1955 SPRING BIRD ROUNDUP - UPPER GULF COAST AREA OF TEXAS

Published by the Ornithology Group, Outdoor Nature Club, Houston, Texas

DATE OF ROUNDUP	May 1, 1955
TOTAL SPECIES RECORDED	215 (including Rock Dove)
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	46 observers in 13 parties.
APPROX. AREA COVERED	Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Ft. Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery, San Jacinto, and Wharton Counties. (N - Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, San Jacinto Co.; S - Freeport, Brazoria Co.; E - High Island, Chambers Co.; W - Eagle Lake, Colorado Co., approx. 120X120 miles.)
HOURS OF OBSERVATION	12 Midnight to 11:30 P.M. 131 "man-hours."
TOTAL MILEAGE	1,257-1/4 (1,168-1/2 by auto; 48-3/4 on foot; 40 by boat)
WEATHER	Mostly clear and warm; 60-91°F.; no wind.

SUMMARY: Weather and fewer observers this year were the two factors responsible for the relatively low count. A wet cold front just prior to the Big Day would have been ideal inasmuch as it would have "grounded" migrants which ordinarily pass over our area "non-stop." Although the weather last year was decidedly worse, the fact that there were 12 more observers in 8 more parties than there were this year accounted for the 16-species difference in the two counts (same number of warblers in both counts, however, i.e., 26). Some 21 species were seen this year which were missed last year, while some 37 species were seen last year and missed this year—including the relatively common Mallard, Sedge Wren, and Scarlet Tanager. Forty-five species were recorded by one party only, as compared to 42 last year. Total species recorded on all 3 counts, 1953, 1954, and 1955: 268 (incl. Rock Dove). The following species were recorded this year but missed in 1954 and 1953: Miss. Kite, Sparrow Hawk (parties #4 and 11), Rose-throated Becard (!!—positively identified by Steve Williams and Lawrence Tabony who were both familiar with the bird in Mexico), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Bell's Vireo (first record for Little Thicket Sanctuary), Solitary Vireo, Swainson's Warbler (parties #1, 4, and 11), Wilson's Warbler, Goldfinch, Grasshopper Sparrow (parties #1 and 2), and Field Sparrow.

SUMMARY OF 1953, 1954, 1955 ROUNDUPS

Date	Species (incl. Rock Dove)	Rank in U.S.	Area	No. Counties	Observers & Parties	Best Party Total	Total Party Miles		
							Car	Foot	Boat
Apr.26 1953	222	3rd.	85mi. X 70mi.	3	42-8	161	-	-	-
May 2 1954	231	1st.	110mi. X 100mi.	9	58-21	148	1,521	61 1/4	7
May 1 1955	215		120mi. X 120mi.	9	46-13	163	1,168 1/2	48 3/4	40

MAY 1

SPECIES RECORDED ON 1955 UPPER GULF COAST SPRING BIRD ROUNDUP

#Birds not seen on 1954 Roundup. (Total: 21 species)
*Birds not included in printed Check-list of our area. (3)
(-)Exclusive species; party number in parentheses. (Total 45)
Unusual species are underlined.

