8,MH;(2)9,MAU;(7, singing)27,J&NS.
 Sparrow, Seaside: Anahuac NWR--(8)11,(1 adult feeding fledgling)23,SCa.

CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS, June, 1980

MAU--Mike Austin; L&MB--Larry & Martha Ballard; SCa--Steve Calver; TE--Ted Eubanks, Jr.; MH--Malcolm Hodges; P&MJ--Paul & Margaret Jones; JMo--Jim Morgan; NP--Noel Pettingell; MRo--Matt Robinson; ES--Ena Spalding; CSu--Colin Summerhayes; J&NS--Jerry & Nancy Strickling; SW--Steve Williams; B--Party of Kelly Bryan, TE, Tony Gallucci, JMo; C--Party of Les Channes, MRo; P--Party of NP, SW.

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES, June, 1980

- (1) CORY'S SHEARWATER - MH
- (2) Osprey - SCa
- (3) Peregrine Falcon - JMo
- (4) BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - NP
- (5) Least Sandpiper - SW
- (6) Dunlin - NP
- (7) Short-billed Dowitcher - NP, CSu
- (8) Western Sandpiper - NP
- (9) Marbled Godwit - CSu
- (10) Least Tern - CSu
- (11) Purple Martin - J&NS
- (12) American Redstart - JMo

- (1) CORY'S SHEARWATER: The bird was seen as it banked & swooped about 25-30 yards off the stern of the New Buccaneer. I watched the bird in excellent light with 7 x 35 binoculars for about 5 seconds, after which I ran downstairs to get the other birders. The bird had left by the time we returned to the upper deck. Description: Typical shearwater shape, with cigar-shaped body; long, "stiff" pointed wings; big rounded head; thick, long, hook-tipped bill; and short, rounded tail. The bill was a golden-tan color. The upperparts were greyish-brown, blending into the white underparts. The underwings were whitish, mottled with dark spots. The tail was uniformly dark. The bird was medium sized, not much larger than a Laughing Gull. Identification: Greater Shearwater was ruled out due to bill color, head & back color and lack of white rump. Sooty Shearwater was ruled out on basis of pale underparts and Audubon's on basis of size, color of upperparts and bill color. I have had no previous experience with this species.

Malcolm Hodges

- (2) Osprey: Seen at edge of bay carrying fish. Noted white on head, crooked wings, otherwise, white below and dark greyish above.
- Steve Calver
- (3) Peregrine Falcon: Large falcon with pointed wings and flight characteristics of Peregrine seen at a distance by all 4 observers with binocs and scope while bird was in flight. Seen in same area where Bryan and Gallucci had observed a Peregrine at close range the day before.

Jim Morgan

- (4) BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: Seen with Western Sandpipers in mud flat on west side of Seawall Blvd. near south jetty and with Dunlins, Western Sandpipers and Sanderlings at Bolivar Flats behind the beach. Baird's were smaller than Dunlins, larger than Westerns with wingtips extending beyond tail. Dark legs, scaly back, buffy head and breast also noted. Baird's fed apart from Sanderlings with slower picking actions. Although latest previous UTC spring date for Baird's Sandpiper was May 27, 1960, the species probably occurs more frequently in late May and early June in SE Texas than records indicate because it can easily be overlooked or missed by the relatively few birders afield after the peak spring migration period (April 15-May 15).

Noel Pettigell

- (5) Least Sandpiper: Seen near Bayou Manor (4141 South Braeswood Blvd.). Small peeps with yellowish legs and short thin bills. Only other UTC record in this month was June 17, 1968, but, like Baird's Sandpiper, probably present regularly in June but not recorded because so few birders go on field trips in Sandpiper habitat at this time of year.

Noel Pettigell

- (6) Dunlin: Both birds in spring plumage (dark bellies, rusty backs). Heavy curved bills and dark legs also noted.

Noel Pettigell

- (7a) Short-billed Dowitcher: Large, chunky, short-legged Sandpipers probing with long, heavy bills in shallow water. Calls of birds at Bolivar Flats were 3-noted like Greater Yellowlegs.

