THE SPOONBILL

Volume XXX, No. 3
July, 1981

A WORD FROM THE JONES'

Dear Friends,

To reward us for doing something we enjoyed as much as our SPOONBILL work is icing a very rich cake! The garden party was lovely, and our heartfelt thanks go to all who planned, executed, contributed food, and/or came to the Red's that hot Sunday. It was a wonderful opportunity to see old friends and meet a few who heretofore had been only names on labels to us. Our thanks also for the kind words from many of you who could not attend but sent notes. The SPOONBILL cake was a masterpiece of cake-decorating art (did anyone get a picture we could have?), and it seemed a shame to nibble away at the icing replica of our masthead bird!

And special thanks to the OG for the thoughtful addition to our library, the "Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds". The book will be especially cherished because we cherish you, everyone of you!

Margaret & Paul Jones

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COMING EVENTS

Saturday July 25	Henslow Sparrow banding with Dr. Arnold. Meet in the shell-paved lot on the corner at Telephone Road and Brisbane (across from Hobby Airport) at 7:00 a.m. Deadline for THE SPOONBILL announcements, articles, etc.
Monday August 3	Clearing House deadline for observations for July. Make sure your contributions are in A.O.U. order (follow a UTC Checklist). Please send early.
Thursday August 6	OG regular meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bayou Manor auditorium, 4141 South Braeswood Blvd. The guest speaker will be Dr. Falco A. "Karl" Eaglet. Although his name is probably better known in herpetological circles, Karl's most recent endeavor should certainly place him in the realm of top-ranking bird listers. In the face of obvious handycaps, he attempted to break a summertime Big Day record in the state of Texas. Incredible though it seems, he succeeded. Come and witness the man, the legend, as he recounts this extraordinary adventure in words and color slides. Also at this meeting, several art prints will be available for viewing (see OG Art Print Auction below).
Saturday August 8	Henslow Sparrow banding with Dr. Arnold. Meet at 7:00 a.m.
Saturday August 15	Henslow Sparrow banding with Dr. Arnold. Meet at 7:00 a.m.

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OG ART PRINT AUCTION

by Ron Braun

Last year one of our members, Jim Beaty, donated several art prints to the OG for fund raising purposes. After too long a time considering what the best method of converting these into cash might be, I have decided that we will give our members a chance to purchase them. The mechanism will be to auction one print at each OG meeting during the

coming year. Bidding will begin at a price below the current appraised value of each print. At the August meeting, Thursday August 6th, all the prints will be available for viewing. The first print will be auctioned at the September meeting. The following is a list of the prints, the opening bid price and the meeting month at which it will be auctioned:

Print #	Description	Opening bid	Auction month
1	Bald Eagle by Charles Beckandorf signed and numbered	$5	September
2	Saw-Whet Owl by Ray Harm signed (out of print)	$25	October
3	Roadrunner by Nancy McGowan (out of print) and	$5	November
4	Jaguar by Doug Pratt, signed and numbered	$20	
5	Imm. Tundra Peregrine by John Langford, signed and numbered (out of print)	$15	December
6	Golden Eagle by Charles Beckandorf signed and numbered (out of print)	$5	January
7	Elf Owl by Ray Harm, signed (out of print)	$25	February
8	Screech Owls by Charles Frace signed (out of print)	$25	March
9	Red-shouldered Hawk by Charles Frace, signed and numbered (out of print)	$25	April

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SPRING ROUND-UP REPORT by Dave Matson

Four parties submitted species lists for the May 3rd Round-up. Obviously, that date was not the best to attract observers! The format for the day was to bird at will; with no limits on coverage. One party covered West Harris County and the Fort Bend County fields, two ran a Big Day, and the third birded their local turf.

Altogether, 205 species were reported; 191 of these were seen in our Checklist area. The only unusual sighting was a Fish Crow on Galveston Island. This species can only be regularly found at Sabine Pass. Of interest were the "western" species seen by Mr. O'Connor on the central coast, including Western Kingbird (which he found "common"), Yellow-headed Blackbird, Pyrrhuloxia, and Lark Sparrow, reconfirming the amazing differences in distribution found in only short distances. Surprising to me were th three vireos and three warblers seen by one observer on the Central Coast not seen by three parties on the Upper Coast.

It is my hope that the Spring Count could become a state-wide event. Perhaps next year more parties will be out.

Party #	Members	Location	Total Species	Exclusives
1	Noel Pettingell Stephen Williams	Harris County Fort Bend County	110	10
2	T. Ben Feltner Linda Roach Jim Morgan	Lake Charlotte, White Memorial Park, Anahuac rice fields, Anahuac NWR, High Island, Bolivar Flats, Galveston Island	170	38
3	John Hamilton Jane Hamilton Jay Fish	Galveston Island	69	4
4	Robert O'Connor	Goose Island, Rockport, Sinton, South Padre Is.	114	14

THE SILENT KILLERS: DISEASES OF BIRDS by B. C. Robison, D.V.M.

Part 6: AVIAN PSEUDOTUBERCULOSIS

That old street gang Pasteurella is at it again, and they are taking on all comers. This time the ring leader is P. pseudotuberculosis.

A wide range of animals can be naturally infected with this germ. Among birds, it has been isolated from domestic fowl, ducks, toucans, finches, pheasants, blackbirds, and mockingbirds. Infected mammals include cats, monkeys, rats, beaver, and deer. If you have a pet muskrat or chinchilla, don't think it is immune.

Although this disease has been investigated most extensively in Europe, several significant epornitics have occured in the U.S. among icterids and cage birds. Infection among the latter has been hilariously referred to as "canary cholera." (I wonder if that name was chosen only for its nice alliterative ring? Maybe someday there will be Petrel Pox and Curlew Curse.)

In 1960 there was a major outbreak in a blackbird roost in Maryland. It was late winter, and there were an estimated one million grackles, starlings, cowbirds, and red-wing blackbirds. As more and more dead birds were found at the roost site, an investigation was decided upon. Necropsy and bacterial isolation revealed avian pseudotuberculosis.

The particular circumstances surrounding this epizootic are instructive. The sheer numbers of birds involved here places enormous stress on them in their struggle for survival, even for the gregarious species Cold weather, dwindling food supply, and increased pre-migratory activity can trigger overt disease in susceptible populations. The pattern of the known epornitics of pseudotuberculosis indicates that the significant factor is not the causative agent's virulence, as is the case in many diseases, but external conditions that stress and weaken the birds.

