

The SPOONBILL



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Coming Events

Thursday, Mar. 3: Ornithology Group meeting at Bayou Manor, 4141 S. Braeswood at 7:30 PM. We will have the rare pleasure of hearing a speaker from Australia, Simon Neville, owner of Falcon Tours. He will present a program, with slides by his co-leader, a nature photographer, showing birds and habitats in seldom-visited parts of the "Outback." Deadline for *Spoonbill* material and for reports to Clearing House. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

Thursday, Mar. 10: Outdoor Nature Club meeting at the Houston Arboretum. Loretta Marr will present "South Pacific Odyssey."

Friday-Monday, Mar. 26-28: Ornithology Group weekend field trip to the Rio Grande Valley. Saturday and Sunday we will bird Santa Ana NWR and Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park. Monday we will bird at Falcon Reservoir before returning home. For those who cannot drive down Friday afternoon, a Saturday meeting place will be arranged at about 1:00 PM. There have been numerous rarities in the Valley this winter in addition to the "ordinary" birds seen nowhere else in the U.S. We can look forward to an excellent trip. If you plan to go call Andrew or Rene Franks at home (943-7609) or at work: Andrew (483-1250); Rene (527-6408). If you will be camping and call before March 4, we will make campground reservations for you. If you plan to stay in a motel, McAllen would be best for Friday and Saturday nights. Rio Grande City is nearest to Falcon Dam for Sunday night; you can try the Fort Ringgold Best Western there. When the number of participants and what they would like to see is known, a final itinerary with complete instructions will be mailed.

ELECTION IN MARCH - NOMINEES CHOSEN

The Nominating Committee has selected the following nominees for the OG's four elective offices: Ed Rozenburg for President; Derek Muschalek for Vice-President; Jerry Patrick for Treasurer; and Richard Uzar for Secretary. The election will be held at the meeting on March 3.

CLEARING HOUSE EDITOR NEEDED

A volunteer is needed to serve as Clearing House Editor. Ted Eubanks has been our interim Editor, but he will be unable to continue past March. To make the job simpler, Ted has adopted a standard computer program that is easy to follow, and developed a report form to standardize members' reports that reduces the time needed to enter them. Copies of this form will be distributed at the March meeting.

We have all benefited from the work of those before us who kept the record of sightings. Unless we continue to compile sightings in the Clearing House it is going to be impossible to get out another accurate and up-to-date UTC checklist. Someone who wants to make a vital contribution by adding current data to that which has been accumulated by others needs to take on this very important job of Clearing House Editor.

ARE YOUR DUES CURRENT?

Please check your mailing label to see which year yours is dated. If yours says "87" your dues for the current year have not been received. Call Jerry Patrick at 461-4975 if you have a question.

Noel's Niche Looking Back

by Noel Pettingell

.....10 YEARS AGO/FROM FEB. 1978 SPOONBILL

"Note for February SPOONBILL from Fred Collins

The Rough-legged Hawk is often confused with the highly variable Red-tailed Hawk. One 'field mark' often considered is this undefined aspect of hovering. The Golden Press Guide Birds of North America states that the Red-tail 'rarely hovers.' Anyone that has spent more than a few hours watching Red-tails knows how misleading this statement is. However if we define hovering and contrast it with another type of stationary flight, fluttering, the statement in the aforementioned guide may be valid. With proper definition Red-tails rarely, if ever, hover and consequently hovering can be a useful field characteristic.

"I consider hovering as that type of stationary flight in which the wings are held in a plane near perpendicular with the body. The most familiar hovering bird in our area is the White-tailed Kite. The wings are held above the head pointing up in a 'V.' The body is dropped to a vertical position, and the tail is turned down almost perpendicular to the ground. This posture is accentuated by the kite dangling its legs. The Rough-legged Hawk exhibits the same features in its hovering posture. Similarly, the body proportions are similar to the kite, narrow wings and relatively long tail.

"The Red-tail when fluttering holds a stationary position but keeps the body in a horizontal plane, the same as the wings. The tips of the wings move, the inner portions maintain a soaring position in the wind. The tail never falls far below the body plane. The wings are relatively broad and tail proportionate. It is noteworthy that Roger T. Peterson doesn't list the Red-tail as a similar species in his account of the Rough-legged."

