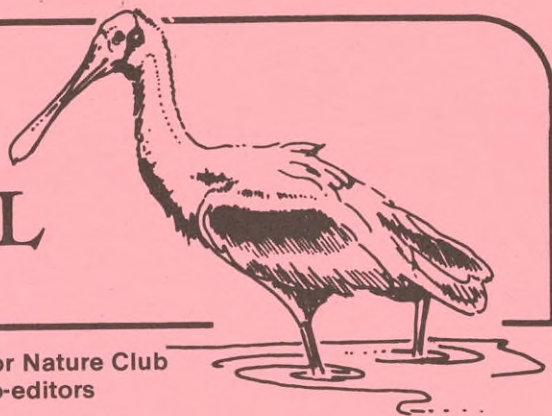


The SPOONBILL



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Houston, Texas Libby Price & Ellen Red, Co-editors

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Coming Events

March 31, 1987: "The Birds of Africa" will be the subject of a talk by Michael John Allen, a renowned ornithologist at the University of Cambridge. Sponsors are HAS and Museum of Natural Science where the talk will be at 7:30 PM. Besides West and Southern Africa, the speaker has led expeditions to France, Spain, Morocco, Swedish Lapland, Foula, Turkey and Romania.

Thursday, Apr. 2: Ornithology Group meeting at Bayou Manor, 4141 S. Braeswood at 7:30 PM. Wild life photographer Werner Stebner will present the program.

Friday, Apr. 3: Deadline for Spoonbill and Clearing House material.

Tuesday, Apr. 14: Outdoor Nature Club meeting at Sutton Elementary School Library, 7402 Albarcore. (See Nature Notes map.) The program will be "Backpacking and Adventure Travel" presented by Nancy Landau.

Saturday, Apr. 18: Ornithology Group field trip to the Big Thicket and High Island, led by Art MacKinnon and Derek Muschalek. Meet at 7:00 AM at the Brookshire Brothers' parking lot in Silsbee. From Houston take I-10 East, exit at Beaumont and take Hwy 69-96-287 North. Continue straight on Hwy 96 after the 69-287 fork until Hwy 96 becomes Hwy 92 in Silsbee. In Silsbee go to the last light on Hwy 92, about 2 miles north of Hwy 327. The Brookshire Brothers' parking lot is on the left side across the street from "Pine Plaza" mall. In the Big Thicket we will see nesting Prairie Warbler, Bachman's Sparrow and possibly Red-cockaded Woodpecker. At High Island we should see migrating Golden-winged, Blackburnian and Cerulean Warblers. For more information call Derek Muschalek at 473-6876.

PIPING PLOVER BANDING PROJECT

by Ted L. Eubanks, Jr.

The Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) has recently been listed by the Interior Department as an endangered species in its breeding range, and a threatened species within its wintering range. One of the reasons for the discrepancy between classifications in ranges is a lack of data concerning the species where it winters. In order to gain more information on the wintering ecology of the species in Texas (a major wintering area), I have begun color-marking a limited sample of Piping Plovers at both Bolivar Flats and San Luis Pass.

These Piping Plovers will be marked with a combination of colored flags and bands. This sequence of colors allows me to track each bird individually. In order to gain as much information as possible for each marked plover, I am asking for the assistance of the Ornithology Group.

If you should sight one of these marked plovers, please record the following information: date, location, time of day, tide, total number of Piping Plovers present, and sequence of colors. (Please make a note of positions of flags and bands.)

Each bird will have two green flags on the left leg (one above and one below the metatarsal joint), and two color bands of varying colors below the joint but above the lower flag. On the right leg there will be a metal Fish and Wildlife Service band above the joint, and two color bands of varying colors below. Note: the Piping Plover Recovery Team is banding plovers on the breeding grounds, and their color sequence is different from the above (the flags differ). I have observed six of their birds on Bolivar Flats, so pay close attention to the colors and their sequence. Please forward the information from your sightings to me at 1000 South Loop West, #120, Houston TX 77054, 713-666 7639 (h) or 713-747-0101 (w).

Noel's Niche Looking Back

by Noel Pettingell

.....TEN YEARS AGO THIS MONTH
FROM MARCH, 1977 SPOONBILL

"Suggestions from the readers: Quite a few of you who returned the questionnaire from the February SPOONBILL (and thanks to all of you who took the time to do so) want more maps and places-to-go. We would all like to have a new map and new places to go each month, but, unfortunately, the well runs dry occasionally. This is a matter of sharing, of tit-for-tat, of you-scratch-my-back-and I'll-scratch-yours; the more of you who share your favorite places, the greater our list of places-to-go will be. So if you have a good birding spot, or idea for a map, let the editor know. There will be a resume next month of all the places-to-go that have been mentioned in the past several years.

"Also there were a number of requests for more accounts of local birding, trips or anecdotes. In the past we have enjoyed the sight, through Wes Cureton's eyes, of a barred owl bathing in a rain puddle; we have thrilled, with Edward Taylor, as he held a (stunned) Pileated Woodpecker in his hand; and we have shared Nancy Strickling's amazement as she rescued an immature Western Kingbird from beneath the feet of baseball fans on a ramp of the Astrodome. Sharing the results of your birding is what this newsletter is all about!"

.....THIRTY YEARS AGO THIS MONTH
FROM MARCH, 1957 SPOONBILL

"The Scene Outdoors - Houston Press - Feb. 14, 1957

A recent survey shows that 19 million mourning doves were bagged by hunters in 29 states and a Canadian province during the 1955 shooting season, the Wildlife Management Institute reports.

"More doves are killed than any other single species of migratory game bird, and exceed by four million or more the combined take of all species of ducks and geese. Gunning pressure has increased during the past five years and is expected to mount. The importance of mourning doves to sportsmen means that game administrators and technicians will have to pay closer attention to dove breeding populations, production figures, and hunter kill records."

BANDATHON TO BENEFIT BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

A "Bandathon" will be going on all day April 25 in Smith Woods. Ted L. Eubanks, Jr. will be banding migrants at High Island at the same time as the Birdathon. Ted needs pledges to help raise money for the Texas Breeding Bird Atlas.

To pledge call 666-7639 (h) or 747-0101 (w).

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK CBC

by Andrew and Rene Franks

Christmas counts are always fun, but they are especially exciting when you are 683 miles from home in prime sparrow habitat. The Guadalupe Mountains count is not well attended either by birders or birds. Fourteen Sandhill Cranes flying overhead outnumbered the birders by three. Birdwise, during the ten years the count has been held, from 43 to 78 species have been identified for a total of 114.

Two years ago we attended our first count in the park, and found we were the only people with a vehicle able to travel a jeep road through the desolate western side of the park, under the shadow of El Capitan. We were undaunted even when we learned that several of the birds likely to be in our area were completely unknown to us.

Things started off easily with some pretty Black-throated Sparrows. Next, four of the drabest sparrows ever created showed up in a creosote bush, and more like them occurred in flocks with multitudes of White-crowned Sparrows. At lunchtime our expert leader examined our notes and told us the drab ones were Brewer's Sparrows.

Other lifers identified included the Sage Sparrow and Green-tailed Towhee. While these were exciting to us, some of the best birds on the count were birds we knew well, such as White-throated and Lincoln's Sparrows and the Sandhill Cranes, a new species for the count, as were a Cardinal and Ring-necked Ducks. We saw Harris' Hawk and White-throated Swift, bringing the number of count newcomers to five.