Another case, involving magpies, illustrates the delicate chain of events that often needs to occur for a disease to erupt. A herd of sheep had been grazing in an apparently contaminated pasture. Since small wild mammals can carry P. pseudotuberculosis and shed it in the feces, the herbivorous animals in the area are obviously going to be exposed.

The sheep were killed and skinned, and the skins were hung on fence posts to dry. Naturally, there were tiny fragments of infected tissue on the skin, and some hungry magpies flew by and....well, you get the picture.

Avian pseudotuberculosis is a septicemia, damages numerous organs in the host, and is often rapid and fatal. As is all too often the case (remember avian cholera and P. multocida?), antemortem diagnosis is for polite conversation in the faculty lounge. Fortunately for the pathologists, there are some pathognomonic lesions: millet-sized nodules in the spleen and liver. This is why it is called "pseudotuberculosis". Small nodules in these organs and in bone, muscle, lungs, and kidneys mimic the classic tubercular nodule.

Clinical symptoms are the usual non-specific sick-bird variety: depression, ruffled feathers, diarrhea, emaciation, paralysis. Transmission appears to be primarily enteric: affected birds pass the agent in the feces, susceptible birds ingest it.

To the poultry industry this condition is not of great economic impact except in the occasional instance where turkey flocks are hit. Then mortality rates can reach 80 per cent.

AROUND AND ABOUT

Texas Bird Banders Assoc. is hosting the Inland Bird-banding Assoc. meeting Friday Sept. 25th and Saturday Sept. 26th, 1981 at Armand Bayou Science Center. There will be field trips Friday starting at noon to Galveston Island plus Bolivar and again on Sunday Sept. 27th- some activity may be planned for Thursday for those arriving early. There may be an owling trip Friday or Saturday night by Armand Bayou. Electric boat rides will be held everyday. A social hour will be held on Friday night. Paper sessions and workshops on Sat. Informal barb-que at $6.00/person on Sat night with OG member John Tveten as guest speaker. Local persons are welcome but all persons attending sessions or workshops must pay $7.00 registration fee. Questions can be handled by local committee consisting of 1)Kelly Bryan 2)Dr. Ralph Moldenhauer 3)Dr. Barry Hinderstein and 4)Allan Mueller.

The International Council for Bird Preservation, founded in 1922, is the world's oldest international conservation organization and remains the only one devoted exclusively to the protection of birds and their habitats. Over the years ICBP has been instrumental in the creation and implementation of international treaties and conventions affecting birds and in the development of protective legislation on the national level. Through its 65 national sections, each composed of the country' leading ornithological and conservation organizations, ICBP continues to work with governments for bird conservation.

As advisor on all bird matters to the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, ICBP plays an important role in assuring that those species in greatest need of research or protective measures receive them. Currently ICBP's greatest concerns are pesticide and oil pollution, trade in endangered species, and the destruction of habitat--particularly tropical forests. ICBP's working groups of specialists in bird families with particular conservation problems have drafted and are executing projects for the species with highest conservation priority--among them, the Imperial and Red-necked Amazons of Dominica, the Siberian Crane, the Philippine Monkey-eating Eagle, and the Houbara Bustard.

Among ICBP's own programs are the management of Cousin Island in the Seychelles, home of several thousand Fairy, Noddy, and Bridled Terns and of the endemic Seychelles Brush Warbler, which since ICBP acquired the island in 1968 has increased from 30 to over 450 individuals, management of three of the world's rarest birds on Mauritius, the endemic kestrel, Pink Pigeon, and parakeet. ICBP has also sponsored field guides such as Ridgely's A Guide to the Birds of Panama and Land's Birds of Guatemala; it is now developing a series of popular bird books in Spanish and Portuguese to cover the most common birds of each Latin American country. ICBP organizes international conferences to develop conservation strategies for various groups of birds--a recent parrot symposium in St. Lucia involved the governments of several Caribbean nations; upcoming meetings include one on cranes, to be held at the Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary, Bharatpur, India, and one on birds of prey, to take place in Greece, the last stronghold for many species formerly widespread in Europe.

The work of ICBP is supported entirely by contribution. For information on how you can assist and the benefits of membership write Dr. S. Dillon Ripley, President, ICBP, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560. (from a Wings, Inc. newsletter).

"More than almost anything, the migratory birds that herald the advent of warmer and longer days represent the international interdependence of all life. Forest migrants such as warblers, with their Easter egg colors, are not secure no matter what measures we may take to protect their nesting grounds. They also need security of habitat in transit and in their wintering areas. Their fate and that of the tropical forests of Central America are inextricably bound together."

Thomas E. Lovejoy
WWF-US Vice President for Science

Throughout the year the Rice University Offices of Continuing Studies and Special Programs offer several minicourses on Texas bird watching. This September we will offer Texas Bird Watching: The Fall Migration. Elaine Robinson Adams will focus this minicourse on migrating warblers, flycatchers, terns, plovers and many other birds of the Gulf Coast. You will have an opportunity to spot these birds during a field trip to Bolivar and High Island, east of Galveston. Course dates: Sept. 8 & 15, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Field trip: Sept. 19 or 20. Course fee: $48 For more information call Rice University, Offices of Continuing Studies and Special Programs, 527-4803 or 520-6022.

A graceful courtship dance between a male Whooping Crane at an Idaho refuge and a female newly arrived from the east has encouraged scientists to predict a large increase in the Whooping Crane population over the next few years. The first Whooping Cranes hatched and raised by Sandhill Crane foster parents at Gray's Lake National Wildlife Refuge are now six years old and ready for breeding, but unfortunately they are all males. The female just imported was reared at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md. The cranes at the center come from "extra" eggs at Whooping Crane summer nesting grounds. Females generally lay two eggs, but only one chick survives, so scientists take one egg of a pair to incubate and rear in captivity. Scott Derrickson of the center says that the female recently sent to Idaho didn't need special wilderness training because her mate will take care of her. He says she has made a good transition she's roosting, foraging and avoiding barbed wire. Derrickson hopes the cranes will migrate together in the fall and breed next year. (From Science News; thanks to Gene Heitzman for submitting this one).

There are no barns in Satellite Beach, Florida, but Barn Owls, Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks are thriving, welcome guests. Since 1978, Satellite Beach has enlisted14 hawks and owls to control its rodent population. They swoop down on rats, mice and gophers that roam beachfront neighborhoods. They are making good progress where traps and poisons failed. "It definitely has an impact," said Acting City Manager Gene Sorensen. "I don't know how many they're eating every night, but we've had reported sightings of them catching rodents." City Manager Richard Shinn is credited with coming up with the idea after reading about several northern communities turning to hawks and owls to get rid of rats. He thought the plan was worth a try in this Atlantic coast town just south of Cocoa Beach, where rapid development is constantly uprooting rodents from their homes. The hawks and owls are supplied by the Florida Wildlife Sanctuary in Melbourne, which is happy to see them put to good use. (from the Houston Chronicle).