Pied-billed Grebe
White Pelican
Brown Pelican
Olivaceous Cormorant
Double-cr. Cormorant
Anhinga
Frigate-bird (1)
Great Blue Heron
Common Egret
Snowy Egret
Reddish Egret
Tricolored Heron
Little Blue Heron
Green Heron
Bl.-cr. Night Heron
Yel.-cr.Night Heron
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Glossy Ibis (7)
White-faced Ibis
White Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Fulvous Tree Duck
Mottled Duck
Gadwall
Baldpate
Pintail
Blue-winged Teal
Shoveler
Wood Duck
Redhead (6)
Canvasback (8)
Lesser Scaup
Ruddy Duck
Turkey Vulture
Black Vulture
Miss. Kite (6)
Cooper's Hawk (6)
Red-tailed Hawk (3)
Red-shouldered Hawk
Marsh Hawk
Osprey (5)
Caracara
Sparrow Hawk
Bobwhite
King Rail
Clapper Rail
Sora
Purple Gallinule (6)
Common Gallinule
American Coot
Piping Plover
Ringed Plover
Thick-b. Plover (7)
Mountain Plover (9)
Killdeer
Am. Golden Plover
Black-bellied Plover
Ruddy Turnstone
Common Snipe (9)
Long-b. Curlew
Hudsonian Curlew
Upland Plover
Spotted Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Willet
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Knot (7)
Pectoral Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper (1)
Least Sandpiper
Dunlin
Dowitcher
Stilt Sandpiper
Semipalm. Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
#Buff-br. Sandpiper
Sanderling
#Avocet (1)
Black-necked Stilt
Herring Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Laughing Gull
Gull-billed Tern
Forster's Tern
Common Tern
Least Tern
Royal Tern
Caspian Tern
Black Tern
Black Skimmer
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
*Inca Dove
Yel-b. Cuckoo
Bl.-b. Cuckoo
Roadrunner (4)
#Barn Owl (1)
Screech Owl (9)
Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Chuck-will's-widow
Common Nighthawk
Chimney Swift
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Yel.-shafted Flicker (1)
Pileated Woodpecker
Red-bel. Woodpecker
Red-headed Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker (4)
Downy Woodpecker
Red-cockaded Woodp'r.(4)
*#Rose-throated Becard (9)
Eastern Kingbird
Scissor-t. Flycatcher
Gt. Crested Flycatcher
#Yellow-b. Flycatcher (3)
Acadian Flycatcher
Eastern Wood Pewee
Vermilion Flycatcher (9)
Horned Lark
Tree Swallow
Bank Swallow
Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Purple Martin
Blue Jay
Common Crow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-br. Nuthatch
#Red-br. Nuthatch (10)
Br.-headed Nuthatch
House Wren
Carolina Wren
Marsh Wren
Mockingbird
Catbird
Brown Thrasher
Robin
Wood Thrush
#Hermit Thrush (5)
Swainson's Thrush
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Veery
Common Bluebird
Blue-gr. Gnatcatcher
Water Pipit (1)
Cedar Waxwing
Loggerhead Shrike
White-eyed Vireo
#Bell's Vireo (4)
Yellow-thr. Vireo (4)
#Solitary Vireo (3)
Red-eyed Vireo
Bl.-and-Wh. Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler (1)
#Swainson's Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler
Blue-winged Warbler (1)
Tennessee Warbler
Parula Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Bl.-thr. Green Warbler
#Cerulean (4)
Blackburnian Warbler (11
Yellow-thr. Warbler
Chestnut-s. Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Pine Warbler
Ovenbird
Small-b. Waterthrush
La. Waterthrush (1)
Kentucky Warbler
Yellowthroat
Yellow-br. Chat
Hooded Warbler
#Wilson's Warbler (1)
Canada Warbler
American Redstart
House Sparrow
Common Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark (13)
Redwing
*#Yel.-headed Blackbird (6
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
Brewer's Blackbird
Boat-tailed Grackle
Bronzed Grackle
Common Cowbird
Summer Tanager
Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Painted Bunting
Dickcissel
#Goldfinch (4)
#Eastern Towhee (1)
Savannah Sparrow
#Grasshopper Sparrow
Seaside Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Pine-woods Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow (4)
#Field Sparrow (4)
White-thr. Sparrow (1)
Lincoln's Sparrow (1)
#Swamp Sparrow
#Song Sparrow (7)

PARTICIPANTS IN 1955 ROUND-UP

Note: Leader of Party is underlined.
* Also participated in 1954 Round-up.