Not so rare, but more interesting to coastal birders were Golden Eagle, Say's Phoebe, Acorn Woodpecker, Verdin, Rock, Cactus, Canyon and Bewick's Wrens, three towhees, Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and the not too solitary Townsend's Solitaire. A total of 71 species was reported by the five groups attending the count dinner. A group of one did not report due to the sixty-mile drive around the mountains in the middle of the count circle.

The dinner is the highlight of the count. Although there are two cafes near the park, neither opens on Saturday nights. Ranger O. V. Olsen has taken great interest in the bird life of the Guadalupe, and his wife makes the count a success by providing a meal for the birders. We enjoyed the hot chili, knowing that a cold night in a tent and a long drive home awaited us.

If you have always wanted to be an area leader, and have a four-wheel drive, the Guadalupe Mountains count is for you. It may not be the biggest in the nation, but at least the birds outnumber the birders.

BIRD MESSENGERS

In addition to the familiar pigeon, other birds have been used as messengers. Frigatebirds were sometimes used in the South Seas, and in early Rome swallows were employed. Sports fans removed swallows from their nests, took them to an event and then sent them home with news of the winners.

METROPOLITAN BIRDING

In the last 60 years Houston has mushroomed into a metropolis, and the day is past when prairie chickens boomed on Fondren Road, let alone the day when the site of Lamar High School, now near the center of town, was a place to camp out. Nevertheless, from the air much of Houston looks like a forest, and there is an abundance of bird life within and just outside the city limits. Starting in this issue is a series of articles on places to bird for half a day or less. You may be surprised at the species that breed here and the migrants that pause in town.

To be away from city sights and sounds is certainly part of the pleasure of birding, but few of us can get out to the beach, the woods or the rice fields often enough to satisfy the need to bird. For all there are times when personal commitments even prevent our going out of town on weekends, perhaps even for a whole nailbiting month.

In the lives of new birders such a hiatus can dull their budding skills. In these articles you will find places to practise and even find lifers. For experienced birders a hiatus can make you hard to live with. Use one of these birding places to be less snappish until you can get out to the concentration and variety of birds you need to be really happy.

The first in the series is an article about Hermann Park, written by P. D. Hulce, who is abundantly qualified, since he and Steve Schultz bird the park constantly and have prepared a checklist of its birds. Participants in Birdathon '87 will have an opportunity to fund publication of this checklist.

PITTMAN PARK NATURE DISCOVERY CENTER

Pittman Park in Bellaire is planning a Nature Discovery Center modeled on the Smithsonian Institute's Discovery Room, where children or family groups can check out a "Discovery Box" containing natural objects and cards which suggest activities, pose questions and provide information. At Pittman Park volunteers and a small professional staff will encourage children to follow their natural curiosity and explore different aspects of nature in an active rather than a passive way.

Donations are needed for this center: bones, fossils, skins, shells, rocks and other natural objects, slide and film projectors, tape recorder, personal computer and most especially a dissecting microscope and nature books and magazines (such as Audubon, but please no more National Geographics).

Those of us who are concerned to encourage future naturalists and environmentalists should contribute whatever we can to this center, whether it is something on the above list or money to support the staff and activities. The park is located at Newcastle and Evergreen; the mailing address is P.O. Box 777, Bellaire TX 77401. For information call Hana Ginsburg at 664-4320.

MINUTES OF THE OG MEETING MARCH 5, 1987

Chairman Robert Thacker opened the meeting at 7:35 PM and reported a successful OG field trip to the Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, Big Creek Scenic Area and Lake Livingston Dam on February 14. March field trip information was given by Derek Muschalek.

Rob then read Peter Vennema's budget draft for the coming year:

PROJECTED REVENUES: (Assuming existing dues)	
Membership Dues, 370 x \$6 =	\$2,220
Spoonbill Subscriptions, 35 x \$9 =	315
Checklist and Map Sales	125
Aluminum Sales	75
Interest on Money Mkt Fund	225
	<hr/>
	\$2,960

PROJECTED EXPENSES:	
Spoonbill Printing, 11 x \$267 =	\$2,937
Bulk Mailing, 11 x \$35 =	385
Bayou Manor Donation	150
Speaker Fees and Expenses	75
New Books	75
Birdathon Team	100
Roster (with ONC)	200
	<hr/>
	- 3,922
	<u>(962)</u>

DEFICIT

The fact was noted that a deficit of over \$900 will result from our operating with the same dues and expenses. Discussion followed about an increase in dues for the OG and also the ONC.

New ONC patches were on sale from Peggy Milstead. Libby Price reported the gift by Noel Pettingell of his new book to our library.

The slate of OG officers for the coming year that was proposed in February by the Nominating Committee was voted upon by members present and approved.

Ted Eubanks announced that in addition to the Audubon Birdathon April 25, he will be holding a Bandathon at High Island and needs sponsors. Ted also reported on organization for the Breeding Bird Atlas and asked volunteers to call him.

Barbara House announced a program on bird photography will be given at the Clear Creek Sierra Club meeting April 7, 7:30 PM at A Uniting Church Building in the Clear Lake area. John Dyess will present the program, illustrating his work with the colonial bird survey on UTC islands. Call Barbara at 337-3683 for directions.

Carol Sloan reported that the scheduled speaker was unable to come and showed instead the film "Flight of the Condors." Adjournment followed.

Caroline Callery, Secretary

The Spoonbill Staff

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Layout Artist	Connie Clark
Typing	Libby Price
Labels	Peggy Milstead
Mailing	Connie Schimbor and Yetta Chapman
Checklist Committee	Ron Braun
	Noel Pettingell and Jim Morgan

Clearing House - FEBRUARY, 1987

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. Common, widely distributed species on the UTC during the reported month are listed as follows: number of reports, (lowest # - highest #; total # of individuals seen), e.g. 8 reports (1-20;82). Noteworthy sightings will be underlined, capitalized, or both, according to their status. Birds with very rare, vagrant, accidental, or no status on the Checklist at the date of sighting require details. Sightings needing details but submitted without them will not be included in the regular Clearing House. All observations affecting the species' status on the current UTC Checklist must be accepted by the Checklist Committee. Documentation is a must for consideration by the Committee.

ABBREVIATION CODES

AB = Armand Bayou NC	LH = Lake Houston
ANWR = Anahuac NWR	LJ = Lake Jackson
Bayt = Baytown	LMq = LaMarque
BB = Bryan Beach	NHC = N. Harris Co.
BBSP = Brazos Bend SP	NWH = NW Houston
BC = Brazoria Co.	OB = Offatts Bayou
BF = Bolivar Flats	Pasa = Pasadena
BNWR = Brazoria NWR	QJ = Quintana Jetty
Bolv = Bolivar Peninsula	SBNWR = San Bernard NWR
CC = Chambers Co.	SFL = Stubblefield Lake
EG = E. Galveston	SJSP = San Jacinto SP
FBC = Ft. Bend Co.	SLP = San Luis Pass
Ferry = Bolivar Ferry	SSJ = Seaside Jetty (BC)
FM = Freeport Marsh	SWH = SW Houston
Galv = Galveston	TC = Texas City
GC = Galveston Co.	TCD = Texas City Dike
GISP = Galveston Is. SP	WGI = W. Galveston Is.
H = Houston	WHC = W. Harris Co.
HA = Houston Arboretum	WL = Warren Lake
HI = High Island	WMP = White Memorial Pk
King = Kingwood	WOB = White Oak Bayou

183 Species reported this month

Loon, Red-throated: TCD-(1)1, SBW (Described last month, ed.); TCD-(12)15, SBW (Notes, ed.)