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NEW PUBLISHER NEEDED

Each issue of THE SPOONBILL represents the combined efforts of many people. OG members prepare and submit announcements, articles, etc., which are edited and organized. Hours of typing are required to put this material onto stencils which are then used to print the final copies. The separate pages are then transferred to a mailing committee which staples them together, folds and labels them, and drops them off at the post office.

Pat Sadler of Bellaire has done the job of publishing your SPOONBILLS for the past nine months. The fine appearance of each issue is a reflection of Pat's page by page effort. He has also gone well out of his way to make sure our mimeograph machine is in top working order. The OG owes him a great many thanks.

Pat is now going to work full-time on a personal research project and he must give up the job. A volunteer is needed beginning with the August issue (i.e.by the first week in August). Please contact Randy Pinkston (667-1334) or Ron Braun (496-3108) for details if you are able and willing to take this job.

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DRY TORTUGAS/SOUTH FLORIDA BIRDING TOUR by Margaret Jones

Paul and I took a long-anticipated trip to Florida the first week of May and found it met all expectations and more. Our leaders, Davis Finch (an expert in birds and patience), Paul Sykes (a Fish & Wildlife biologist and the current top "lister" of North American birds with 735), Jon Dunn (a name many of you will recognize from his birding articles in The Western Tanager), and Steve Hilty (known as Mr. Columbi for his experise on the birds of that South American country), made our trip the delight it was. Even your ex-ed's "lifer" experience with seasickness on a rough trip back from the Tortugas (I did not make it to the rail!) didn't lessen by one jot my enjoyment. In a summary sent to all participants, Davis Finch gives a delightful picture of our tour which we would like to share with you.

"Like those of the past, this year's trip to the Dry Tortugas was a glimpse of another world: Fort Jefferson was the same changeless monstrosity of brick in arrested decay, unbelievable even when seen; Loggerhead Key with its blinding coral beaches and wispy breeze-tossed Casuarinas was again frequented by Yellow-billed Cuckoos with a haunted look, and Barn Swallows bravely facing a very uncertain future; Middle Key, which we edged up to closely, was, to our great delight, the afternoon and evening resort of five near-adult Masked Boobies, sitting flat-footed and ponderous on the sand among worn-out Herring Gulls and the freshest, pinkest Roseate Terns ever; and Channel Marker #3 off Garden Key, bless it, was a momentary perch for our one Brown Booby, a subadult that we approached to the middle range of binocular focus. Somnambulant and moribund Cattle Egrets marched the parade grounds in the fort, an Antillean Nighthawk flew low overhead at dusk calling "killy-kidik", and the next day the same or another was perched on a low branch, its strongly buffy underparts and warmly-toned dorsum suggestive of no race of Common Nighthawk; migrant or vagrant passerines there included a very gray (Newfoundland?) Veery and a Yellow-throated Warbler of the albilora race. Particularly striking to Tortugas vetera were the eight or more Turkey Vultures hanging in the same updrafts as the frigatebirds, or rocking along with them in overwater transit from Loggerhead Key, or putting up clouds of Sooty Terns and Noddies as they passed low over their colony on Bush Key. These birds were new to the islands this year.

"The day following our return from the Tortugas started with a dawn performance by a pair of Antillean Nighthawks at the Marathon airport. Later most of us (but not all, alas) got superb looks at Mangrove Cuckoos on Sugarloaf Key, the birds calling throughout the morning and occasionally appearing at the roadside, tawny-bellied and strongly masked, curvy-billed with yellow mandibles, wings like Black-billeds, tails like Yellow-billeds, and sounding like neither. Lots of White-crowned Pigeons, Gray Kingbirds, and Black-whiskered Vireos. May 6th we were again at sea off Islamorada: point-blank Audubon's Shearwaters with all their structural and behavioral singularities, and Sooty and Bridled Terns juxtaposed for the finest studies. Late afternoon in the Everglades we looked at four nest-loads of young Anhingas, still in the large "powder-puff" stage and endearing indeed.

"Our three final days in South Florida produced all its specialties: Wood Storks nesting at Corkscrew, Roseate Spoonbills galore in the Everglades, lots of Swallow-tailed Kites, 11 Everglade Kites along the Tamiami Trail, a dark-phase Short-tailed Hawk at Fisheating Creek, Caracaras, Sandhill Cranes, Limpkins, Forster's and Caspian Terns to bring the trip tern list to an even dozen, Smooth-billed Anis at several spots, Burrowing Owl, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers aplenty, Scrub Jays a nesting pair of Spotted-breasted Orioles, and more singing Bachman's Sparrows than we've ever recorded."

Our trip species total for the nine days was 174, and we enjoyed every one of them, our lifers and familiar friends alike. We found that going into new terrain with a birding tour was the way to go!

A "REALLY BIG" DAY IN JUNE (and some all-time Big Day comparisons by month)

by Noel Pettingell

Birding the Upper Texas Coast after the spring migration is a real letdown for avid listers. A total of only 156 species are expected to occur in June within the UTC area--the lowest for any single month. Even July has a higher annual list of species--163. This is in sharp contrast with May's total of 247 and April's 290--all but 21 of the entire UTC common-to-rare annual total of 311.

And then there's that other equally demoralizing factor that one must face when birding the UTC in June: hot and humid weather. On the day Ben Feltner and I birded Chambers and Galveston counties (June 1) the minimum temperature for Houston was 72 (Galveston 75), with a maximum of 89 (Galveston 84) and humidity ranging from 70% to 93%--and no wind until we reached the coast at 2:30 PM. Prior to then, the temperature-humidity index was probably at 80 or higher, meaning we were suffering "acute discomfort", according to the National Weather Service. We did, however, manage to escape the sweltering heat momentarily when traveling between primary birding areas in our air-conditioned car (during which times we would take turns asking each other "Whose crazy idea was this?").

A chronological account of our June 1st efforts to establish a new Texas/UTC Big Day record for the month follows....

