



THE SPOONBILL

VOLUME XIII, No.11
March, 1965

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* Migration is the greatest adventure *
 * in the life of a bird, the greatest *
 * risk it must take. Hundreds of mil- *
 * lions of migrants never reach their *
 * destination. How birds can find *
 * their way with apparent ease over *
 * vast distances remains the unsolved *
 * riddle of migration. *
 * * * * *

* Life Nature Library - The Birds - *
 * Roger Tory Peterson *
 * * * * *

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

COMING EVENTS

March 27-28 (Saturday-
and Sunday)

Clayton Gilman leads the O.G. Field Trip to George West. Make your reservations at the Buenas Noches Motel in George West and join one of the finest field trips we have. You will be guaranteed many different species of birds, beautiful wild flowers and, if you like them, plenty of snakes. Meet Saturday AM at 7:30, Buenas Noches Motel. Don't miss it.

April 1, (Thursday)-

O. G. Meeting, 7:30 PM, Downtown Recreation Center. Clayton Gilman will give us many pointers on what, and when to plant trees, shrubs and flowers to attract birds to our yards. There should be slides showing some of the beautiful flowers that Clayton has grown. This should be an interesting program.

April 10-11 (Saturday
and Sunday)

O.N.C. Field Trip to Hodges Gardens. Make your reservations at the Motor Inn opposite the Gardens. Dr. Carlos D. Speck will lead this trip.

April _____

Sometime in April the Texas Ornithological Society's Annual Meeting will be held in the Valley. The exact location of the meeting, and the exact dates have not been announced by the Executive Board. This location offers excellent trips into Bentsen State Park, Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge and Laguna Atascosa Wildlife Refuge. I hope we receive the word on particulars soon. Perhaps we will be able to announce this at the O. G. Meeting in April. Try to attend (both) if possible.

April _____

The Annual Spring Big Day Run- this will be discussed at the April meeting. No particular date has been chosen at this time. Please try to attend the meeting and get the information for birding on this Big Day. It's fun and you may go where you wish.

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP - O. G.

On a recent Saturday (February 20, 1965), Dr. Hardin Craig led an O. G. Field Trip to Western Harris County that produced 16 cars, 42 people and all of 13 species of Sparrows, not including the House Sparrow which was seen, to be sure.

Much of the trip covered the many habitats that Cinco Ranch affords and this is where the elusive little Henslow Sparrows were observed by some of the group (namely Jerry Strickling, Jim Ellis, Noel Pettingell and Jane Robinson) at very close range for all of 20 minutes. The light was perfect, the wind mild and the cooperation of the Henslows under close scrutiny unexpected if not downright bold. At such close distance, binoculars were of no benefit as each outstanding marking on this midget was clear and definable. The short rather rodent like movements through the low grass never enabled the bird to get out of sight.

In all, the White-crowned, White-throated, Vesper, Henslow, Song, Savannah, Field, Chipping, Fox, Harris, Lincolns, Swamp and Grasshopper Sparrows were seen at the Ranch.** The Fox and Harris were in good numbers and various plumages.

Both the Barn and Barred Owls appeared; 4 species of warblers (Wilson's, Pine, Myrtle and Orange-crowned); a Dickcissel; Carolina, Bewick's and House Wrens; 6 species of Ducks; male and female Vermilion Flycatchers; Sandhill Cranes; Great Blue, Little Blue, Cattle and Common Egrets; Bobwhites; Rufous-sided Towhees; Cedar Waxwings; American Goldfinch; and Snow, Blue, White-fronted and Canada Geese were among the birds seen throughout the day.