.....20 YEARS AGO/FROM FEB. 1968 SPOONBILL

"TREE TANGLEFOOT - by Henry Aldrich

"Tree Tanglefoot is keeping squirrels out of my bird feeders and saving me a fortune in sunflower seed. I learned about this repellent from an article on Nuisance Barriers in the January issue of Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine. It is described in the article as one in the category of 'an extremely sticky concoction, disagreeable underfoot to birds. It is colorless, odorless and harmless to birds. It lasts many months and is not affected by weather.' The article did not mention squirrels although it gave it as an alternate to a 'one to two-foot piece of tin girdling tree at least four feet from ground.' I set up two pipe mounted feeders, one about five feet off the ground, the other about eight feet. I removed the squirrel guards which had not been effective. On each of the pipes I smeared the tanglefoot for a length of about eighteen inches at a height of about four feet from the ground. I have not seen a squirrel in either feeder since Friday. (article was written January 30.) The six ounce

tube which we bought from a nearby pet and garden shop, is as big as the biggest 'family size' tube of toothpaste. The amount that I've used is hardly appreciable."

OWL REPORT

For eight winters Diane and Doyle Wise, who live in Alvin, had a nesting pair of Screech Owls, which arrived in the fall and successfully raised their chicks. Last year there was trouble with ants in the box, but thanks to Diane playing stepmother and cleaning the ants out, the chicks survived. This year the female owl took over the box in the fall as usual, but just after Christmas, when the Wises returned from a trip, Diane saw a squirrel in the box and there was no sign of the owls. It was the first squirrel she had ever seen there, since there were no large trees on their land. Now that the pines the Wises planted are bearing cones, the squirrel seems to be finding food. Since he has taken over the box, there will be no Screech Owl chicks this year.

Barn Owls, however, have returned to their box for the third year and seem undisturbed. They always arrive between January 28 and February 2. In the past they have reared chicks each year, and Diane is hoping for equally good luck in 1988.

MEXICAN SPECIALTIES

by Jim Morgan

On December 27 I flew to Oaxaca City to meet up with Bob Behrstock and Gloria Saylor for eight days of birding in the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. I was looking forward to this trip since we were going to concentrate on three areas known for certain Mexican endemics (E) and specialties.

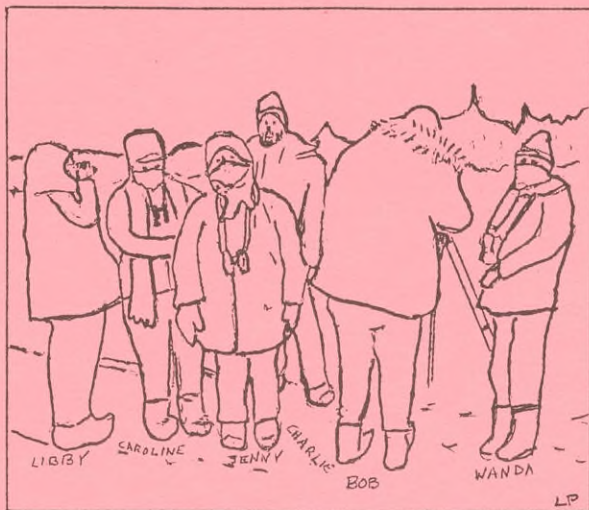
We began our birding around Oaxaca City. Since Bob had just finished co-leading a Oaxaca birding tour for WINGS, he had several "stakeouts" nearby. Early on our first day we proceeded to the ruins at Monte Alban, where we were immediately greeted by the ubiquitous White-throated Towhee (E), Nuttig's Flycatcher, and Dusky Hummingbird (E). Within one-half hour we located the beautiful and rare Slaty Vireo (E). A little later on, after great looks at Boucard's Wren (E) and Gray-breasted Woodpecker (E), Bob called in the little-known and very rare Dwarf Vireo (E). This bird scolded freely while giving us some real good looks after first skulking through the brush.