Lake Charlotte Area (NW Chambers Co.) 5:40 to 8:25 AM

Essential forest species found here included Screech and Barred Owls, 5 species of woodpeckers including a bonus Flicker, Wood Thrush, Bluebird, 3 vireos, 7 warblers including Black-and-white (bonus), Prothonotary, Swainson's, Parula, Pine, Kentucky, and Chat, and both buntings. We also added such other "goodies" as Double-crested Cormorant (bonus), Anhinga, both Night Herons, White Ibis, Wood Duck, and Fish Crow (another bonus bird). We had identified 53 species during our first 2 3/4 hours--60 more and we would set a new one-day UTC record for a single party....

White Park/Rice Fields/Anahuac Refuge (Chambers Co.) 8:25 AM to 1 PM

We managed to lure a Hooded Warbler out of a thicket in White Park (near I-10 at Hwy. 61)--the only one seen that day and the only species added during 40 minutes of birding there.

Enroute to Anahuac Refuge we added Mottled Duck, Blue-winged Teal, both vultures, Marsh Hawk, and Dickcissel plus the following in rice field habitat: Ruddy Turnstone and 3 bonus sandpiper species: Pectoral, White-rumped, and Semipalmated.

Among the nine new species found at the refuge were Olivaceous Cormorant, Least Bittern, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, and Greater Yellowlegs(bonus).

We crossed the Highway 124 bridge into Galveston County with a total of 90 species--"only" 23 needed to break the record! ("Whose crazy idea was this, anyway?").

High Island and Bolivar Peninsula 1 to 4:30 PM

Although the woods at High Island were devoid of migrant lingerers we nevertheless added 11 species to our day's list along the nearby oil field roads, including Common Gallinule, 5 tern species, Barn Swallow, and Seaside Sparrow. At this point (2:30 PM) we had recorded a total of 101 species--and no Rock Dove as yet!

Enroute to the Bolivar Flats we added Pied-billed Grebe, White-faced Ibis, Black Skimmer, and Broad-winged Hawk (flushed out of the Johnson property woods where a Barn Owl usually roosts)--another bonus species and No. 105 for the day.

Bolivar Flats made it all worthwhile with its unexpected bonanza of 15 new species--7 more than we needed for the record, and all seen between 3:30 and 4:30 PM--with nightfall still 4 hours away! We would probably run out of possible new additions to our list on Galveston Island befor running out of daylight. Included among the 15 added at the flats were oystercatcher, Semipalmated and Piping Plovers; six more bonus shorebirds: Knot, Least and Western Sandpipers, Dunlin, Short-billed Do-

witcher, Marbled Godwit; Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, and Sandwich Tern.....

Galveston Island 5 to 8:30 PM

We added 3 species shortly after we left the ferry landing--all doves: Rock (finally!), White-winged, and Inca. West Galveston yielded only 2 new species: Gull-billed Tern (Anderson ways) and White-tailed Kite (3 immatures with 2 adults at Pirates Beach). Our last (126th) species was not only the best bonus bird of the Big Day but also my 7th most-wanted lifer--Glaucous Gull at the south jetty!

Summary--June 1, 1981 Big Day

Total species: 126 (Ben Feltner-126/Noel Pettingell-122)
New Texas/UTC Single-Team June Record
Car miles(Begin and end at 2811 Westgate, Houston): 265
Foot miles: 3 Ferry miles: 3.2
Party hours: 17 3/4 (4:40 AM - 10:25 PM, CDT)
Weather: partly cloudy with no wind inland, SE 5-15 mph along coast/
Temp. range: Houston 72-89/Galveston 75-84

Note: A total of 16 bonus (unexpected) species were recorded (of which 10 were shorebirds) whereas the following expected species were missed: Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Barn Owl, Horned Owl, Acadian Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Robin, and Blue Grosbeak.

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Previous UTC June Big Day One-party Records:

June 1, 1980 - 112 species by Stephen G. Williams and the writer along a 289-mile route from Houston to the Sheldon Reservoir area, Galena Park, Lynchburg Ferry, La Porte, Seabrook, League City, La Marque, Tiki I., Galveston I., W. Bolivar Peninsula, and back to Houston.

June 18, 1960 - 111 species by S. G. Williams and Paul Corneil along a 245-mile route from Houston to the Sheldon Reservoir area, Highlands Reservoir, Lynchburg Ferry, Miller Cutoff Rd., La Porte, Seabrook, Galveston I.(to San Luis Pass), and back to Houston (reaching Hermann Park before dark).

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126 or more species have been recorded in a day's birding within the 6-county UTC area by single parties during each month of the year. The following table compares UTC Big Day records with annual species totals for each month, as well as the all-time high North American (U.S. and Canada) Big Day records by month:

	Upper Texas Coast Big Day Record	UTC Species Common to Rare	All-time High North American Big Day Record	UTC Big Day vs. Mo./N.Am. Totals
Jan.	126 (1/2/66)	218	174(Cal.-1/27/79)	92/48
Feb.	147 (2/8/81)	218	175(Cal.-2/24/79)	71/28
March	174 (3/31/74)	262	178(Cal.-3/31/79)	88/4
April	193 (4/22/71)	290	231(Cal.-4/29/78)	97/38
May	181 (5/1/60)	247	206(Cal.-5/2/59)	66/25
June	126 (6/1/81)	156	172(Man.-6/2/79)	30/46
July	126 (7/31/72)	163	166(Cal.-7/14/73)	37/40
Aug.	134 (8/19/78)	198	167(Man.-8/9/80)	64/31
Sept.	153 (9/22/78)	231	171(Cal.-9/29/79)	78/18
Oct.	152 (10/13/79)	261	160(Cal.-10/31/79)	109/8
Nov.	136 (11/10/73)	240	169(Cal.-11/24/79)	104/33
Dec.	138 (12/8/79)	220	166(Cal.-12/11/76)	82/28

NOTES

* Second column includes species shown from common to rare one or more weeks in "A Birder's Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast", 6th edition, Jan. 1980.
Last column compares differences between 1st and 2nd/3rd columns.

* The table which appears in the April 1980 SPOONBILL, page 6, contains the following errors:

SPECIES TOTALS BY SEASON...ETC.

ALL FAMILIES

(II) Very rare (irregular visitants) change 29 to 30
Total common to very rare (I & II) " 340 " 341

COMMON TO RARE SPECIES TOTALS BY MONTH

Dec. change 219 to 220

* Acount of 200 or more species in one day by a single party could probably be achieved in late April along the June 1, 1981 Big Day route if a team of 4 highly-competent field observers undertook an all-out effort on the morning after a wet norther had passed through the area and if all essential nocturnal species were identified, as well as other staked-out specialties along the route.