Party		Total Species	Exclusive Species
1	*Nance Cunningham *Don Melstrom George Palmer *Noel Pettingell Edwin I. Stearns *Josiephine Wilkin Ernest B. Wright *Armand Yramategui	163	13
2	*Mrs. William B. Brooks Sally Brooks David Graham Mrs. J. G. Little Jimmy Little	56	
3	*Arlie K. McKay	106	3
4	*Joe M. Heiser, Jr.	37	9
5	Alice Filkins Sue Harris Lloyd Lambert *Edna Miner James Murray	109	2
6	*Jerry Baker *Darris Massingill Ruth Moorman *Norma Oates *Leota Stilwell	79	5
7	* Bob Binhammer *Dr. Charles E. Hall *John Hildebrand Lloyd F. Sanborn	104	4
8	Carl Aiken *Vic Emanuel Maurine Jarrell	73	1
9	*Lawrence Tabony *Steve Williams	137	5
10	Henry V. Aldrich Marguerite D. Aldrich	14	1
11	*Mrs. J. L. Hooks Mr. H. B. Lindsay *Mrs. H. B. Lindsay Mr. B. D. Orgain Mrs. B. D. Orgain Mrs. F. H. Seewald Dr. S. T. Wier *Mrs. S. T. Wier	66	1
12	Charlotte Reindl	15	
13	Leonard McWhirter		1

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Supplement to June, 1955 SPOONBILL

Noel Perley (Pettingell), Compiler
1814 Berry St.
Houston 4, Texas

Washington. He emphasizes that it is a question of everlastingly carrying on education and calling public attention to the ridiculousness of shooting these valuable birds for the minute amount of meat they yield. Actually they are shot because they are living targets, and for the fun of it. For those who would like to help, Mr. Atherton will supply, for a dime, two car-window stickers carrying a message "Stop Dove Hunts!" and ten labels for stationery entitled "Facts about the Mourning Dove." This last presents the following facts: "Smaller than a domestic pigeon. Meat 3 ounces. Sacred emblem of peace and life after death. Eats up to 10,000 weed-grass seeds daily. Total hunting season over four months. The only game bird shot while still brooding its (two) young in the nest. Often shot from wires by boys as a target. Estimate 5 cripples for each kill recovered. Hunters increasing 10% a year. Doves losing. Nests often destroyed by wind or predators.

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NEW CHECK LIST OF UPPER GULF COAST BIRDS - (Noel Perley) PETTINGILL

We are proud to announce publication of a brand new up-to-date revised check-list of the Birds of the Upper Gulf Coast of Texas! Although research was begun on this check-list even while the September 1952, first edition was being printed, we can never hope to produce a list that will accurately reflect the status of the birdlife in this part of the State at any given moment of the year - mainly because of these three factors:- (1) inconsistent habits of birds in general, (2) environmental changes - both man-made and geological, and (3) climatic cycles.

We are all familiar with the various changes in topography brought about by civilization (cultivation of land, growth of cities, artificial lakes created by dams, etc), but we must also bear in mind that there are natural forces at work which have been altering the face of the land on a far greater scale. The effects that these natural changes are having on our birdlife here in East Texas is graphically illustrated by comparing the Outdoor NatureClub's Little Thicket Sanctuary in San Jacinto County with the Houston area, some 50 miles nearer the coast. So it is that both natural and artificial forces are constantly bringing about changes in the distributional pattern of birdlife - which in turn has the effect of rendering any regional check-list of birds out-of-date after a few years have elapsed.

But there is one other factor which vitally affects the accuracy of any check-list showing the relative abundance of birds for a certain region throughout the year, and that is the combined opinions of the compilers as regards the status of each species on the list. Much compromising is necessary where existing data and/or personal experience and opinion is in conflict. And so the check-list as it now stands represents an index to the birds of T.O.S. Region #8 in as simplified yet complete and accurate a form as it is possible to attain under existing circumstances

All who will be using the check-list will probably be interested in the following supplementary information:-

I. Area Covered: Texas Ornithological Society Region #8 consisting of fifteen coastal prairie counties, extending from the Louisiana border (Orange and Jefferson Counties) southward through Victoria and Calhoun Counties.