As the morning wore on the ruins became crowded with non-birding visitors, so we proceeded to the less crowded Ruinas Yagul and areas nearby. Here we located Bridled Sparrow (E) and Beautiful Hummingbird (E), the latter species being closely related to, and very similar to Lucifer's Hummingbird. We also relocated one of Bob's "stakeouts," the elusive Ocellated Thrasher (E).

Our second day found us proceeding to Cerro San Felipe. Even though we were engulfed in cloud mist and hampered by wind, we found numerous Gray-barred Wrens (E), Collared Towhees (E) and Dwarf Jays (E). Good looks were obtained by all three of us. In addition to these Mexican species

MINNESOTA IN JANUARY

by Ellen Red



The television scenes of horrendous blizzards all over the U.S. did not intimidate a stalwart group of nineteen OG members, who with their fearless leader, Bob Behrstock, flew to Minnesota on January 8th for a weekend of birding. We had spent weeks rounding up all the warm clothing we could lay hands on, and we felt confident we would be equal to the elements.

However, when we first stepped out of the Minneapolis airport, we looked at each other in disbelief. It was COLD. We quickly boarded two vans and were off to Duluth, which is on the shores of Lake Superior. Our motel, on the lake's edge, looked out over boundless icy water shrouded in mist. We questioned the wisdom of getting a motel so close to the water in such cold weather. The TV weather report that night set us straight. It was eighteen degrees below zero by the lake; further inland the temperature was minus twenty-five!

Our comfort was short-lived. "Inland" is where we were going the next morning. We met at the vans at 5:30 A.M. bundled like Eskimos. After a breakfast stop we drove west of Duluth for an hour or so. Daylight revealed beautiful snow-covered farmland, dotted with colorful houses and barns. There had been no snow for a few days, and the roads had been scraped. Driving, even on little farm roads, presented no difficulty, but we wondered if we would see any birds in that vast white wilderness. Yesterday we had seen a Rough-legged Hawk from the freeway. Now in the dawn we saw another and a few crows. Suddenly a Northern Shrike swooped across the road and posed on a branch. Next we saw a flock of Redpolls and then two Pine Grosbeaks pecking gravel in the road.

Early on we mastered a vexing problem. The moist air in the vans frosted the windows and froze solid. A scraper was provided, but it took time, and of course we all wanted to use it at once. Some genius in the car (Was it Carol Sloan?) suggested using a plastic credit card for scraping the ice. It worked! We scraped; we looked out; the frost came back; we scraped again. In this way we managed

to spot Gray Jays, Hairy Woodpeckers, Siskins, Blue Jays, a few White-winged Crossbills and several large flocks of Snow Buntings. Once when we stopped to photograph a frozen stream marked "Mississippi River," two Bohemian Waxwings flew into a bush nearby.

Whenever a bird was seen, we all literally tumbled out of the vans. Scarves, hats and mittens had to be retrieved in seconds. If you had your boots off, you probably missed the bird. Boots off? Well, some of us simply had to massage our icy toes every now and then, especially those with rubber boots. Once later on in the trip after a quick rest stop at our motel, Charlie Smith told us that for a few minutes he had stood in a tub of hot water with his boots on, thereby warming boots, socks and toes in the time allotted.

Terry Savaloja, our Minnesota expert and driver of one of the vans, was not bothered by the cold and kept his attention on finding the birds he knew to be there. Suddenly he stopped the van and shouted "Sharp-tailed Grouse." High in a tamarack tree by the side of the road, we could all see a prairie-chicken type bird calmly eating the buds of the tree. His light-colored breast and pointed tail were clearly visible. It was a lifer for nearly everyone. Terry told us that the grouse bury under the snow most of the time, and only occasionally come out to eat. Later Bob Willman spotted a Ruffed Grouse, which had a wide, banded tail and black neck patches, another great bird.

At dusk as we were coming back to Duluth, Terry told us to look for Snowy Owls. Wanda Smith saw one high on a building near the harbor as we were whizzing down the freeway. We had to make a huge circle to get back to it, but it waited for us. What a spectacular way to end the day!