Loon, Common: 9 reports (1-24;65)
 Grebe, Pied-billed: 14 reports (1-60;184)
 Grebe, Eared: 10 reports (1-120;277)
 Gannet, Northern: Galv-(350)1, SBW; SSJ-(20)1, JB (See CH Editor's Notes)
 Pelican, American White: 15 reports (1-110;562)
 Pelican, Brown: SSJ-(4)1, JB; Bayt-(1)2, ER (Notes submitted, ed.)
 Cormorant, Double-crested: 10 reports (1-2000;2235)
 Cormorant, Olivaceous: 5 reports (1-20;43)
 EG-(20)1, SBW; (6)28, ARF; TCD-(10)1, SBW; Bayt-(1)18, ER; SJSP-(6)20, DM
 cormorant, sp.: EG-(5)28, ARF
 Anhinga: BBSP-(1)1, JB; (6)15, HA; (5)23, DM
 Bittern, American: BBSP-(1)23, DM
 Heron, Great Blue: 18 reports (1-10;73)
 Egret, Great: 15 reports (1-14;82)
 Egret, Snowy: 8 reports (1-44;86)
 Heron, Little Blue: 8 reports (1-7;19)
 Heron, Tricolored: 6 reports (1-4;10)
 Egret, Reddish: 5 reports (1-4;12)
 BC-(2)1, JB; SSJ-(1)1, JB; WGI-(4)2, (2)27, JHH;
 SLP-(3)28, ARF
 Egret, Cattle: 12 reports (1-120;302)
 Heron, Green-backed: AB-(1)12, ER
 Night-Heron, Black-crowned: BNWR-(3)7, RU; (100)8, TM;
 SJSP-(80)20, DM; ANWR-(1)28, JB
 Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned: BNWR-(20)7, RU; (5)8, TM;
 TC-(1 imm)25, EO; Galv-(2)26, JHH
 Ibis, White: 10 reports (3-550;1224)
 Ibis, White-faced: 6 reports (1-600;679)
 Spoonbill, Roseate: 5 reports (1-6;13)
 CD-(2)1, MLO; WGI-(6)2, (1)27, JHH; ANWR-(1)28, JB;
 GISP-(3)28, ARF
 Goose, Greater White-fronted: 6 reports (60-2000;3065)
 Goose, Snow: 8 reports (35-3000;9210)
 (Goose, Blue): 4 reports (1-1500;1807)
 Goose, Ross: WHC-(3)7, SW
 Goose, Canada: WHC-(100)7, SW; BNWR-(35)8, TM;
 FBC-(2)15, HA; (6)23, DM
 Duck, Wood: King-(4)1, (2)8, SG; Pasa-(1)13, ER;
 BBSP-(6)15, HA
 Teal, Green-winged: 5 reports (12-1000;1142)
 Duck, Mottled: 8 reports (1-10;48)
 Mallard: WHC-(10)1, DM; ANWR-(5)28, JB; FM-(3)28, PM
 Pintail, Northern: WHC-(1000)1, DM; (300)7, SW;
 BNWR-(60)7, RU; (6)8, TM
 Teal, Blue-winged: 12 reports (2-100;369)
 Teal, Cinnamon: SBNWR-(1)8, TM; (26)24, DM; BBSP-(1 m)15, HA
 Shoveler, Northern: 16 reports (6-860;3201)
 Gadwall: 8 reports (5-160;350)
 Wigeon, American: 6 reports (1-55;92)

Canvasback: SFL-(6)7, RU; ANWR-(4)16, JHH; (1)28, JB;
 FBC-(8)23, DM
 Duck, Ring-necked: TCD-(15)1, SBW; BNWR-(3)7, RU;
 BBSP-(27)23, DM
 Scaup, Greater: TCD-(1)1, SBW
 Scaup, Lesser: TCD-(60)8, DM; GISP-(20)28, ARF
 Bufflehead: TCD-(16)8, DM; FBC-(12)23, DM
 Merganser, Red-breasted: 10 reports (4-45;187)
 Duck, Ruddy: 6 reports (3-400;668)
 Vulture, Black: 8 reports (1-50;72)
 Vulture, Turkey: 15 reports (1-150;280)
 Kite, Black-shouldered: 10 reports (1-5;17)
 Eagle, Bald: BBSP-(2 inc 1 ad; 1 subad)15, HA
 Harrier, Northern: 9 reports (1-12;50)
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: King-(1)8, SG; H-(1)15, HA;
 NWH-(1)22-28, VL
 Hawk, Cooper's: LMq-(1)1, SBW (Notes, ed.); BBSP-(1)15, HA;
 Huffman-(1)16, SG
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: 8 reports (1-6;19)
 Hawk, White-tailed: FBC-(2)15, HA; (1 ad)23, DM (Resident
 area, ed.)
 Hawk, Red-tailed: 11 reports (1-4;23)
 Caracara, Crested: BNWR-(1)7, RU
 Kestrel, American: 21 reports (1-25;158)
 Falcon, Peregrine: EG-(1)28, ARF
 Bobwhite, Northern: WHC-(3)1, DM
 Rail, Clapper: WGI-(1)2, JHH; SJSP-(2)20, DM
 Sora: SBNWR-(1)8, TM
 Moorhen, Common: 8 reports (2-120;226)
 Coot, American: 15 reports (3-1500;4812)
 Crane, Sandhill: SBNWR-(3)1, JB; BNWR-(45)7, RU;
 FBC-(2)15, HA; (160)23, DM
 Plover, Black-bellied: 5 reports (1-40;47)
 Plover, Semipalmated: SLP-(8)28, ARF; EG-(9)28, ARF
 Plover, Piping: SLP-(4)28, ARF; EG-(8)28, ARF
 Killdeer: 13 reports (2-125;288)
 Stilt, Black-necked: ANWR-(3)16, JHH
 Avocet, American: WGI-(1)2, JHH; BNWR-(18)8, TM
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 6 reports (1-12;19)
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: BNWR-(1)7, RU; (4)8, TM; SBNWR-(8)8, TM;
 WGI-(4)27, JHH
 Willet: 8 reports (1-62;90)
 Sandpiper, Spotted: TCD-(1)8, DM; Ferry-(1)8, SW;
 WGI-(1)27, JHH
 Curlew, Long-billed: 10 reports (1-35;67)
 Turnstone, Ruddy: SSJ-(5)1, JB; TCD-(10)8, DM;
 SLP-(1)28, ARF
 Knot, Red: SLP-(138)28, ARF
 Sanderling: 7 reports (2-125;244)
 Sandpiper, Semipalmated: WGI-(7)27, JHH
 Sandpiper, Western: WHC-(100)7, SW; WGI-(1)27, JHH;
 SLP-(342)28, ARF; EG-(25)28, ARF
 Sandpiper, Least: WHC-(15)7, SW
 Dunlin: EG-(35)1, SBW; (50)8, SW; BC-(1)1, JB; SLP-(6)28, ARF
 Dowitcher, Short-billed: RP-(16)8, SW
 dowitcher, sp.: BC-(100)1, JB; BNWR-(42)7, RU; (40)8, TM;
 ANWR-(2)28, JB
 Snipe, Common: SBNWR-(19)24, DM; ANWR-(17)28, JB
 Gull, Laughing: 11 reports (1-500;1857) Inc.
 NWH-(1-4)1-28, VL (Unusual location, ed.)
 Gull, Bonaparte's: 9 reports (2-80;161)
 Gull, Ring-billed: 11 reports (2-450;1728)
 Gull, Herring: 10 reports (1-20;58)
 Kittiwake, Black-legged: TCD-(1)8, DM; (1)21, SG (See Jan.
 CH for details, ed.)
 gull, sp.: SWH-(2-6)1-28, PM
 Tern, Gull-billed: LMq-(2)1, SBW
 Tern, Caspian: 10 reports (1-6;24)
 Tern, Royal: SSJ-(5)1, JB; TCD-(1)8, DM; BB-(5)8, TM;
 EG-(3)28, ARF
 Tern, Sandwich: BF-(4)8, SW (Notes, ed.)
 Tern, Forster's: 9 reports (2-240;750)
 Skimmer, Black: 5 reports (1-600;1589)
 Dove, Rock: 4 reports (1-40;81)
 Turtle-Dove, Ringed: NWH-(1-4)1-28, VL
 Dove, White-winged: Galv-(15)12, (5)15, 27, JHH
 Dove, Mourning: 12 reports (1-25;111)
 Dove, Inca: 10 reports (1-30;96)
 Barn-Owl, Common: Algoa-(1-2)1-28, DW;
 Tomball-(1)6, SW; (1)16, SBW
 Screech-Owl, Eastern: Algoa-(1)1-28, DW
 Owl, Great Horned: BBSP-(1)23, DM; NHC-(1)28, ER
 Owl, Barred: King-(1)1-28, (1)17, SG; BC-(1 roadkill)8, TM;
 Algoa-(1 m)12, DW
 Hummingbird, Buff-bellied: LJ-(1)1, JB (Notes, ed.)
 Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: Galv-(1)15, SBW (Notes, ed.)
 Kingfisher, Belted: 12 reports (1-2;16)
 Woodpecker, Red-headed: King-(1)1-28, SG; (1)8, JB
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 9 reports (1-20;33)
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: 6 reports (1-3;8)
 Woodpecker, Downy: 8 reports (1-10;20)
 Flicker, Northern: 8 reports (1-4;18)
 Woodpecker, Pileated: King-(2)1-28, SG; (1)22, JB;
 BBSP-(1)15, HA; (5)24, DM
 Empidonax, sp.: BBSP-(1)23, DM (Notes, ed.)
 Phoebe, Eastern: 11 reports (1-24;51)
 Flycatcher, Vermilion: SBNWR-(1 m)1, JB; BNWR-(1 m)7, RU;
 BBSP-(3 m)15, HA; (3 m)23, DM
 Lark, Horned: BNWR-(2)7, RU; SLP-(1)28, ARF
 Martin, Purple: 10 reports (1-14;45)
 WL-(2)1, DM; H-(1)5, WC; EG-(2)8, SW; Bolv-(4)21, SG;
 SWH-(1)22, PM; BBSP-(14)23, DM; SBNWR-(3)24, DM;
 WGI-(1)27, JHH; NWH-(1-5)28, VL; Sagemont-(1)28, ER
 Swallow, Tree: BBSP-(25)23, DM
 SWALLOW, BARN: WL-(1)1, DM (Notes, ed.)
 Jay, Blue: 12 reports (1-10;43)