Our recent trips have been attended by several new members as well as guests and we are most happy to see so many newcomers on the field trips. Among those attending - all comers, new and old - were Betsey Perry, B. Williams, Hardin Craig, Marie Bateman, Johanna Grabbe, Marian Erwin, Woodrow Erwin, Bill and Betty Wright, Alice McGowan, Mike McGowan, Sharon Skelton, T. E. Gillett, Jane Robinson, Nancy Kilpatrick, Jane Dodge, Jerry Baker, Norma Oates, Charlotte Reindl, Josiephine Wilkin, Chip Weber, Tim Crook, Jerry and Boots Evans, Jim Ellis, Jerry Strickling, Dennis Shepler, Noel Pettingell, Bill Goloby, Sarah Gordon, Melba Drake, Ewell Bradley, Julia Bradley, Tom Danial, Katrina Thompson, Bill Ladwig, Mary Sears, Thelma Smith, Bob Braden, Susan Braden, Carol Cunningham and Annie Arantzen.

Before the trip was over, many had covered the ranch and the Katy area wherein a total of 75 species were flushed, run-down and gazed at by the eager assemblage that have learned that winter birding is great fun and very productive.

The following accounts were mailed to Armand Yramategui and he in turn sent them to us to pass onto you. We think you will find them most interesting.

'A couple of summers ago, my husband, Mr. J. W. Whitaker, first noticed a little Screech Owl flying in for water in late evenings. This Spring we saw and heard him every evening as he perched in our spreading Arizona Ash at back of the house. Soon we observed one owl in the wooden house my husband had made and installed in a large elm at back of our lot. Then we noticed the owl had a mate - and the evening call we no longer heard.

About two months ago, we saw two light gray baby owls. About this time, we heard a hissing sound from the owls, brought on mainly by a very agitated Mockingbird who would fly up to any of the four owls perched in the trees. The owls never budged during the day; evening time the war fare intensified.

** On Feb. 22, 1965, Margaret Anderson saw a LeConte's Sparrow in the Henslow Sparrow field.

Recently our neighbor, Mrs. Schumann, was loosening soil in her back yard under a pear tree. Apparently the owl had flown into the pear tree for a locust or other insect. He hissed until he frightened her away. When she ran into the house, the owl flew away.

A night or two later, the neighbors on the other side of us, Mr. & Mrs. Smart, were working and watering in their garden. All the while Mrs. Smart worked the owls hissed. It was nearly dark and the owls feeding time. As Mr. Smart was watering the garden one of the owls flew at his head, clawing about an inch or two scratch on his scalp.

During the week, the small children around the block had been shooting fire-crackers endlessly which had made the owls somewhat nervous. I believe the noise, the neighbor's late at night yard work, the warring mockingbirds - all of these factors - provoked the owls into this unusual behaviour.

All four of our owls are still with us, though they are not as obvious during the day. At dusk they fly from tree to tree in our yard. The adult owls fly into the neighboring yard for food, then feed the babies up in our trees or on fence lines.

Our neighbors have not complained again - they may accept our feathered friends. I repeated your assurance that they were a beneficial bird.

Mrs. J. W. Whitaker

Mrs. Whitaker's descriptions of these birds identify them as Screech Owls - tree bark in color, little ears. Since they mated the birds have made no calls - only a hissing sound when disturbed. Even in flight they are soundless.

- - - -
2-6-65

Following your advice to me, I am sending this information concerning the bird that visited our back yard feeders recently. My husband, who prepares the food and feeds the birds, spotted the new visitor in mid-December. Then from January 17th to January 23rd, this bird made numerous visits daily to feed and drink. I had ample opportunity to view and study her, using binoculars and the naked eye. The bird became very friendly, coming as close as four feet to me, fluttering its wings on the window as if to enter and eat on my table. The field marks were -- trim bird, somewhat larger than a sparrow, dull greenish above, blackish on wing and tail edges, bright yellow throat, belly and under tail coverts, two wing bars, top one yellowish, bottom one white, heavy type, longish beak, lower mandible lighter, tanager shaped tail. Using Peterson's Field Guide, identified as female Western Tanager.

Mrs. R. B. Whitaker

Armand adds that his first conversation with Mrs. Whitaker disclosed a tanager like bill and not oriole like and he felt sure it was a female Western Tanager or a juvenile male.