The second day we went a hundred miles north of Duluth into forests of spruce, fir and birch trees. We were walking along a snowy road when we found three spruce grouse in a tree right over our heads. We could see and photograph the beautiful male bird easily, since he did not move, even with twenty people immediately below him. That day we also found Boreal Chickadees, Evening Grosbeaks, nuthatches and other small birds at feeders in people's front yards. We had lunch at Grand Marais, a few miles from the Canadian border, where we saw Herring Gulls, Black Ducks and a few Goldeneyes.

On our last morning we found three spectacular birds in the countryside around Duluth. Before sun-up we found a Great Gray Owl on a pole near the road and saw it well by the light of Bob's Q-beam. A little later a Hawk Owl was even more cooperative and stayed around for photographs. Our next bird was not so easy and required a long walk through snowy woods. We were all glad to finally see a Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker pecking away on the trunk of a pine tree.

The last bird of the trip's forty-five species was a Common Merganser. We saw ten near the airport in Minneapolis. We just had time to take a quick look before speeding to the plane. Back in Houston we said good-bye and headed for our cars waiting in the parking lot. I peeled off my coat and flipped on the air-conditioner. Now, this was more like it!

Clearing House - DECEMBER, 1987

The Clearing House is a monthly listing of bird sightings made on the upper Texas coast (UTC). The UTC is comprised of Brazoria, Chambers, Ft. Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, and Waller counties. How to read the CH - Species: location code (number)_date_ observer. For those species whose sightings are itemized each individual record is segregated by a semicolon (;). The sightings of common, widely distributed species are summarized as follows: Species: #_reports (low count - high count)_early date - late date. Noteworthy sightings will be underlined, capitalized, or both, according to their status as described on the UTC Checklist. Birds with very rare, vagrant, or accidental status on the Checklist at the date of the sighting require details. Sightings lacking required details will not be included in the CH. Details for observations affecting a species' status on the current UTC Checklist will be published, and the documentation referred to the UTC Checklist Committee for consideration. Such documentation is required for an observation to be considered by the Checklist Committee.