BIRDING UPDATE: HERMANN PARK

by P. D. Hulce

Hermann Park's central location in Houston should make it an ideal spot for those mornings when you have only 30 minutes or an hour to go birding. Even so, knowing exact areas in the park can make it a little easier to get some quality birding time in. The summer season is usually the quietest time for birds, but it is also the best time to see Red-headed Woodpecker, as well as Red-bellied, Downy and often Flicker. Spring and fall can be excellent for migrants, depending on the weather. Winter brings flocks of Kinglets, Pine Warblers and waterfowl on the Grand Basin. I hope the accompanying keyed map will enable anyone to have a pleasant birding experience in Hermann Park at any time of the year. If you call Miller Outdoor Theater at 520-3294, weekdays, either I or Steve Schultz can usually give you an update on what is being seen that week.

KEY TO MAP OF HERMANN PARK AREA

1) GRAND BASIN: This can be an excellent area for waterfowl in winter. Regular birds include Lesser Scaup, Double-crested Cormorant, Ring-billed Gull, American Coot and Caspian Tern. In 1985 and 1986 a single Greater Scaup wintered here. Other good birds seen include Bufflehead, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Black-crowned Night-Heron and Belted Kingfisher. The Zoo and Parks Department maintain many captive birds here, including a small flock of Redheads and at least four different species of Whistling Ducks.

2) RAILROAD WOODS: In the spring and fall over 20 species of warblers, orioles, flycatchers and other migrants are possible here. Screech Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker and up to three other species of woodpecker regularly nest here. In the winter this is often the best place to find the "flock," consisting of Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Pine Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and usually one or two Yellow-throated Warblers. Southern Flying Squirrel also nests, but is strictly nocturnal.

3) REFLECTING POND AREA: Oaks around the pond can be good for migrants in spring and fall, and Screech Owl often nests here. Red-headed Woodpeckers nest in the woods on either side of the pond, and the "flock" can often be found here in winter. Cooper's Hawk also frequents this area in winter, as well as a small flock of escaped parrots, including Senegal, Monk, Black-headed and Masked Parakeets.

4) TRIANGLE WOODS: This small area can be good for migrants in season as well as woodpeckers and the winter flock. Chuck-will's-widow is occasionally seen here in spring, and this is the only area in the park where I have seen Great Horned Owl. Flying Squirrels are also here at night.

5) MUSEUM: The trees around the museum can also be good for migrants in season, woodpeckers and Screech Owls. If the grounds crew is not too enthusiastic there is often some low shrubbery and undergrowth next to the fences by the water tanks that can be good for thrushes and other ground-dwelling migrants.

6) GARDEN CENTER: A walk through the Garden Center in spring and summer can be enjoyable

just for the planting. The hedgerows and fenceline bordering Hermann Drive often attract the ground-dwelling and lower level migrants that can't be found at other areas of the park.

7) GOLF COURSE RUNNING TRAIL: The lovely double row of oaks lining this trail can be quite good for migrants in the spring and fall, and for Screech Owls as well.

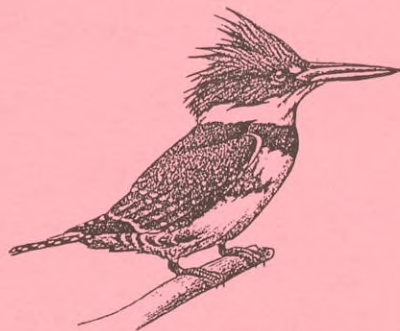
8) BRAYS BAYOU WOODS: This is the largest wild area in the park and can be good for almost any of the land birds. Red-headed Woodpeckers should nest in the more cleared areas. Egrets and Spotted Sandpipers can occasionally be seen on the concrete walls of the the bayou. Parking can be difficult, but you can usually park on the concrete at the corner of Almeda and Macgregor.

9) MEDICAL MUSEUM WOODS: Right outside of the park proper, these four wooded blocks are also good for most of the woodland birds seen in the park. Red-headed Woodpecker has nested, and Kestrel is often seen in winter.