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ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE - AND RECEIVE AND RECEIVE...

by Fae Humphrey

Some years back I said, "God, I want very much to go to Arizona to see all those hummingbirds. Since I'm not physically able, they'll have to come see me." The first seven species that showed up were appreciated and enjoyed but they didn't prepare me for the eighth.

Wednesday, June 3rd 1981 will forever be imprinted on my mind - the day of the Green Violet-Ear Hummingbird!! I was on the phone when it appeared, causing the person on the other end to think I'd flipped out. All day I tried to identify it. It was raining and dark and all I could find in Birds of North America to resemble it even slightly was a Rivoli's. For two days it was a Rivoli's.

Friday morning I decided maybe Margaret Anderson might like to see it. I called and she not only would like to see it but she put it on the Rare Bird Alert. It seemed pretty rare to me so I said O.K. Finally the sun came out and I saw "the bird" in all it's blue, violet, and green glory. It can't be a Rivoli's, but what? I borrowed a Mexican guide and there it was!

Saturday morning two van loads of people were standing in the ditch at the edge of my lawn. I invited the whole bunch in and they'd seen "the bird" - "it is a Green Violet-Ear." There's a rush for the telephone. "I need to call San Francisco." "I need to call Indianapolis. "I need to call -" Such excitement I've never been exposed to. By Saturday night 36 people had come and gone and so had the phone.

Sunday, I finally found a book suitable for a log of the visitors. There are people flying in from Oklahoma and Indiana. People are driving in from San Antonio, Austin and Junction in pouring rain. The police drove by about five times. They probably thought I was dealing in some of the better Columbian weed. Even better, a Mexican hummer!

The "700 Club" members began to arrive. Could anyone really have 700? Not just 700, but 724, 730 (he drove straight through from Denver), 711, 716,etc. One of them finally made 700 - he really needed to celebrate. It was 9:30 a.m. and all I had was cheap white wine in the refrigerator. He said it tasted like the best champagne. I tried more than once to get the phone company to fix my phone. "Lady, I've got to have a phone."

"What's the emergency?"

"I've got a rare bird and -" loud laughter." They'd have it fixed by Wednesday evening. I'd gotten more than 75 calls.

continued on page 15 ...

CLEARING HOUSE, June, 1981

The Clearing House is a monthly record of bird sightings made on the Upper Texas Coast. How to read the CH: Location--(how many) date, observers. Those common species which can be easily identified and are widely distributed in the UTC will also be listed, followed by the number of reports, with the lowest and highest number of individuals seen in parenthesis, i.e. (1-40). Noteworthy sightings will be underlined, capitalized, or both, according to their status. All sightings reported below must be accepted by the Checklist Committee. before being considered as valid records.

Grebe, Pied-billed: High Island--(1)1, B; Hale Ranch--(1)20, M
Pelican, White: Rollover Pass--(20)1, B; Chambers Co.--(2)2, D
Cormorant, Double-crested: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B
Cormorant, Olivaceous: 3 reports (2-10)
Anhinga: 7 reports (1-25)
Frigatebird, Magnificent: Bryan Beach--(1 fm)28, E; Mouth of Brazos--(7)3, TG
Heron, Great Blue: 15 reports (1-20)
Heron, Green: 11 reports (1-30)
Heron, Little Blue: 10 reports (1-200)
Egret, Cattle: 21 reports (1-18,000)
Egret, Reddish; Hale Ranch--(1)20...first for ranch, very rarely seen away from salt water; 6 other reports (1-20)
Egret, Great: 16 reports (4-100)
Egret, Snowy: 16 reports (2-30)
Heron, Louisiana: 12 reports (2-20)
Night Heron, Black-crowned: 7 reports (1-20)
Night Heron, Yellow-crowned: 10 reports (1-20)
Bittern, Least: 6 reports (1-6)
Stork, Wood: Anahuac NWR--(2)27, KW; Houston--(11)28, RS; Chambers Co.--(30)27, D; Hale Ranch--(11)20, M
IBIS,GLOSSY: Anahuac NWR--(1)27, KW...see notes
Ibis, White-faced: 12 reports (1-50)
Ibis, White: 8 reports (2-80)
Spoonbill, Roseate: W. Harris Co.--(1 on nest)20, M; 7 other reports (1-200)
Whistling Duck, Black-bellied: Hale Ranch--(30)20, M
Whistling Duck, Fulvous: Brazoria Co.--(1)6, WC; W. Harris Co.--(5)13 D; (3)2, TG; Danbury--(1)21, G; Hale Ranch--(1)27, L
Duck, Mottled: 13 reports (1-20)
Teal, Blue-winged: Anahuac NWR--(1)1, B; San Bernard NWR--(2)10, (12)19, TG
Scaup, Lesser: San Bernard NWR--(1)19, G
Duck, Wood: Lake Charlotte--(3)1, B; Edith Moore Sanct.--(1)15, HAS; Hale Ranch--(20)20, TG; Danbury--(1)21, G
Duck, Ruddy: Freeport--(1)28, E
Vulture, Turkey: 14 reports (1-25)
Vulture, Black: 11 reports (1-8)
Kite, White-tailed: 3 reports (1-5)
Kite, Mississippi: Spring Creek Park--(2)1, WC; River Oaks--(1)15, SW; Hale Ranch--(1)20, M; Richmond--(3)3, TG
Hawk, Red-tailed: Brazoria Co.-- (1)14, E; (1)21, TG; Richmond--(1 ad.)3, TG; Hale Ranch--(1 ad.)27, L
Hawk, Red-shouldered: 8 reports (1-12)
Hawk, Broad-winged: Bolivar--(1)1, B; Lake Jackson--(1 ad.)19, G
Hawk, Swainson's: Astrodome area--(1-2)all month, SW; Pasadena--(1)13, SW; Brazoria Co.--(1 ad.)21, G
Hawk, Marsh: Galveston--(1)1, B; Anahuac--(1)1, B; Houston--(1-2)all month, E; (1)25, TG; Pasadena--(1)13, SW; San Bernard NWR--(1 m.)10, N
Bobwhite: 9 reports (1-20)
Pheasant, Ring-necked: Anahuac--(1)20, D
Rail, King: 8 reports (1-5)
Rail, Clapper: 5 reports (1-9)
Rail, Black: San Bernard NWR--(1)3, TG
Gallinule, Purple: Anahuac--(1)1, B; (10)20, (7)27, D; Hale Ranch--(20)20, (15)27, TG; Danbury--(1)21, G
Gallinule,Common: 12 reports (1-30)
Coot, American: Freeport--(2 im.)28, E; 2 other reports (1-6)
Oystercatcher, American: Bolivar--(1)1, B
Plover, Semipalmated: Bolivar--(2)1, B; Freeport--(1)3,20,27, (18)21, TG
Plover, Piping: Bolivar--(1)1, B; Freeport--(1)3, TG
Plover, Wilson's: 8 reports (1-11)
Killdeer: 22 reports (1-50)