185 species reported this month (excluding Christmas Counts)

Loon, Common: Galv(5)5, BB
 Grebe, Pied-billed: 8 reports (2-7)5-24
 Pelican, American White: 6 reports (1-5)5-24
 Pelican, Brown: BF(10)5, BB; RP(124)5, BB; WGI(8)5, BB
 Cormorant, Double-crested: 3 reports (2-30)12-18
 Cormorant, Olivaceous: EG(8)5, BB; SJSP(23)19, Mu
 Anhinga: WHC(1)4, SW; FBC(1)12, HA
 Heron, Great Blue: 5 reports (1-6)5-18
 Egret, Great: 7 reports (1-15)5-18
 Egret, Snowy: 3 reports (1-12)5-12
 Heron, Little Blue: 4 reports (1)4-12
 Heron, Tricolored: 3 reports (2)4-6
 Egret, Reddish: 4 reports (1-3)5-19
 Egret, Cattle: 2 reports (15,75)12, 18
 Night-Heron, Black-crowned: 4 reports (1-8)5-18
 Ibis, White: 8 reports (1-10)4-31
 Ibis, White-faced: 9 reports (10-145)2-26
 Spoonbill, Roseate: 5 reports (1-18)6-23
 Whistling-Duck, Fulvous: WC(1)18, ME - notes submitted
 Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied: WC(22)10, SW; BC(12)12, HA; WC(800)18, ME; BBSP(30)24, HC
 Goose, Greater White-fronted: 5 reports (1-4000)2-22
 Goose, Snow: 9 reports (1-4000)2-27
 Goose, Ross': FBC(1)24, HC
 Goose, Canada: 3 reports (105-550)2-24
 Duck, Wood: WC(2)2, Mu; BC(1)12, HA
 Teal, Green-winged: 6 reports (10-30)2-22
 Duck, Mottled: 6 reports (1-30)2-22
 Mallard: WHC(52)2, Mu; ANWR(30)5, BB; FBC(15)16, TM
 Pintail, Northern: 7 reports (20-20000)2-18
 Teal, Blue-winged: 4 reports (4-100)5-22
 Teal, Cinnamon: SBNW(12)22, DM
 Shoveler, Northern: 5 reports (5-1500)5-22
 Gadwall: 7 reports (20-240)2-22
 Wigeon, American: 7 reports (12-150)2-24
 Canvasback: 5 reports (1-20)2-24
 Redhead: WHC(1)2, Mu; FBC(1)12, HA; SBNW(2)22, DM
 Duck, Ring-necked: 6 reports (6-58)2-19
 Scaup, Lesser: WC(15)2, Mu; RP(20)5, BB - combine these paltry numbers with those in the Christmas Counts and you will have dramatic testimony as to what some of us have been saying for the last 5 years - the scaup are disappearing from the UTC - ed.
 scaup, sp.: BNWR(18)6, RU
 Goldeneye, Common: SJSP(1)7, Mu
 Bufflehead: 5 reports (3-37)6-24
 Merganser, Hooded: SJSP(43)7, Mu; SJSP(33)19, Mu - what happened to all of the Hooded Mergansers at Hale Ranch (now BBSP) - ed.?
 Merganser, Red-breasted: RP(28)5, BB
 Duck, Ruddy: 4 reports (50-75)2-12
 duck, sp.: ANWR(500)5, BB
 Vulture, Black: 4 reports (2-18)10-22
 Vulture, Turkey: 4 reports (2-18)3-160
 Osprey: SJSP(2)7, Mu; SJSP(1)19, Mu; HC(1)23, JF
 Kite, Black-shouldered: 8 reports (1-10)4-24
 Eagle, Bald: WC(2)2, Mu; WC(1)18, ME
 Harrier, Northern: 6 reports (2-40)5-22
 Hawk, Sharp-shinned: 4 reports (1-3)12-24