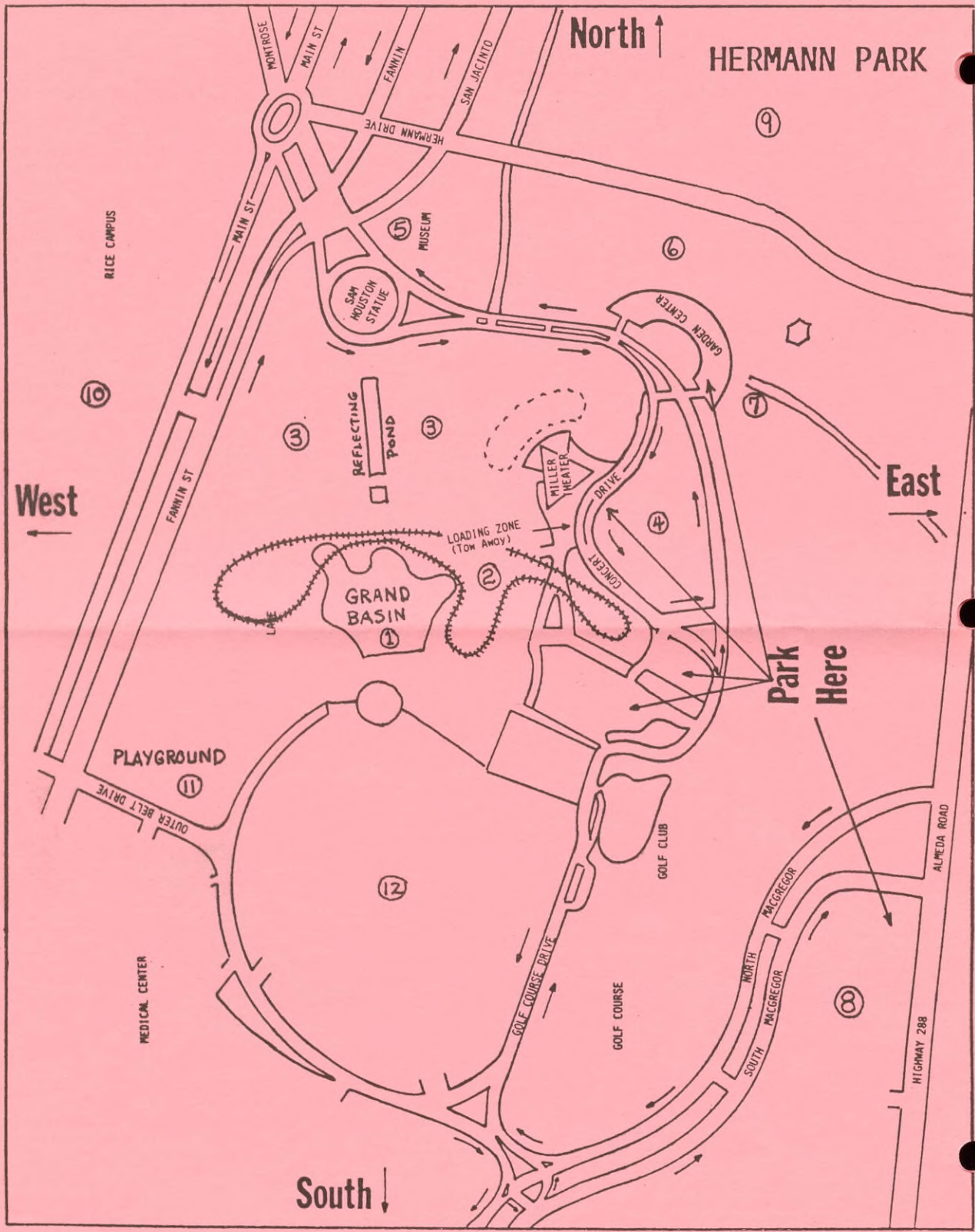
10) RICE UNIV.: The fantastic oaks bordering Main Street can be excellent for spring and fall migrants, and great numbers of blackbirds often congregate here in winter.

11) Playground: This area is often too populated for quiet birdwatching, but should be good for migrants. Red-headed Woodpecker has nested.

12) ZOO: The zoo has a great collection of birds, and the duck pond can be particularly interesting. This is one of the few places in the park to see Cardinals. Black-crowned Night-Heron and Barn Owl can often be found roosting in the zoo.



A pair of Belted Kingfishers digs a burrow in a sand or gravel bank for a depth that may run to 15 feet. The female lays eggs directly on the floor of the burrow. The male may dig himself an extra burrow in which he roosts at night.



Crow, American: 12 reports (1-80;225)
 Crow, Fish: WGI-(2)15, SBW (Notes, ed.)
 Chickadee, Carolina: 10 reports (1-60;146)
 Titmouse, Tufted: 8 reports (1-50;119)
 Nuthatch, Brown-headed: 6 reports (1-3;8)
 King-(1)1,7,8,22,JB;(1)8,SG; Tomball-(3)7,SW
 Wren, Carolina: 6 reports (1-22;51)
 Wren, House: WOB-(1)1-28,WC; King-(1)8,JB; BBSP-(3)23,DM
 Wren, Winter: King-(1)1,SG
 Wren, Sedge: SBNWR-(1)8,TH;(5)24,DM
 Wren, Marsh: QJ-(1)8,TH
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: 6 reports (1-6;19)
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 16 reports (1-130;187)
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 7 reports (1-40;58)
 Bluebird, Eastern: 8 reports (1-18;62)
 Thrush, Hermit: Tomball-(1)7,SW; King-(1)8,JB;(1)8,SG;
 BBSP-(18)23,DM
 Robin, American: 22 reports (1-4400;5789)
 Catbird, Gray: King-(1)8,SG
 Mockingbird, Northern: 11 reports (1-12;46)
 Thrasher, Brown: 7 reports (1-36;45)
 Pipit, Water: 5 reports (2-35;79)
 Waxwing, Cedar: 6 reports (1-250;588)
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 11 reports (1-25;76)
 Starling, European: 11 reports (1-50;159)
 Vireo, White-eyed: BBSP-(5)23,DM
 Vireo, Solitary: WOB-(1)21,WC; BBSP-(6)23,DM
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: 10 reports (1-18;39)
WARBLER, MAGNOLIA: BBSP-(1)23,DM (Notes, ed.)
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped: 22 reports (1-340;787)
 Warbler, Pine: 14 reports (1-5;33)
 Warbler, Palm: SBNWR-(4)24,DM; GISP-(1)28,ARF
 Ovenbird: King-(1)1,SG (Notes, ed.); Algoa-(1)2,DW
 (Present since Dec. - see Dec. CH for details, ed.);
 HA-(1)8,KW (Notes, ed.)
 Yellowthroat, Common: 6 reports (1-10;18)
 Warbler, Wilson's: BBSP-(3)24,DM
 Chat, Yellow-breasted: SJSP-(1)20,DM (Notes, ed.)
 Cardinal, Northern: 15 reports (1-120;183)
 Grosbeak, sp.: HA-(1)13,WHJG (Notes, ed.)
 Towhee, Rufous-sided: King-(1)1-28,SG; WOB-(1)21,WC
 Sparrow, Chipping: BBSP-(3)15,HA
 Sparrow, Field: WHC-(1)1,DM;(1)7,SW
 Sparrow, Vesper: WHC-(4)1,DM;(15)8,SW
 Sparrow, Lark: WHC-(2)8,SW
 Sparrow, Savannah: 8 reports (1-90;214)
 Sparrow, Sharp-tailed: BF-(1)8,SW
 Sparrow, Seaside: Ferry-(2)8,SW
 Sparrow, Fox: King-(1)1-28,SG
 Sparrow, Song: WHC-(3)1,DM;(2)8,SW; SJSP-(1)20,DM;
 SBNWR-(1)24,DM
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: 7 reports (1-4;15)
 Sparrow, Swamp: 5 reports (2-21;45)
 Sparrow, White-throated: 10 reports (1-40;95)
 Sparrow, White-crowned: WHC-(2)1,DM
 Junco, Dark-eyed: Tomball-(2)7,SW
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 10 reports (5-500;1123)
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 12 reports (2-75;243)
 Meadowlark, Western: WHC-(1) voice,1,DM
 Blackbird, Brewer's: Bayt-(2)25,ER; Sagemont-(2)28,ER
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 8 reports (1-100;319)
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: 6 reports (1-30;101)
 Grackle, Common: 7 reports (1-100;233)
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 5 reports (6-125;341)
 NWH-(10-125)1-28,VL; BNWR-(6)8,TH; Pasa-(60)11,MLO;
 King-(50)21,SG; WGI-(100)27,JJH
 Siskin, Pine: King-(5)1,SG; Bunker Hill Village-
 (1)6,27,(2)23,26,(4)19,20,24,MBM
 Goldfinch, American: 9 reports (1-150;279)
 Sparrow, House: 3 reports (6-200;221)