II. Listing System: Strictly alphabetical by generally-accepted common name in order to enable all birders to locate and record species quickly and easily. Multiple names are listed as follows: HERON, Night, Bl. cr. The only exceptions to the rule are as follows:-

WHIMBREL (formerly Hudsonian Curlew) listed under "CURLEW"
DUCKS all listed under "DUCK" except Mergansers, Scoters and Teals.
DUNLIN (formerly red-breasted sandpiper) listed under "SANDPIPER".
WARBLERS all listed under "WARBLER" except Waterthrushes.

III. Status:

A) Resident - Any bird which consistently remains in a specific locality during a period of at least 6 consecutive months (See also D) Notes)

B) Visitant - Any bird which strays into a specific locality temporarily (less than 6 consecutive months) and usually without year-to-year consistency (hence 5, 6, or 7 on the scale of relative abundance)

C) Migrant - Any bird which moves through the check-list area on a migratory journey, regardless of season.

D) Note 1 - Summer and winter residents/visitants are automatically considered migrants, e.g., "2SR" indicates common summer resident and migrant; while "2M3SR" indicates common migrant, fairly common summer resident.

Note 2 - Extremely early or late migrating summer or winter residents (e.g. Martins in Jan., Nighthawks in Dec., or Least Sandpipers in July)

are not considered summer and winter residents/visitants (i.e. the calendar is not always the authority for determining seasonal status of certain species as a whole)

Note 3 - Summer Residents are birds which breed in the check-list area or consistently remain in a specific locality six consecutive months or more, including June, July and August.

Note 4 - Winter Residents are birds which consistently remain in a specific locality six months or more, including some portion of Jan. but not later than June (except permanent residents)

Note 5 - "R" without "S" or "W" indicates a non-migratory bird consistently found in a specific locality with the same relative abundance the year round.

IV. Accidentals Omitted from Check-list

(Note: Those listed here are "possible but highly improbable", while those listed in check-list are considered "possible with some degree of probability")

Ani, Smooth-billed (7V)	Limpkin (7V) NIGHTHAWK, TEX. (V)	Sparrow, Tree (7WV)
Becard, Rose-throated (7V)	Oriole, Bullock's (7V)	Swallow, Violet-green (7M)
Chickadee, Black-capped (7WR)	Owl, Saw-whet (7WV)	Swan, Trumpeter (7V)
Cowbird, Bronzed (7WR)	Pigeon, White-cr. (7V)	Swan, Whistling (7V)
Curlew, Eskimo (7M)	Raven, American (7WV)	Swift, Black (7V)
Flamingo (7V)	Redstart, Painted (7V)	Tern, Roseate (7V)
Heron, Great White (7V)	Sandpiper, Curlew (7V)	Thrush, Varied (7V)
Hummingbird, Buff-bellied (7V)	Sandpiper, Purple (7WV)	Warbler, Bachman's (7M)
Jaeger, Pomarine (7WV)	Sparrow, Brewer's (7WV)	Waxwing, Bohemian (7WV)
Kingbird, Cassin's (7V)	Sparrow, Rufous-cr. (7V)	Wigeon, European (7V)

This second edition of the field check-list of the Birds of the Upper Gulf Coast Area of Texas is sponsored by the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston and may be obtained from Miss Leota Stilwell, 3009 Rice Blvd., Houston 5, Texas, at 5¢ each or 25 for $1.00.

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THE HOUSTON CHRISTMAS COUNT

Bigger and Bigger! -- (Noel Perley)

Last January 2nd, some 40 sharp-eyed observers made Christmas Count history in Texas by running up a record-breaking list of species (146) for the 3rd year in succession! But even though this feat stands unequaled in the entire 51-year history of the count in Texas, the birders of Houston are out to better their own all-time record for the fourth time in a row this December 31st. (For further information on the forthcoming bird census - see page 1 of this issue)

However, Houston's Christmas-counters have been setting State records ever since their first census back in 1914 when their list of 39 species was No. 1 in Texas. Houston was first again in 1924 (43 species), 1943 (78), and 1944 (84). Some 20 or more Texas localities have participated in the Count during each of the last three winters -- with Houston finishing second only to Laguna Atascosa Refuge (in the Valley) from the standpoint of total species. Only two areas in all of Texas have ever reported bigger lists than Houston's 146 - Laguna Atascosa and Harlingen - both in the lower Rio Grande Valley. With regard to number of observers, Houston has held first place in that category since 1950.