Noel Pettingell

- (7b) Short-billed Dowitcher: There were two of these sitting together on the mud flat, along with a Willet (for a nice size comparison). They must have been tired, as they allowed me to approach to about 20 ft. before moving. Then they ran as I followed, finally flying a few feet. Head striped; bill extra long (compared with willet), legs short, white rump triangle extending up lower back; barred tail; light underbelly; brownish breast. No dark rust coloration, plus relatively "short" bill (for Dowitcher), plus no strong barring on sides or underbelly distinguishing it from Long Billed Dowitcher. No call heard.

Colin Summerhayes

- (8) Western Sandpiper: "Peeps" smaller than Sanderlings were all dark-legged with longish bills unlike typical profile of Semi-palmated, i.e., "A ball with a short stick in it" (Peterson's "Birds of Texas").

Noel Pettingell

- (9) Marbled Godwit: Large brown wader with pale cinnamon breast lightly barred with brown. Long upturned pinkish bill with dark brown tip. Larger than nearby Willet. No white rump patch (i.e., not Hudsonian). Did not display wing linings. Bill diagnostic. Range about 20 yards.

Colin Summerhayes

- (10) Least Tern: Found nest of Least Tern at westernmost end of the Sandspit. Nest just a scrape, with a small bluish and much speckled egg. Least Terns flying about. Later, from distance, watched Least Tern settle on egg, confirming ownership. Several ORV tracks close by. Other terns in pairs - which means more nesting action on the same spit. Did not find other nests.

Colin Summerhayes

- (11) Purple Martin: We have a Purple Martin house with nesting Martins plus the usual House Sparrows. We have seen male House Sparrows feeding young Purple Martins both at the nest holes and also on the ground and in a small tree near the house. We have never seen a female House Sparrow do this. We also saw this happen when we had a Martin house in Westbury. We lived for 6 years in St. Louis, Mo. with a Martin house there, but we did not see House Sparrows feeding Martins. We have never seen a Martin feed a House Sparrow.

Nancy and Jerry Strickling

- (12) American Redstart: The 6 birds included 2 females and 4 singing birds. At least 3 birds seemed to be on territories. Two singing birds were first year (1979 fledged) males with black blotches on breast, orange-yellow shoulders and tail bands. Females had yellow shoulders and tail bands. All birds seen displayed the usual characteristic of fanning their tails while foraging. Each bird seen was carefully observed with binocs at distances of 20-60 ft. All 4 observers saw at least 2 or more birds. Light conditions excellent. Birds found in general area where found the previous summers but most birds were not in exact locations as noted in years past.

Jim Morgan

MANY THANKS TO OUR STENCIL TYPIST THIS MONTH: MARIAN FIRESTONE

Marian Firestone, responding to our request for help in getting out THE SPOONBILL, cheerfully did a fine job this month in typing all the stencils for this issue. Though the Editor had the material all organized, it is still a very big job. She did it during her lunch hour and before and after work, and we are deeply appreciative. (Barbara Darr, just as cheerfully, has typed the Clearing House several times when asked).

Due to a change in jobs, the Editor no longer can type the stencils, but is willing to try to continue as Editor for awhile if the stencils can be typed by volunteers each month. We should have a "stable" of nimble fingers so as to spread the involvement around. Requirements?....an electric typewriter, some time, and a desire to be a part of THE SPOONBILL team. Afraid of stencils?....don't be, Corrective Fluid works miracles! Please volunteer, you are needed. Call the Editor, Margaret Jones, evenings at 665-4197, to volunteer, or if you have questions.

Our thanks again to Marian Firestone, THE SPOONBILL's Typist of the Month!

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Send bird records for Clearing House before 3rd of month to: <u>Ted Eubanks, Jr.</u> , 730 W. 42nd, Houston, Texas 77018	694-2242
Send requests for OG information, checklists, maps to: <u>Maxine Davis</u> , 10602 Cedarhurst, Houston, Texas 77096	723-8559
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