Turnstone, Ruddy: Bolivar--(26)1, B; Freeport--(3)3, (2)21, TG; Brazoria Co.--(10)20, G
Curlew, Long-billed: Bolivar--(2)1, B; Freeport--(1)28, E; (1)3, (6)20, TG Chambers Co.--(1)20, D
Willet: 4 reports (6-50)
Sandpiper, Spotted: San Bernard NWR--(1)10, N
SANDPIPER, SOLITARY: San Bernard NWR--(1)10, N...see notes
YELLOWLEGS, GREATER: Anahuac--(1)1, B; (1)20, D; Bolivar--(1)1, B; Galveston--(1)1, B; San Bernard NWR--(5)10, N...see notes
Yellowlegs, Lesser: San Bernard NWR--(14)10, N
Knot, Red: Bolivar--(2)1, B; Freeport--(4)3, TG
Sandpiper, Pectoral: Anahuac--(1)1, B
Sandpiper, White-rumped: Anahuac--(14)1, B; Mercury Dr.--(15)4, WC; Freeport--(6)3, TG
SANDPIPER, LEAST: Bolivar--(1)1, B...needs notes
Dunlin: Bolivar--(1)1, B
DOWITCHER, LONG-BILLED: San Bernard NWR--(1)10, N...see notes
dowitcher species: San Bernard NWR--(5)10, N
Sandpiper, Semipalmated: Bolivar--(10)1, B; Freeport--(1)21, TG
Sandpiper, Western: Bolivar--(4)1, B; Freeport--(3)21, G
Godwit, Marbled: Bolivar--(2)1, B
Sanderling: 5 reports (1-35)
Stilt, Black-necked: 13 reports (1-425)
JAEGAR SPECIES: Quintana Jetty--(1)20, G...see notes
Gull, Glaucous: South Jetties--(1)1, B
Gull, Herring: Bolivar--(1)1, B; Chambers Co.--(1)27, D; Freeport--(13)3, (8)21, TG; Brazoria Co.--(6)20, G
Gull, Ring-billed: Bolivar--(20)1, B; Freeport--(30)28, E; (13)3, (6)20, (8)21, G
Gull, Laughing: 14 reports (20-500)
Tern, Gull-billed: 5 reports (1-10)
Tern, Forster's: 8 reports (1-10)
Tern, Common: Bolivar--(10)1, B; Chambers Co.--(1)20, D; Freeport--(3)20,21, G; San Bernard NWR--(2)19, G
Tern, Least: 10 reports (1-100)
Tern, Royal: 9 reports (1-100)
Tern, Sandwich: 4 reports (1-5)
Tern, Caspian: 4 reports (1-12)
Tern, Black: San Bernard NWR--(700)19, G; 11 other reports (1-100)
Skimmer, Black: 8 reports (5-50)
Dove, Rock: 15 reports (5-60)
Dove, White-winged: Galveston--(1)1, B
Dove, Mourning: 19 reports (2-100)
Dove, Ringed turtle: Rosenberg--(1)27, L
Dove, Inca: 9 reports (1-30)
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed: 20 reports (1-25)
Owl, Barn: Manvel-- (1)25, KW; Houston--(2)3, LD; (1)17, RS; Chambers Co.--(1)27, D; San Bernard NWR--(1)3, TG; Hale Ranch--(2)27, L
Owl, Screech: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; Manvel--(2)27, KW
Owl, Great Horned: N. Houston--(1)20, E; Hale Ranch--(2)20, M; San Bernard NWR--(1)3, 10, TG
Owl, Barred: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; Hale Ranch--(2)19, (3)20, (15)27, TG
Nighthawk, Common: 19 reports (1-30)
Swift, Chimney: 16 reports (1-30)
VIOLETEAR, GREEN: Lake Jackson--(1)1-19, Faye Humphrey...see notes
Hummingbird, Rubythroated: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; Lake Jackson--(3-4)all month, FH; Hale Ranch--(10)20, M; (1)27, L; Danbury--(1)21 G
Kingfisher, Belted: Danbury--(1)21, G
Flicker, Common (Yellow-shafted): Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; White Oak Bayou--(1)all month, WC
Woodpecker, Pileated: 8 reports (1-8)
Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 12 reports (1-20)
Woodpecker, Red-headed: Chambers Co.-- (6)1, B; (1)1, D; Double Bayou Park--(12)27, KW; Lake Houston--(5)16, WC
Woodpecker, Hairy: Wycliffe Rd.--(1)14, TG
Woodpecker, Downy: 13 reports (1-20)
Kingbird, Eastern: 16 reports (1-40)
Kingbird, Western: W. Harris Co.--(1)17, TG
Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: 19 reports (2-30)
Flycatcher, Great Crested: 12 reports (1-15)
Flycatcher, Acadian: Deussen Park--(1)16, WC; Hale Ranch--(10)20, (8)27, M, G; Bear Creek Park--(1) 2, TG; Brazoria Co.--(1)3, TG
Pewee, Eastern: Lake Charlotte--(2)1, B; Edith Moore Sanct.--(1)2,21, HAS; Deussen Park--(1)16, WC
Lark, Horned: Chambers Co.--(2)20, D; Freeport--(1)3, TG