HOUSTON CHRISTMAS COUNT - 1964 - Corrections of Data in Feb. Spoonbill

Page 3 - Insert following at top of compilation:

- * Indicates total equals or exceeds previous high count (1913-1963)
- Ani, Groove-billed - Total 5 should read 5*.

Page 5 - Comparison of Exceptionally-high Individual Totals for 1964 Houston Count:

- Change * Previous highest count by a single North American locality
- To read:

* All-time highest count by a single North American locality through 1963. Totals with year(s) underlined are highest in North America for those years only.

Houston Christmas Count corrections, cont.

- Underline year(s) shown after total for following species:

Ruby-crowned Kinglet	462	(1960)
White-throated Sparrow	3157	(<u>1961</u>)
Wood Thrush	1	(<u>1949</u> , <u>55</u> , <u>60</u> , <u>62</u>)
Lesser Yellowlegs	242	(<u>1963</u>)

Whew! I hope the above makes sense - I have tried to simplify it as much as possible and had to revise the revision in order to do so. Sometimes I get too carried away with statistical analyses and find myself bogged down in a veritable morass of figures! Well, nuff sed on that subject.

Noel Pettingell

FROM THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT (where everything looks so rosy)

Varied dividends are reported to Parks and Wildlife Department headquarters from the management project at Sheldon Reservoir, fifteen miles northeast of Houston.

More than 2,000 ducks, involving twelve species, have been banded and released there this winter. This number is expected to be increased when the late-arriving Blue-winged Teal drop in on their way northward.

March - Game Warden Bob Rhudy, Meridian, reported finding several Dove nests in Bosque County during the last fortnight. One nest contained two young doves almost ready to fly. Rhudy attributed the early nesting of doves to mild winter weather.

NEW MEMBERS, SUBSCRIBERS, ETC.

Member - Miss Hazel C. Green, Box 136, Redbird Lodge, Wimberley, Tex. 78676

Subscriber- Mrs. Allene Orgain Bachman, 880 19th St., Beaumont, Texas.

Change of Address: Mrs. Edna W. Miner, 4141 South Braeswood, Apt. 631
Houston, Texas 77025 MO6-2651

Miss Luta Buchanan, 4141 South Braeswood, Apt. 330
Houston, Texas 77025 MO6-2651

CLEARING HOUSE, February, 1965

Common Loon: (3)27 Tex. City Dike JLT, GAT.

Eared Grebe: (7)7, (1)18 Cove AKM; (7)7 Tex. City Dike JLT PK.

Pied-billed Grebe: (1)7, (10)10, (5)18, (3)25 Cove AKM.

White Pelican: 7 days, (800)25 Cove AKM; (65)27 Gilchrist, (30)27 Bolivar ENM.

Cormorant, Double-crested: 5 days (64)18 Cove AKM.

Anhinga: (1)7 Buckhorn ENM.

Great White Heron: (1)14 Galveston, (1)27 Bolivar Jetty ENM.

Great Blue Heron: (19)27 Gilchrist, (11)27 Bolivar ENM.

Little Blue Heron: (6)7 Galveston JLT GAT PK.

Cattle Egret: (1)14, 23, 25, (15)28 Cove AKM; (4)14 Baytown, JLT PK; (2)27 Galveston JLT GAT.

Reddish Egret: (2)7 Galveston JLT PK; (1)27 Bolivar ENM.

Black-crowned Night Heron: (2)27 Bolivar JLT PK.

American Bittern: (1)27 Galveston JLT GAT.

White-faced Ibis: (20)7 Cove AKM.

White Ibis: (13)7 Galveston JLT PK.

Roseate Spoonbill: (11)7, (40)12, (2)13 Cove AKM.

Canada Goose: (700)7 Sheldon ENM.

White-fronted Goose: 8 days (300)14 Cove AKM.

Snow Goose: (25)7 Sheldon ENM.