The following report, requiring details, was submitted without them:
 Kite, Mississippi: NWH-(1)3,VL (No February records, ed.)

CONTRIBUTORS - FEBRUARY, 1987

ARF=Andrew & Rene' Franks; DM=Derek Muschalek; DM=Diane Wise; EO=Eileen Owens; ER=Ed Rozenburg; HA=Houston Arboretum field trip reported by Bob Honig; JB=John Buckman; JJH=Jane & John Hamilton; KW=Kathy Wallace fide Bob Honig; MBM=Mary Ann & Bob Moore; MLO=ML Owens; PM=Peggy Milstead; RU=Richard Uzar; SBW=Steve & Beverly Williams; SG=Steve Gast; SW=Steve Williams; TH=Rob Thacker, Tom Michael; VL=Vanessa Luce; WC=Wesley Cureton; WHJG=Doug Williams, Martha Henschen, Phyllis Jackson, Frank Gregg

CLEARING HOUSE NOTES - FEBRUARY, 1987

Red-throated Loon: 2/15/87 Steve Williams
 This was a small, close-knit flock which was observed for about 5 minutes in good light at 90-100 yds. with a 25x scope as they swam about two miles down TCD from its beginning. All had upturned, rather slim beaks, much white on the face for loons we usually see, & on a few, there was small white spotting on the back. Back color was lighter gray, sometimes brownish gray, when compared to back color of Common Loons. Interestingly, no diving occurred while observation was made by any bird in the flock. Field guides describe the Red-throated Loon as being gregarious and tending to flock on its wintering grounds. I have rarely if ever observed Common Loons engaging in flocking behavior. With respect to size,

the birds were not much larger than a nearby Ring-billed Gull, while the Common Loon is significantly larger. I believe this is the largest concentration of Red-throated Loons ever seen in Texas.

Cooper's Hawk: 2/1/87 Steve Williams
 Large Accipiter nearly the size of a Laughing Gull not far away; tail appeared rounded; immature plumage, with brownish streaky appearance above and whitish with breast streaking below; seen for 1 min, 10x50 binocs.

Sandwich Tern: 2/8/87 Steve Williams
 Large terns with black bills, white foreheads & back, wispy feathers on back of head. Winter plumage. Size & head pattern eliminate other dark-billed terns.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird: 2/1/87 John Buckman
 At feeder in Lake Jackson. I noted darkish bill with dull red lower mandible base, bright green throat & breast, buff belly, bright chestnut tail, greenish head & back & dark wings.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 2/15/87 Steve Williams
 Galveston seaway, at Mike Gaido Blvd. (39th Street). A female *Archilochus* was seen for about 1 1/2 min from 15-20 ft as she flew around plants at Gaido's Restaurant. She was green on the back, whitish underneath, and is presumed to be this species, since they become common in March, and are then the most usual hummingbird species.

Empidonax species: 2/23/87 Derek Muschalek
 Observed a small, erect, tail-flipping bird for the 2nd consecutive winter at 40 Acre Lk at BBSP. Bird had a well defined yellow eye-ring & two yellow wingbars. The bird also displayed a grayish throat & breast that contrasted with its yellow belly & undertail coverts. No voice given. Used 10x50 binocs from 25' to 45' for 30 sec.

BARN SWALLOW: (No UTC records for 1st week of February)
 2/1/87 Derek Muschalek
 Tommy Michael & myself observed this species at Warren Lake, as it associated with two Purple Martins. The bird was seen perched on high lines and in flight for approx. 10 min with 10x50 binocs. The bird was easily recognized by its deeply forked long tail, & its much slimmer appearance when it perched next to martins. Field marks: buff-cinnamon breast & belly; chestnut forehead & throat; metallic blue-black above with long deeply forked tail. In flight the bird looked sleek & swift, while the martins looked plump as they sailed.

Fish Crow: 2/15/87 Steve Williams
 Two smallish crows were observed for about 1 min as they sat on pilings & on ground near salt water from about 60-80 yds in good light with a 25x scope. They were the same size as Laughing Gulls nearby. The place was the yacht basin on Stewart Rd just west of Galveston Country Club & golf course. The birds ended observation by flying away down the yacht basin toward West Bay. Habitat & size eliminate Common Crow, although the diagnostic call was not heard. In nearly 40 years of birding on Galveston, I have never seen a Common Crow on the Island, but have seen Fish Crows twice before. Interestingly, once was at this spot.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER: (No UTC records for February)
 2/23/87 Derek Muschalek
 My 3rd "winter" record on the UTC, & my 2nd this winter!! Oberholser considers this *Dendroica* extremely rare along the coast from Dec. to mid-Feb. Apparently this is the latest February sighting in Texas ornithological history! This particular bird was observed for 25 min with excellent morning sun at my back. The bird stayed in yaupon trees & fed with a (female) Wilson's Warbler. Quite often the bird made unique "tlep" notes as it chased insects. Field marks noted: gray head with white eye-ring; olive green back with very faint black streaks; two white wingbars; bright yellow rump; the underparts were bright yellow & I clearly saw a distinct narrow gray band that crossed the breast. The great lighting allowed me to see some black streaks on the sides. The bird had white undertail coverts and a white tail (from below) with a black terminal band. In flight the bird constantly flashed broad white tail patches. Used 10x50 binocs from 10' to 35'.

Ovenbird: 2/1/87 Steve Gast
 All field marks seen well, including central dull-rusty crown stripe bordered by black stripes; brownish-olive back; prominent black spotting on underparts; obvious white eyering; in dense yaupon holly thicket. Observer at close range for 30 sec or more in full view.

Ovenbird: 2/8/87 Kathy Wallace fide Bob Honig
 At Houston Arboretum, late morning. Heavy dark streaking on light breast up to throat. Crown with dark stripes and rusty orange center. Back greenish/yellowish. White eye ring. No wing bars. On ground walking among leaf litter. Approx. 10 ft distant, viewed with & without binoculars (7x35). Sunny day, but in brush. Viewed for approx. 10 min, then 20 min later for about 5 min. Unobstructed view at times.