SWALLOW,TREE: Brazoria Co.--(2)14, E; Anahuac NWR--(1)27, KW; W. Harris Co.--(2)13, D...all need notes; Spring Branch--(1)13, L...see notes
Swallow, Rough-winged: Brazos River--(1)3, TG
Swallow, Barn: High Island--(8)1, B;Pasadena--(6)4, SW; Airport--(2)18, WC; Manvel--(10)all month, KW; Anahuac NWR--(5)27, KW; W. Harris Co.--(1)2, TG
Swallow Cliff: Oyster Creek--(15)20, M
Martin, Purple: 18 reports (2-200)
Jay, Blue: 19 reports (1-20)
Crow, Common: 18 reports (2-50)
Crow, Fish: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B
Chickadee, Carolina: 18 reports (1-45)
Titmouse, Tufted: 12 reports (1-50)
Wren, Carolina: 14 reports (1-20)
Wren, Marsh: Danbury--(5)21, G
Mockingbird, Northern: 23 reports (1-119)
Thrush, Wood: 4 reports (1-2)
Bluebird, Eastern: Lake Charlotte--(2)1, B; Brazoria Co.--(4)14, E; (1)21, G; Lake Houston--(5)16, WC; Freeport--(2)3, TG
Shrike, Loggerhead: 20 reports (1-69)
Starling: 13 reports (2-200)
Vireo, White-eyed: 9 reports (1-25)
Vireo, Yellow-throated: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; Hale Ranch--(1)20, M
Vireo, Red-eyed: White Park--(2)1, B; W. Harris Co.-- (3)13, D; Hale Ranch--(1)20, 27, M, L; Fort Bend Co.--(1)3, TG; Brazoria Co.--(4)3, TG
Warbler, Black-and-white: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B
Warbler, Prothonotary: Lake Charlotte--(2)1, B; Hale Ranch--(15)20, M; (8)27, G
Warbler, Swainson's: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; W. Harris Co.--(3)13, D Hale Ranch--(1)20, M
Parula, Northern: 7 reports (1-40)
Warbler, Pine: 2 reports (4)
Warbler, Kentucky: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; White Park--(1)1, B Lake Houston--(1)16, WC
Yellowthroat, Common: 6 reports (1-10)
Chat, Yellow-breasted: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; Danbury--(2)21, G
Warbler, Hooded: White Park--(1)1, B; W. Harris Co.-- (3)13, D; Hale Ranch--(1)20, M
Redstart, American: Hale Ranch--(3 singing males)20, M; (1m., 1f.)27, L
Sparrow, House: 19 reports (1-165)
Meadowlark, Eastern: 19 reports (2-231)
Blackbird, Red-winged: 17 reports (2-300)
Oriole, Orchard: 6 reports (1-6)
Grackle, Boat-tailed: 9 reports (1-100)
Grackle, Great-tailed: 16 reports (5-200)
Grackle, Common: 18 reports (2-124)
Cowbird, Brown-headed: 14 reports (1-15)
Cowbird, Bronzed: San Bernard NWR--(2m., 1f.)10, N; (2m.)19, G
Tanager, Summer: 6 reports (1-2)
Cardinal: 20 reports (1-57)
Grosbeak, Blue: Brazoria Co.--(1)6, WC
Bunting, Indigo: Lake Charlotte--(1)1, B; Hale Ranch--(4)20, M; (6)27, L; San Bernard NWR--(1)11, N; Danbury--(1)21, G
Bunting, Painted: 9 reports)1-50)
Dickcissel: 9 reports (2-100)
Sparrow, Seaside: 4 reports (1-10)

Clearing House Contributors, June, 1981: B-Ben Feltner, Noel Pettingell; D-Don and Lee Richardson, Gill and Linda Douglas; E-Ena Spaulding, John Bargman; FH- Faye Humphrey; G-Tony Gallucci, Kelly Bryan ; HAS-Houston Audubon Society; KW-Kris Wilson; L-Tony Gallucci, Randy Pinkston; LD-Laurence Duhon; M-Jim Morgan, Tony Gallucci, Kelly Bryan; N-Tony Gallucci, Doug Slack; RS-Robert Sylvester, Jr.; SW-Steve Williamson; TG-Tony Gallucci; WC-Wesley Cureton

Field notes, June, 1981:

GLOSSY IBIS: Observed June 27 at Anahuac Nat'l Wildlife Refuge by a party of three. Light was good. Seen at a distance of approximately 20-25 feet with 8X30 binoculars. Observed alone for approximately 15 minutes. Immediately noticed that it did not exactly look like a White-faced Ibis, which all had seen before, including one in brilliant breeding plumage seen about five minutes before this Ibis. Following fieldmarks were noted: No white on face- such as a Glossy would appear, but non-breeding and immature White-faced appear this way also; Dark eye- the eye was hard to distinguish,

as it faded into the face. White-faced has a red eye; Dark gray skin on face and legs- White-faced has reddish or pinkish face and legs. It did not have much iridescence, except for a little pinkish on the wings, thus appearing to be an immature bird. All of these fieldmarks led us to conclude that it was an immature Glossy Ibis.

--Kris Wilson

SOLITARY SANDPIPER: San Bernard Nat'l Wildlife Refuge on June 10. Medium-sized shorebird with rather long-legged appearance. In spring plumage: olive brown above with white flecking throughout, white below with fine gray barring on flanks. Legs black, bell black, short and stout. Rump with dark central bar and barring on edges, pattern extending onto tail. Wings without stripe. Face dark with spectacled look. No voice heard. Seen at a distance of 20-200 meters with 7X35 binoculars and 15-40X Balscope in generally good light (overcast) and watched at leisure.

--Tony Gallucci
&
R. Douglas Slack

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: No previous record on June 1. Large tringa sandpipers with upturned bills, Bright chrome-yellow legs, and heavily barred summer plumage. Seen with 8X40 binoculars by both observers at distances down to 30 feet. Call notes of two of three individuals closely heard--whew whew whew.

--Noel Pettingell
&
Ben Feltner

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: Sam Bernard Nat'l Wildlife Refuge on June 10. Five birds, immediately comparable to lesser yellowlegs, solitary sandpiper, and dowitchers. Large in comparison to these species. Long- and stout-billed, giving quite different head profile from that of lesser or solitary. Very mottled bird all over, ranging from dark on light below to light on dark above. Dark unstriped wings. Pure white rump. Tail light, faintly but noticeably barred with gray. Legs long, yellow. Voice loud, TOO-TOO-TOO, TOO-TOO-TOO, and easily distinguished from weaker shorter notes of the lessers. Seen at 20-200 meters with 7X35 binoculars and 15-40X Balscope in generally good light (overcast) and watched at leisure.