Mallard: 13 days (30)16 Cove AKM; (13)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Black Duck: (4)7, (12)27 Anahuac JLT PK GAT.
 Mottled Duck: 21 days, (4)21 Cove AKM.
 Gadwall: 7 days, (25)10,24 Cove AKM; (3)5 West.Harris Cty. "A".
 Pintail: 13 days,(150)10 Cove AKM; (15)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Green-winged Teal: 18 days (3000)7 Cove AKM; (60)5 West.Harris Cty. "A".
 Blue-winged Teal: (3)10, (1)7, (7)24,28 Cove AKM.
 American Widgeon: 10 days,(500)10 Cove AKM; (46)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Shoveler: 6 days, (250)22 Cove AKM,
 Redhead: (1)13 Cove AKM.
 Ring-necked Duck: (1)13, (7)25 Cove AKM; (5)7 Buckhorn ENM.
 Canvasback: (40-800) 5 days Cove AKM; (7)7 Sheldon ENM.
 Lesser Scaup: 6 days (150)13 Cove AKM.
 Common Goldeneye: (17)7, (4)13, (1)14,18,25 Cove AKM; (1)7 Tex. City
 Dike JLT PK.
 Bufflehead: (6)7,(5)13 Cove AKM.
 Ruddy Duck: (80)10, (4)14 Cove AKM.
 Hooded Merganser: (4)7 Sheldon ENM.
 Red-breasted Merganser: (20)7,13 Cove AKM; (25)7 Tex. City Dike JLT PK.
 Black Vulture: (1-4)6 days Cove AKM.
 White-tailed Kite: (1)7 Galveston JLT PK.
 Sharp-shinned Hawk: (1)10 Cove AKM.
 Cooper's Hawk: (1)21 Cove AKM.
 Red-tailed Hawk: (1)13, (9)18, (5)25 Cove AKM; (8)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Kridler's (1)7 Kemah JLT PK.
 Harlan's Hawk: (1)13 Cove AKM.
 Red-shouldered Hawk: (1-3) 7 days Cove AKM; (1)5 West.Harris Cty. "A".
 White-tailed Hawk: (1)21 Gulf Freeway HP.
 Bald Eagle: (3)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Marsh Hawk: (1)13, (20)18, (8)25 Cove AKM.
 Osprey: (1)16 Galveston SW PE.
 Caracara: (1)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Sparrow Hawk: (15)13, (29)18, (25)25 Cove AKM.
 Greater Prairie Chicken: (3)21 Fondren Road ENM.
 Bobwhite: (15)14 Baytown JLT PK; (4)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Sandhill Cranes: (15)7 Galveston JLT PK; (85)5 West. Harris Cty."A".
 King Rail: (1)27 Galveston JLT GAT.
 Clapper Rail: (2)7 Galveston JLT PK.
 Sora: (1)27 Galveston JLT GAT.
 American Coot: (1000)10, (4)14, (1)18, (3)28 Cove AKM.
 Semipalmated Plover: (2)7 Galveston JLT PK.
 Piping Plover: (2)7 Galveston JLT PK; (4)27 Galveston JLT GAT.
 American Golden Plover: (1)22 earliest ever by 6 days Cove AKM; (1)26
 GalvestonCty. Park ENM.
 Black-bellied Plover: (1-7) 6 days Cove AKM; (30)27 Gilchrist ENM.
 Ruddy Turnstone: (9)13 Cove AKM; (5)7 Galveston JLT PK; (30)27 Galveston
 JLT GAT.
 Common Snipe: 11 days, (85)18, (100)24 Cove AKM; (4)7 Galveston JLT PK;
 (5)14 Baytown JLT PK.
 Long-billed Curlew: 8 days (100)22 Cove AKM.
 Spotted Sandpiper: (1)10,22, the only 2 all winter Cove AKM; (1)14
 Sheldon JLT PK.
 Willet: 5 days, (38)13 Cove AKM.
 Greater Yellowlegs: 7 days (50)24 Cove AKM.
 Lesser Yellowlegs: 8 days, (1)8, migration of both species began near
 midmonth, (2)18,20, (3)21, (25)22, (200)24 Cove AKM.
 Dowitcher, species: 7 days, (100)22 Cove AKM.
 Marbled Godwit: (2)7 Tex. City JLT PK.
 Sanderling: (3)13 Cove AKM.
 American Avocet: (350)27 Gilchrist, (700)27 Bolivar ENM; (500)7,27
 Bolivar JLT GAT PK.
 Laughing Gull: (1)7 with black head Cove AKM.
 Bonaparte's Gull: (2)14 Cove AKM; (6)27 Bolivar JLT GAT;(35)27 Gilchrist ENM.
 Gull-billed Tern: (1)27 Gilchrist ENM.
 Forster's Tern: (400)27 Gilchrist ENM.
 Common Tern: (1)27 Gilchrist ENM.
 Black Skimmer: (300)7 Bolivar JLT PK; (50)27 Gilchrist ENM.
 Ground Dove: (5)18 Cove AKM.
 Groove-billed Ani: (1)27 Galveston JLT GAT.
 Barn Owl: (3)6 Anahuac JLT GAT.
 Great-Horned Owl: (1)17 Cove AKM.
 Barred Owl: (2)13 Gal. Co. Park (seemed to roost in park) ENM.