Yellow-breasted Chat: 2/20/87 Derek Muschalek
 Found feeding in hedge-rows at south-side of San Jacinto SP. This species is considered a rare "winter resident" along the Texas coast (Oberholser). I was not really surprised to find this bird since this was the mildest winter in years. Field marks: An extremely large warbler with a brilliant yellow chin, throat, & breast. Belly & undertail coverts were white. Large, dark, heavy bill; white spectacles & black lores noted; the upperparts were olive green from head to tail. Used 10X50 binocs at 25' for 5 min in excellent light.

grosbeak species: 2/13/87 Doug Williams
 Size comparison made with Yellow-rumped Warbler. Dark brown crown with light supercilary stripe, dark brown (almost black) streak running through the eye, very broad. Burnt orange throat, breast, & nape grading into cream belly. Thin yellow band at the breast/belly interface. Breast unstreaked. Back streaked brown & cream. Yellow flash underwings. Upper tail dark, grey below with what seemed to be light tail spots. Upper mandible dark; lower, pinkish. First observed in small elm tree eating new seeds. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was in the same field of view at this time. Observed for 5 min in good light. Binocs: 10X40, 8X40, 10X50, & 8X35. Observed from 30-50 meters.

CH EDITOR'S NOTES - FEBRUARY, 1987

Northern Gannets:

In the January CH I suggested that you see the CH Editor's Notes for additional comments on Northern Gannet. If you did, you may have noticed that the additional comments did not exist. This month I amend that mistake. Here are Steve Williams comments which I failed to include last month:

"The gannet was the commonest species of bird seen off the Galveston Seawall from 6th St. to its western terminus on 1/31. At least 350 individuals were present, mostly in small groups of 3-20, mostly immatures, & mostly at least 1/3 mi offshore. They were largely concentrated in this area, for only 2 were seen as far east as E. Beach, & only 3 from the end of the Seawall to 13-Mile Rd. In a previous CH report, Ted Eubanks, Jr. also noted a large flight of gannets along the Gulf beach (Spoonbill, March or April, 1985). As far as I can tell, these 2 reports represent the largest concentrations of gannets ever seen in the Western Gulf which have been visible from shore."

"In order to see the gannets, the following information might be helpful: a) use a strong telescope; b) check large birds flying out quite far offshore which at 1st glance could be passed off as cormorants, pelicans, or large gulls; c) observe closely any large cormorant-like birds which skim along stiff-winged & in a line just above the waves; & d) observe closely any large bird which dives into the water (which Brown Pelicans also do). There have been more reports of gannets since 1980 than in all the earlier years of record-keeping combined on the UTC (since 1933). Probably this is because telescopes are now more available to more birders than ever before. Nearly all of these gannets were so far out that they would have passed unobserved but for telescopic observation. It is possible that they are more common than they appear to be, but are not seen because of their offshore habitat. It is also possible that they gather in large concentrations just before they migrate north in the spring." More study will give us the answers to these questions."

John Buckman noted the following for the 20+ birds he saw from the Surfside Jetty on 2/1:
 "There were 3 adults, 1 or 2 sub-adults & the rest immature brown birds."

Handicapped Hummers:

At the Freeport CBC countdown, Diane Wise mentioned to me seeing two unusual hummers at her feeders in Algoa. She thought they might be of interest to CH readers. Since I was not aware of much information in the literature concerning the ability of deformed or handicapped birds, & in particular, hummingbirds, to survive in the wild, I encouraged her to record her observations and send them to the CH. Here are her notes, which I thank her for:

"In October we had 2 very unusual female ruby-throated hummers on our feeders. Each stayed several days, & I was able to see them many times at a distance of 3-5 ft. During this period we also had 1-8 other hummers daily.

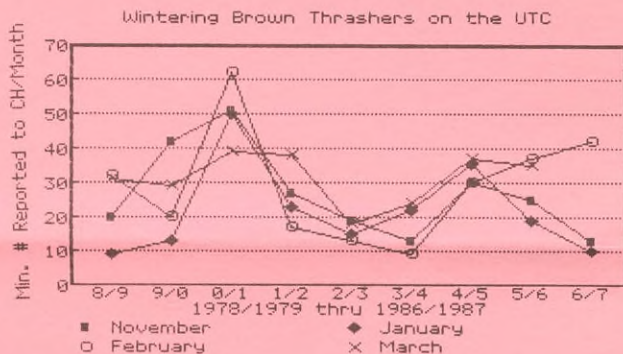
Hummer #1 had no feet & only the stub of 1 leg. It had no trouble feeding, but what did it do at night? Sit on a flat surface & spread its tail for balance? Wedge itself in a bush?

Hummer #2 immediately caught my attention because of its huge beak which appeared to curve downward (We had just returned from Cave Creek Canyon where we had repeatedly seen a lucifer at a feeder at a private residence so the silhouette was really fresh in my mind.). The lower mandible was twice normal size but of normal shape. Close inspection showed that the beak was not down-curved. Instead the upper mandible was vastly oversized, about 3X normal & had a high ridge on it. The entire upper mandible was thickened & ridged, much like a lava flow, with a hump in the middle. It had no trouble feeding, but at no time over a 3 day period did we ever see the tip of the tongue retracted."

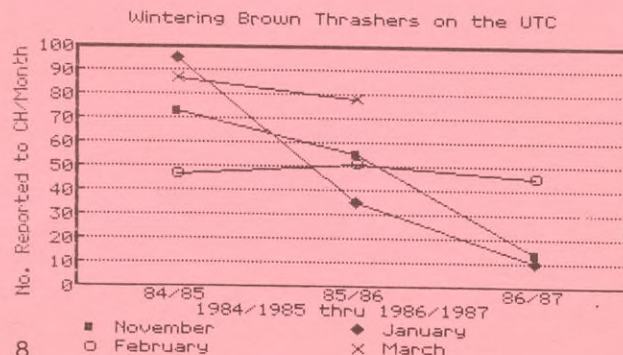
Brown Thrasher Population:

Steve Williams posed the question "It seems that this species (Brown Thrasher) has been less common, even scarce, in much of its usual habitat this winter. Has anybody else noticed or found this to be true?" I turned to the CH data to see if it had any trends. Here's what I found.

Because of the way CH data has been recorded over the years for common (at least at times of the year) species, it is not possible to determine to exact total number of individuals for a given species reported each month prior to Aug. 1984. However, a minimum & maximum total number of individuals for these species can be calculated. For reasons that have to do with open-endedness on the maximum side, the actual number of individuals reported will have a higher probability of being closer to the minimum total calculated than to the calculated maximum or even the average of the minimum & maximum (and if I didn't get that right, I'm sure Jim Morgan will straighten me out). By now you're either totally turned off or you're saying "What the devil (or what in @#*##, as the case may be) has this got to do with Brown Thrashers anyway?" Well, it's all a way of rationalizing the use of the minimum total (as opposed to the maximum or an ave. of the minimum & maximum, etc.) number of individuals reported as being the next best thing to the actual total number of individuals reported (which we don't have for months prior to ...). In the following analysis, incidentally, for common species reported before about the middle of 1976, not even the minimum or maximum total can be calculated in some cases. Thus we have defined the bounds of the data analysis. For those months after Aug. 1984, I have used the calculated minimum total instead of the actual total reported so that the data is internally consistent. Thus for the months Nov., Jan., Feb., & March, we can plot the following:

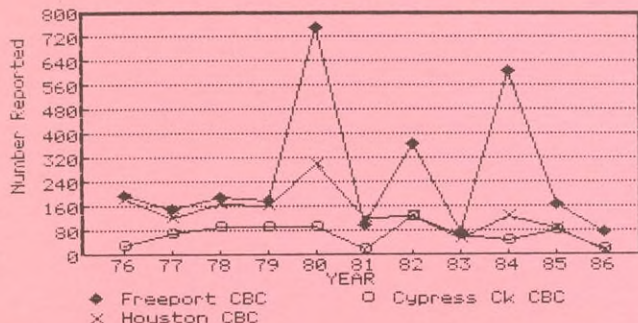


As you can see from the plot, the winter population (as censused by CH reports) shows definite cycles over the last 10 years, e.g. peaks occurring in the winter of 1980/81 and again in 1984/85. Thus, initially one might conclude that the current winter population is in one of the down cycles. But a closer look at the right end of the chart shows some interesting trends. For the 1985/86 and 1986/87 winter, the number of individuals reported during November & January was definitely down from previous years. Perhaps more interesting is that the Nov. & Jan. numbers diverge from the numbers reported for February & March. Depending on where the March 1987 number falls, the divergence could turn out to be larger than at any previous time since 1978. At this point you might be asking, "What if you used the actual total number of individuals reported instead of the calculated minimum?" Good question! Have a look at the next plot.