--Tony Gallucci
&
R. Douglas Slack

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: actually six dowitchers present, but only one was in summer plumage, and no vocals were issued. Dark, long-billed, short-legged bird at distance and in comparison to yellowlegs. Dark-capped bird with noticeable white eyestripe. Wings and back dark. At rest the back streaked with white. Throat, chest, belly very rusty, fading to crissum--light rusty in this bird. Some rust distinguishable on upper tail coverts where they curl over the upper surfaces of the tail. Tail thinly banded black on white. Rump and lower back white. Sides and flanks to crissum streaked and barred with black. Spots of black present, but intermingled with barring. Eliminated short-billed because of richness and extent of rusty on belly and crissum and strength of barring on upper sides and flanks. Although I have handled no longbills this spring, I have handled three highly plumaged shortbills, none of which approached the color of this bird. Seen at 20-200 meters with 7X35 binoculars and 15-40X Balscope in generally good light (overcast) and watched at leisure. --Tony Gallucci
&
R. Douglas Slack

JAEGAR SPECIES: one bird seen off and on 7:20-8:45 PM, June 20, 1981, at Quintana jetty, Brazoria Co. at 30-75 feet, with 7X35 and 8X40 binoculars and 25X scope. Six photos taken at 30 ft. with 500 mm. lens. First seen standing in driftwood and trash at base of jetty feeding on dead gafftop catfish. Several times flew and returned to the same spot. Spread its wings and hopped in the air when a laughing gull came near, and again when a willet tried to close in. Was feeding on dead hammerhead shark when we left. The flight was always straight and direct. The wing-beats were ternlike. The bird occasionally appeared to be wafted on the wind. Standing, the bird was quite gull-like except that the head looked grotesquely small for the body size. The body was noticeably triangular in shape--heavy chest area attenuating to the thin tail area. The head was very flat-fronted and peaked at the rear. The bill was rather like a laughing gull's in comparison to the head, thinner at the base, yet

bulbous, and obviously hooked at the tip. The tip was dark becoming lighter; the bill was horn-colored at the base. Contrary to any field guide (and to Jim Morgan's experience in the field), this bird had a dishwater white head. There was a duskiness about the rear of the crown, but absolutely no hint of a crown. There were light dusky patterns about the face. From the rear there appeared to be a darker ear patch a la Bonaparte's Gull, but these patterns were probably a function of light angles. Directly in front of the eye was a small, quite dark crescent, but with no lightness between the crescent and the eye. The iris was very dark, and the pupil was different enogh to be seen in the iris. The neck was unmarked white except that the chocolate brown mantle extended well up on it. The mantle and upper wings were unmarked chocolate brown, except that the feathers of the back proper had whitish shafts showing as light white thin streaks very sparsely distributed over the back. The rump was light in color, though never well seen. The upper tail coverts at rest showed a very light base, the outer two-thirds forming three very dark wide bands. The crissum, belly, and chest were the same dirty white as the rest of the bird. A distinct light brown, unmottled breastband contrasted with a dirty white chin. Sides were heavily barred in chocolate brown. The chocolate brown flight feathers were unmarked above and below. There were no noticeable windows at the base of the primaries. The outer two primaries were almost completely white, probably because of being so worn. All the other primaries were newly grown and chocolate brown in color. The underwing was checkered with brown and light. There was a chocolate brown axillar area which graded into the barring of the sides. The central retrices did not extend beyond the outer ones, but did come to a noticeable point. They were lighter in color, and distinctly worn in comparison with the outer retrices. The outers were more chocolate brown, except that the outer two tail feathers on the right were white at the base and the outer two left feathers were mangled and mostly missing. The legs above the ankle joint were black on the outside and bluish on the inside. The joints themselves, and down to the toes, were bluish-gray, in some lights appearing sky blue. The toes and palmations were black. In flight it seemed slightly smaller than laughing gulls, and standing, it was comparable in body size to a willet.

On June 21 at daybreak, the bird was seen again by Faye Humphrey, Roberta Crabtree, Ann Atkins, and Shirley Wright, who saw a crook in the wings and described it as ternlike.

Based on conversations with Jim Morgan and Ben Feltner, both of whom have considerable jaegar experience, and on notes from several experts from the East and West Coasts and on the available literature, we feel the bird most closely resembles a pomarine jaegar. There are some very noteworthy inconsistencies, however, and parasitic is a good second possibility, and long-tailed should not be ruled out altogether. Using the key in Blake's Manual of Neotropical Birds, we could eliminate long-tailed. Our photos show the nasal saddle of the Quintana bird to be about two-thirds of the length of the bill. It should only be $\frac{1}{2}$ of the bill length in a long-tailed.

--Tony Gallucci & Kelly Bryan

Summary of occurrences of green violetear in Texas: usually at feeders. No known breeding. At least four records have been associated with feeding swarms of rubythroated hummingbirds.

Hidalgo Co.....July 11-28,1961
Cameron Co.....April14,1964
Travis Co.....Aug.25-sept.18,1969
Kleburg Co.....May 24,1973
Hays Co.....Summer,1975
Hays Co.....May21-July 6,1976
Travis Co.....May12-June 9,1977
Hidalgo Co....Fall, 1980
Brazoria Co...May 26-June 19,1981

--Tony Gallucci

TREE SWALLOW: Spring Branch 13 June, 1981 Seen briefly over Spring woods High School. Bird was in strong purposeful flight but still showed some characteristic fluttering moves typical of the smaller swallows. The bird appeared first like a Barn Swallow, because of its flight habit. Looks with binoculars revealed a small, dark-backed, dark-tailed swallow, with immaculate white underparts--no trace of dark on the throat, belly, crissum, breast, or sides. This very clean, sharply delineated appearance is characteristic of only two North American species in any plumage--the Tree Swallow and the Violet-green Swallow. The Violet-green can be eliminated on the basis of lack of the white patches found on either side of the rump. These patches were lacking in the bird we saw. This also is the least likely UTC species in any season. Distance not less than 75 meters with 7X35 and 10X50 binoculars (Bushnell) in fair light.

page 15 continued from page 9 ...

My husband, Wade, is standing at the kitchen cabinet eating supper. "I wish the bird would leave", he says.

By Sunday the 14th, my phone is fixed - there's a call from Seattle. "We've been on Altu, Aleutian Islands and got two pieces of outside information - your hummer and a Black-capped Gnatcatcher in Arizona. We're flying to Tucson today to get it first and we will see you in the morning." No way, man, no way you can do that - they do it. They saw the bird, took a nap on the floor, saw it again and left.

On Friday June 19th a friend of mine, Roberta, from Little Rock sees the bird feed at 6:20 a.m. There are people from Florida, Terrell and Dallas due in. One hour, 2 hours, 3 hours pass and no bird. Friday night he was gone (there was a possible sighting at 3:20 p.m. but he wasn't feeding). He didn't even tell me goodbye.

On Saturday the 20th he made no show. My eyes were shot and my nerves on edge. Tony Gallucci calls with a report of a possible Long-tailed Jaeger at Quintana jetty!! Two rare birds, one Mexican and one Arctic in two weeks - unreal. It had been the most exhilarating experience I've had in my birding activities, seeing and visiting with beautiful people I had only heard of and never expected to meet.

- -

Special thanks should go to three typists who have helped me out with the last three issues: Barbara Darr in May, Mary Bourgeois in June, and Kris Wilson in July. Each of them contributed much of their time and did a terrific job. -Ed.

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