- Belted Kingfisher: (3)20, (1)21,23 Cove AKM; (2)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Yellow-shafted Flicker: 10 days ((7)13 Cove AKM.
 Pileated Woodpecker: (2)28 Cove AKM; (1)7 Deussen Park ENM.
 Red-headed Woodpecker: (1)28 Cove AKM; (3)14 Sheldon JLT PK.
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: (1-4) 8 days Cove AKM.
 Downy Woodpecker: (2)13,18, (1)14,21 Cove AKM; (1)5 West. Harris Cty. "A".
 Eastern Phoebe: (1-6) 11 days Cove AKM.
 Empidonax Flycatcher: (1)13 (see Notes) Cove AKM.
 Vermilion Flycatcher: (1)17,18,26,27 Cove AKM; (3)14 Sheldon JLT PK;
 (1)7 Buckhorn ENM.
 Horned Lark: (5)14 Galveston ENM.
 Tree Swallow: (2)10, (1)12,25 Cove AKM; (1)7 Galveston JLT PK.
 Purple Martin: (3)10, earliest ever by 2 days, (5)17,23 Cove AKM; (1)14
 LaPorte JLT PK; (1)27 Galveston JLT GAT; (3)14 Galveston
 ENM; (12)8 Houston (see Notes) NP.
 Brown Creeper: (1)7, (2)25 Cove AKM; (1)5 West. Harris Cty. "A";
 (1)21 in yard JH BH.
 House Wren: (1) 7 days Cove AKM; (1)14 Webster ENM.
 Bewick's Wren: (1)25 Cove AKM.
 Carolina Wren: nest built by end of Feb. earliest ever Cove AKM.
 Long-billed Marsh Wren: (1)25 Cove AKM.
 Short-billed Marsh Wren: (1)14 Baytown JLT PK.
 Catbird: (1)7 Cove AKM.
 Robin: 19 days, (200)4,18, (300)18 Cove AKM.
 Varied Thrush: (1)13,28 Galveston County Park ENM; (1)14 Galveston County
 Park JH BH Jr.
 Hermit Thrush: (1-7)10 days Cove AKM; (4)13, (2)26 Galveston Cty. Park ENM.
 Eastern Bluebird: (15)7, (1-8) 10 days Cove AKM; (6)14 Sheldon JLT PK.
 Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher: (1-6)8 days Cove AKM; (3)27 High Island ENM.
 Golden-crowned Kinglet: (1)13, (2)21 Cove AKM; (1)5 West Harris Cty. "A".
 Water Pipit: 12 days, (200)22 Cove AKM.
 Sprague's Pipit: (1)14,18,23,26 Cove AKM.
 Cedar Waxwing: (1)25 Cove AKM; (35)13 Gal. Cty. Park, (100)14 Dickinson ENM.
 Starling: AKM (See Notes)
 Orange-crowned Warbler: (1-4) 8 days Cove AKM.
 Myrtle Warbler: 16 days (100)18,25 Cove AKM.
 Pine Warbler: (5)7,25, (1)13,19, (2)18 Cove AKM; (3)13 Ga. Cty. Park ENM.
 Palm Warbler: (2)14 Cove AKM.
 Yellowthroat: (1)26 Cove AKM; (1)14 LaPorte JLT PK.
 Wilson's Warbler: (1)13 Gal. Cty. Park ENM.
 Bullock's Oriole: (1)7, and Jan. 24, I was in error reporting it as a
 Baltimore Oriole in last Spoonbill Cove AKM; (1)1,2,3,12
 13,20,21,22,24,25 in yard JH BH.
 Brewer's Blackbird: (1-20) 6 days, fewest in 15 years Cove AKM.
 Rusty Blackbird: (100) all month in Gal. Cty. Park ENM.
 Boat-tailed Grackle: 13 days, (20)10, (16)20, total incl. repeats 83.
 See Notes Cove AKM.
 Common Grackle: (NC)6, 1 day only Cove AKM.
 Brown-headed Cowbird: See Notes Cove AKM.
 American Goldfinch: 17 days, (100-150),1,13,21 Cove AKM.
 Rufous-sided Towhee: (1)13, (2)25 Cove AKM.
 Grasshopper Sparrow: (1)14 Cove AKM.
 LeConte's Sparrow: (3)14 Baytown JLT PK; (2)22 Cinco Ranch HP.
 Seaside Sparrow: (1)18,25 Cove AKM; (6)6 Anahuac JLT GAT; (2)27 Bolivar ENM.
 Vesper Sparrow: (3-10)14,18,25,28 Cove AKM; (1)7 Anahuac JLT PK.
 Slate-colored Junco: (3)28 Cove AKM; (3)7 Deussen Park ENM.
 Chipping Sparrow: (10)14, (1)18 Cove AKM; (10)7 Deussen Park ENM.
 Field Sparrow: (1-15) 7 days Cove AKM; (20)14 LaPorte JLT PK.
 Harris Sparrow: (1)18 Cove AKM.
 White-crowned Sparrow: (10)18, (20)23, (6)25 Cove AKM.
 Lincoln's Sparrow: (1-5) 8 days Cove AKM.
 Swamp Sparrow: (1-7) 7 days Cove AKM.
 Song Sparrow: (1)14,18,21,25, (2)23 Cove AKM.
 Chestnut-collared Longspur: (1)28, a lifer. A male with very dark under parts
 and sharp head markings. I failed to find it on each of the
 next 4 days Cove AKM.