Hawk, Cooper's: 5 reports (1)4-31
 Hawk, Red-shouldered: 5 reports (1-12)5-24
 Hawk, White-tailed: WC(1)18, ME - upgrade status - ed.
 Hawk, Red-tailed: 9 reports (1-35)2-22
 (Hawk, Harlan's): WC(1)18, ME - upgrade status - ed.
 Hawk, Ferruginous: BC(1)12, HA; WC(2)18, ME; BC(1)24, HC - upgrade status - ed.
 Caracara, Crested: WC(1)17, SW; WC(3)18, ME; WC(1)24, WC; FBC(2)24, HC
 Kestrel, American: 12 reports (1-45)2-31
 Merlin: FBC(1)16, TM
 Bobwhite, Northern: 4 reports (11-23)16-24
 Rail, Clapper: SJSP(3)19, Mu - would seem to be a bit inland for a Clapper - I wonder just how far up Galveston Bay that the Clapper extends.
 Rail, King: ANWR(1)5, BB; WC(1)18, ME
 Gallinule, Purple: ANWR(2)5, BB; WGI(1)5, BB - documentary photos provided - ed.
 Moorhen, Common: 4 reports (1-50)5-22
 Coot, American: 4 reports (20-900)5-18
 Crane, Sandhill: FBC(50)12, HA; BC(75)12, HA; SBNW(34)22, DM
 Plover, Black-bellied: RP(10)5, BB; Galv(4)5, BB
 Killdeer: 10 reports (1-250)1-22
 Oystercatcher, American: RP(5)5, BB; Galv(3)5, BB
 Stilt, Black-necked: Bol(20)5, BB
 Avocet, American: RP(30)5, BB; WC(5)10, SW
 Yellowlegs, Greater: 4 reports (1-3)5-13
 Yellowlegs, Lesser: 3 reports (1-20)5-18
 Willet: Galv(20)5, BB; Bol(40)5, BB
 Sandpiper, Spotted: FBC(1)16, TM
 Curlew, Long-billed: 6 reports (1-60)5-22
 Godwit, Marbled: RP(8)5, BB
 Turnstone, Ruddy: Bol(10)5, BB
 Sanderling: CUTC(n/c)5, BB - yes, folks, we are monitoring the status of the Sanderling with a critical eye - ed!
 Sandpiper, Western: WC(3)18, ME
 Dunlin: Galv(8)5, BB
 Dowitcher, Long-billed: WC(1200)2, Mu; WC(150)18, ME
 Snipe, Common: 4 reports (1-75)5-18
 Woodcock, American: SJSP(2)19, Mu
 Gull, Laughing: 2 reports (1-30)5, 6
 Gull, Bonaparte's: Galv(50)5, BB; SJSP(1)7, Mu; SJSP(1)19, Mu
 Gull, Ring-billed: 4 reports (1-260)5-19
 Gull, Herring: 3 reports (1-8)4-19
 Tern, Gull-billed: Galv(1)5, BB; SBNW(2)22, DM
 Tern, Caspian: 3 reports (5-10)5-19
 Tern, Royal: 2 reports (2-300)5, 19
 Tern, Sandwich: Galv(10)5, BB
 Tern, Common: Galv(20)5, BB; SJSP(3)19, Mu
 Tern, Forster's: 2 reports (1-45)5, 19
 Skimmer, Black: 3 reports (20-600)5-19
 Dove, Rock: 6 reports (8-43)12-31
 Dove, White-winged: SWH(1-4)3-31, WS
 Dove, Mourning: 11 reports (2-125)5-31
 Dove, Inca: 4 reports (1-13)5-31
 Ground-Dove, Common: 4 reports (2-15)10-22
 Ani, Groove-billed: WGI(6)5, BB
 Barn-Owl, Common: SWH(1)11, SW; WC(1)18, ME
 Screech-Owl, Eastern: SWH(1)30, TM
 Owl, Great Horned: WC(1)18, ME; SBNW(1)22, DM
 Owl, Barred: 5 reports (1-6)10-22
 Hummingbird, Buff-bellied: GC(1)27, BHO - after this winter, we'll have to rewrite the book on UTC hummers - ed!
 Hummingbird, Ruby-throated: WHC(2)10, SW - no notes submitted - why not Black-chinned - ed?
 Hummingbird, Rufous: Hou(1)8-29, Mo
 Kingfisher, Belted: 6 reports (1-6)5-18
 Woodpecker, Red-headed: WC(1)2, Mu; WC(3)18, ME
 Woodpecker, Red-bellied: 8 reports (1-8)12-31
 Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: 9 reports (1-15)2-31
 Woodpecker, Downy: 9 reports (1-25)2-31
 Woodpecker, Hairy: SJSP(1)7, Mu; SJSP(1)19, Mu
 Flicker, Northern: 13 reports (1-20)2-31
 Woodpecker, Pileated: 4 reports (1-4)2-22
 Phoebe, Eastern: 9 reports (2-52)5-31
 Flycatcher, Vermilion: FBC(1)16, TM; SBNW(2)22, DM; BBSP(2)24, HC
 Flycatcher, Ash-throated: BC(2)12, HA; WC(1)18, ME - notes submitted - ed.
 Flycatcher, Scissor-tailed: WHC(1)24, WC - notes submitted - ed.
 Lark, Horned: BNWR(7)6, RU; WHC(7)17, SW
 Swallow, Tree: WHC(55)10, SW; WC(4)10, SW