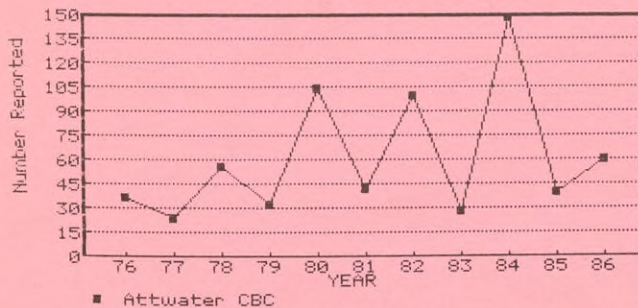
The trend remains the same. So what does this mean? I don't know except that it could explain why at least through half the winter people might perceive that there were less Brown Thrashers around. Why did the numbers start building in Feb. & March? Migration influence you suggest. But why is this only observed in 1985/86 & 1986/87 & not in the previous 7 years I counter. Much could be attributed to the often heard "poor quality" criticism of CH data. While I am not going to argue that the CH data is statically sound, I do think it has some value in pointing out trends. As you may have noticed I did not include the December CH data in the above analysis. That's because with many CBCs happening during late Dec., the reports to the regular CH are heavily distorted, whether the CBC data is included in the regular CH or not. But the CBC data itself, although not perfect, could be of use since it suffers less from some of the problems that may plague CH data. Thus I offer the following:

Brown Thrashers on Selected UTC CBCs



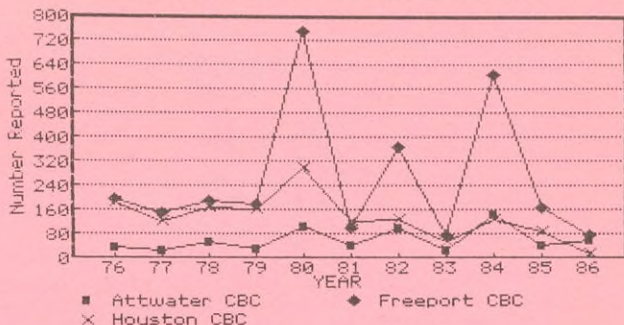
Notice how the numbers really tail off for 1986. Fits rather nicely with the Nov. & Jan. data from the CH shown earlier. So is the Brown Thrasher population crashing or not? Inconclusive from the data presented so far, i.e. because the winter numbers seem to cycle it is not possible to tell at this point if a permanent reduction has occurred or just a natural cycle. What I find most interesting however is the reoccurrence of the spikes through out almost all the data. True, the big 1982 spike in the Freeport CBC data does not show up in the CH data but the 1980 & 1984 spikes certainly do. One last point, if you look at a non-UTC CBC, namely Attwater, the 1986 trend is reversed.

Brown Thrashers on the Attwater CBC



Interesting how the numbers for this count are a perfect saw-tooth pattern. And look at those spikes for 1980, 1982 & 1984, just like Freeport! As a matter of fact, the similarities in pattern across the whole 11 years displayed for the following 3 CBCs are remarkable, considering the difference in number of observers, count strategies, etc. Maybe, just maybe, all this "poor quality" censusing that we do in some way reflects reality.

Brown Thrashers on Selected CBCs



U.S.-MEXICO JOINT WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

On December 2-4, 1986, the Joint Committee for Wildlife Conservation met in Mexico. Frank Dunkle, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service headed the U.S. team and the Mexican team was led by Jose Domingo Gonzalez Solorio, Director General for Ecological Conservation of Natural Resources for the Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology.

Mr. Dunkle reported that in addition to the government, eight Mexican conservation groups, research organizations and universities participated for the first time. Their expertise and resources will add considerably to the projects.

Since the joint committee was established in 1974, the U.S. and Mexico have made annual surveys of wintering waterfowl and worked to help the endangered Masked Bobwhite and Mexican wolf. Both sides felt that this meeting was the most successful ever.

Programs approved were: 1) Continuation of White-winged Dove and wintering waterfowl surveys; 2) Development of plans to protect and manage important Mexican wetlands; 3) New studies on distribution, abundance and harvest of wintering Black Brant and Snow Geese in Mexico; 4) Joint surveys of endangered Yuma Clapper Rails in Mexico; 5) Joint surveys of endangered Masked Bobwhites in Mexico; 6) Restoration of the extirpated Mexican turkey (*Meleagris galopavo mexicana*) in the U.S. 7) Control of illegal wildlife trade. The U.S. will provide training for Mexican biologists in a number of these programs.

Also at this meeting the possibility that Mexico might join the U.S. and Canada in North American waterfowl management was discussed. Director Dunkle invited a Mexican delegate to the March 1987 meeting of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Quebec.

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

DO look now to see if your mailing label still says 12-86, because in that case your subscription is about to lapse.

GUADALUPE DELTA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

A new area, the Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area, has been created north of Aransas NWR, according to De Rerum Natura, the newsletter of the Golden Crescent Nature Club of Victoria. It is off Highway 35, north of Tivoli, between Green Lake and the Guadalupe River crossing.

FOR OG information, checklists, maps, contact Maxine Davis, 10602 Cedarhurst, Houston 77096, 723-8559.

SEND bird records for Clearing House to Ron Braun 1302 Berrywood Ln., Houston 77077, 496-3108.

RARE Bird Alert Tape, sponsored by Piney Woods Wildlife Society: 821-2846

SEND material for Spoonbill to Co-Editor, Libby Price, 3715 Sunset, Houston 77005, 665-1159.

SEND dues, subscriptions and address changes to Peter Vennema, 2120 Tangley, Houston 77005
Annual Dues \$11 (ONC \$5, OG \$6)
Annual Subscriptions: \$9

COMPETE IN BIRDATHON '87

It's time once more for rugged birders to aim for new records in Birdathon '87.

TIME: April 25th, midnight of the 24th to midnight of the 25th.

PLACE: Orange, Liberty, Harris, Montgomery, Hardin, Galveston, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Waller, Austin, Colorado, Matagorda, Jefferson and Chambers Counties.

HOW: A team of 2-5 people may pay the \$25 registration fee itself or find a conservation group to sponsor it, then get as many people or cor-

porations as possible to pledge as large a sum as possible for each species seen. Teams may raise money for any of the following: 1) Maintenance of HAS sanctuaries; 2) Publication of a checklist of Hermann Park birds by P. D. Hulce and Steve Schultz; or 3) The Texas Breeding Bird Atlas. To register call HAS at 932-1392 or Laura Singleton at 666-7736.

N.B. REGISTRATION IS NOW ONLY \$25. SUPPORT THESE GOOD CAUSES BY COMPETING.

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