Contributors to Clearing House:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| AKM | Arlie K. McKay | JLT | John Tveten |
| NP | Noel Pettingell | GAT | Gloria Tveten |
| HP | Harvey Patten | ENM | Elric McHenry |
| SW | Steve Williams | JH | Jean Harwell |
| PE | Pat Ellis | BH | Bill Harwell |
| PK | Philip Klabunde | BH Jr. | Bill Harwell, Jr. |
| | (from Wilmington, Del.) | | |
| | "A" - JW - Joyce Wildenthal | - CJ | Charlotte Johnson |
| | JR - Jane Robinson | PE | Pat Ellis |

NOTES FROM CLEARING HOUSE REPORTS:

We had an unusual winter. Clover winter killed worse than in many years, yet Dallas, Bermuda and St. Augustine grasses grew all winter. Bitter weed was still blooming in Dec. (25th), Dewberry flowering February 12, and Blackberry flowers Feb. 28 were earliest ever. Slow gum (buckthorn) and cedar elm green with fall leaves and slow gum with spring leaves Feb. 28th.

I had thousands upon thousands of Snow and Blue Geese in my pasture. I let my cattle into other pasture and hoped the geese would leave when the Trinity flooded the marshes and was 3.9 ft. at Wallisville, but more came. I have about 150,000-200,000.