State records aren't the only ones held by Houston, however, for a look at the latest census figures shows that out of a total of 516 reports from all over the U.S., the Houston group counted more individual birds of the following species than any other area: - gadwall, sharp-shinned hawk, western sandpiper, pileated woodpecker, eastern phoebe, gray-cheeked thrush (only bird of this species reported in the whole U.S.), pine warbler (2nd year in a row), Louisiana waterthrush (tied with Great Smokies, Tenn.), orchard oriole (only bird reported in whole U.S.)

The Houston group has also been turning in some of the Nation's top counts for total species in recent years. In 1951 Houston's 123 was 8th in the U.S. while in 1952 only five localities exceeded Houston's list of 139 species - a national ranking never before attained in all the 19-count history of the census at the site of the Bayou City. In 1953 it was 143 species - 7th place, and last year 146 species - 10th in the Nation. And just 6 years ago (1948) Harlingen ran up the same total - 146 - and won top honors in the U.S., even though this figure had already been exceeded as early as 1933. As of the latest count, only 11 areas in the whole country - since 1900 - have turned in lists exceeding Houston's 146. It is interesting to note, too, that the total species recorded on the last four Houston counts is 176 - one over the present national record set by San Diego last year, while some 207 species have been recorded since the first census was taken in Houston some 40 years ago.

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HISTORY OF RECORD U.S. CHRISTMAS COUNTS

On December 26, 1954, 43 observers in 21 parties set an all-time national record of 175 species of birds - three more than had ever been recorded in the 55-year history of Audubon Christmas Counts. Site of this record-breaking list was the San Diego, California area, whose 1953 total was a relatively unimpressive 124 species. Although San Diego had never held the all-time U.S. record prior to 1954, it did produce the bigest list in the nation for 1922, 1923, 1925, 1927 and 1928.

Thus the U.S. Record shifts from Texas (Harlingen) back to California. A complete history of the 19 record U.S. counts follows:

No.	Species	Years	Locality	Years Held
1	24	1900	Moorestown, New Jersey	1
2	36	1901	Pacific Grove, California	1
3	38	1902	Woods Hole, Mass.	1
4	44	1903-1904	Knickerbocker, Texas	2
5	46	1905-1906	Gardiners I., New York	2
6	50	1907	Orient Pt., L.I., New York	1
7	56	1908-1909	Gardiners I., New York	2
8	76*	1910	Santa Barbara, California	1
9	100*	1911	" " "	1
10	103*	1912-1913	" " "	2
11	108*	1914	" " "	1
12	121	1915-1929	Los Angeles, California	15
13	129*	1930	Santa Barbara, California	1
14	140*	1931	" " "	1
15	142	1932	Palm Beach, Florida	1
16	156	1933	Santa Monica, California	1
17	166	1934-1949	" " "	16
18	172	1950-1953	Harlingen, Texas	4
19	175	1954	San Diego, California	1

*Including additional subspecies.

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MEMBERS

The following persons are now registered in the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club, bringing the membership total up to 78:

Mrs. H. J. Longenbaugh, Cypress, Texas (new member)
Mrs. Nettie Barnes, 3032 Jarrard, Houston 5, Texas
Miss Nona J. Brand, 1937 Swift, Houston 25, Texas
Mrs. Theo Thompson, 2004 River Oaks Blvd., Houston, Texas
Lloyd Lambert, 5503 Lacy, Houston 7, Texas
T. M. Daniel, 1916 Elmen, Houston 19, Texas (new member)

The following persons have subscribed to the Spoonbill, making a total of 12 non-members who receive the Spoonbill and have paid $1.00 toward its support:

Dr. Harry Oberholser, 2933 Berkshire Rd.,Cleveland Hts.,Cleveland O.
Fred S. Webster, 4926 Strass Drive, Austin 3, Texas

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12-4-55

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