I observed 133 species in Feb., 202 in 30 yrs; 116 in first half, 128 in 1964; 116 in second half, 135 in 1952 and 138 in 1964; total for 30 years 191 in first half, 193 in second.

Empidonax Flycatcher - seen 13th, my first winter record I wish it were collected for it seemed to differ from any other I ever saw. I suspect it was a Western or a Western Flycatcher.

Starling - least common in my 30 years of birding. Saw only one on a day when I counted over 80 species of birds. I recorded them 23 days in Jan.; in each of the previous 30 Januarys they were common every day.

Boat-tailed Grackle: For over 25 yrs., I recorded them from 28 to 29 days each February, totaling tens of thousands.

Cowbird: seen daily, but am not sure of over 10,000 on any day. There were 4 to 5 million here in one roost in the lat thirties. Since the beginning of Federal sponsored poisoning of rice seed in 1959 I have never seen over 1% of that number. Even last February thousands annoyed me at my feed lots, but now I have from none to about 100 each evening.

There was a pair of Cardinals building a nest about 4ft. from my living room window on Feb. 28th. Both it and the wren discontinued building after the freeze of March 1.

Arlie K. McKay

- - - -

On February 13 I made a one-day trip to Aransas and Rockport with a friend, Philip Klabunde, who was birding in Texas for the first time. In spite of sleet and bitter winds we had a very successful day with 110 species. These included: Whooping Crane, Turkey, Black-crested Titmouse, Inca Dove, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Phrrhuloxia, Caracara, Olivaceous Cormorant (a beautiful comparison-sitting on a rail with three Double-crested), huge flocks of Buffleheads, Goldeneyes and Redheads, White-tailed Hawk, Hooded Merganser, Priarie Chicken, Lark Sparrow. The highlight of the trip for me was a flock of teal containing 7 beautiful male Cinnamon Teal. This is a gratifying way to get a lifer.

On February 7, Philip Klabunde and I saw an interesting gull in Galveston. We noticed it sitting on a piling along 61st Street as we drove by and were immediately attracted by its pure white color. Because we had both recently been birding in the East coast, we immediately thought of the Iceland Gull. This bird, however, was the same size as accompanying Ring-billed Gulls and was probably a partial albino. It had clear white plumage with bright

yellow legs and bill. We eventually made it fly and it exhibited very light brown wing tips. Even when it later sat on the other side of the bay it was easily distinguishable from its companions.

It was only a few minutes later that we saw a White-tailed Kite (a lifer!) hovering beside the road near the golf course. It stayed within 30-40 feet of us for the twenty minutes we watched and alternately hovered close to the ground and higher in the air to give us a complete look at a very beautiful bird. We also found a flock of 15 Sandhill Cranes along Stewart Road. These were the first I have seen on Galveston Island, although my experience is admittedly of short duration.

On February 27 my wife, Gloria, and I saw what appeared to be a very strange "blackbird" along the road on Galveston Island. On closer examination, it proved to be a Groove-billed Ani with absolutely no tail. It was unable to fly and hopped around in the grassy ditch until we came too close and it made for a briar patch. This was one case where we really got a chance to examine the bill at close range.

John Tveten

Purple Martins arrived at Blalock-McNall Lumber Co., 1006 Evergreen Dr. on Feb. 8 (6 pairs), according to Robert L. Mills, who also reported their arrival at his home on the same date. See March 1964 SPOONBILL (Page 5) for arrival dates for 1952 through 1964 at above site.

It has been a remarkable year so far - Great White Heron, Varied Thrush, 13 kinds of Sparrows at Cinco, etc. Next: ESKIMO CURLEW!!! (I hope!)

Noel Pettingell

Published by the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club

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Secretary:	Miss Katrina Thompson
Treasurer:	Miss Ella Wolfer
Field Trip Chairman:	Bob Braden
Program Chairman:	Mrs. L. W. (Margaret) Anderson
Co-editors of SPOONBILL:	Jim and Pat Ellis, 5414 Fairdale, Houston, 77027



Outdoor Nature Club
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