Swallow, Barn: WC(1)2,Mu
 Jay, Blue: 9 reports (5-40)5-31
 Crow, American: 5 reports (5-250)5-31
 Chickadee, Carolina: 10 reports (1-48)5-31
 Titmouse, Tufted: 5 reports (1-24)10-22
 Creeper, Brown: 4 reports (1-4)2-22
 Wren, Carolina: 5 reports (1-12)2-22
 Wren, Bewick's: WC(6)18,ME; SBNW(3)22,DM
 Wren, House: 6 reports (1-16)5-22
 Wren, Winter: WC(1)2,Mu; SJSP(1)19,Mu
 Wren, Sedge: 6 reports (1-32)6-22
 Wren, Marsh: BNWR(3)6,RU; SBNW(2)22,DM
 Kinglet, Golden-crowned: 7 reports (1-17)5-22
 Kinglet, Ruby-crowned: 15 reports (1-92)1-31
 Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: 5 reports (1-36)5-24
 Bluebird, Eastern: 6 reports (1-40)2-24
 Thrush, Hermit: 7 reports (1-21)2-31
 Robin, American: 8 reports (1-900)5-31
 Catbird, Gray: SJSP(1)7,Mu; BC(1)12,HA; WC(1)18,ME
 Mockingbird, Northern: 10 reports (1-40)5-31
 Thrasher, Brown: 11 reports (1-30)2-31
 Pipit, Water: FBC(50)12,HA; FBC(3)16,TM; WC(4)18,ME
 Waxwing, Cedar: 8 reports (10-250)2-31
 Shrike, Loggerhead: 10 reports (1-60)5-31
 Starling, European: 3 reports (1-30)5-31
 Vireo, White-eyed: SBNW(2)22,DM
 Vireo, Solitary: 4 reports (1-8)5-31
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: 8 reports (1-36)5-22
 Warbler, Yellow-rumped: 12 reports (7-175)5-31
 Warbler, Pine: 9 reports (1-6)2-31
 Warbler, Palm: FBC(1)16,TM; SBNW(3)22,DM
 Redstart, American: WGI(1)5, BB - notes submitted - ed.
 Yellowthroat, Common: 4 reports (1-40)5-24
 Warbler, Wilson's: SBNW(2)22,DM; BBSP(1)24,HC
 Cardinal, Northern: 12 reports (1-75)5-31
 Towhee, Rufous-sided: 4 reports (1-3)10-22
 Sparrow, Chipping: WHC(1)2,Mu; WHC(3)10,SW;
 WC(20)18,ME; BBSP(20)24,HC
 Sparrow, Field: 6 reports (1-15)2-22
 Sparrow, Vesper: 6 reports (1-40)2-22
 Sparrow, Lark: BC(1)12,HA
 Sparrow, Savannah: 5 reports (10-236)6-22
 Sparrow, Grasshopper: FBC(1)16,TM; SBNW(8)22,DM
 Sparrow, Le Conte's: FBC(2)16,TM; WC(6)18,ME;
 SBNW(26)22,DM
 Sparrow, Fox: 7 reports (1-25)2-22
 Sparrow, Song: 4 reports (4-19)12-22
 Sparrow, Lincoln's: 7 reports (1-36)4-22
 Sparrow, Swamp: 7 reports (3-180)5-22
 Sparrow, White-throated: 10 reports (2-200)6-31
 Sparrow, White-crowned: WHC(13)10,SW; WC(3)18,ME;
 SBNW(16)22,DM
 Sparrow, Harris': WHC(1)10,SW; WC(25)18,ME;
 SBNW(2)22,DM - unusual location - ed?
 Junco, Dark-eyed: 7 reports (1-22)2-22
 Longspur, Lapland: WC(500)18,ME
 Blackbird, Red-winged: 6 reports (1-10000)5-18
 Meadowlark, Eastern: 6 reports (1-240)5-22
 Meadowlark, Western: WHC(1)2,Mu
 Blackbird, Rusty: WC(2)18,ME
 Grackle, Great-tailed: 4 reports (1-50)5-18
 Grackle, Boat-tailed: TCD(50)31,MO
 Grackle, Common: 4 reports (1-75)5-18
 Cowbird, Brown-headed: 5 reports (100-5000)5-22
 blackbird, sp.: WC(12000)18,ME
 Finch, Purple: WOB(8)22,WC
 Siskin, Pine: 6 reports (1-6)7-31
 Goldfinch, American: 12 reports (12-290)1-31
 Sparrow, House: 2 reports (1-40)5,18

Location Codes

AB - Armand Bayou
 ANWR - Anahuac NWR
 Algo - Algoa
 BBSP - Brazos Bend State Park
 BC - Brazoria County
 BF - Bolivar Flats
 BNWR - Brazoria NWR
 BP - Bay Area Park
 Bayt - Baytown
 Bol - Bolivar Peninsula
 CC - Chamber's County
 CUTC - Coastal Upper Texas Coast
 EG - East Galveston Island
 EH - East Houston
 FBC - Fort Bend County
 Fr - Friendswood
 Free - Freeport
 GC - Galveston County
 GISP - Galveston Island State Park

Galv - Galveston Island
 H - Houston
 HA - Houston Arboretum
 HI - High Island
 HP - Hermann Park
 Kemp - Kempner Park, Galveston
 LC - Lake Charlotte
 NHC - North Harris County
 Pasa - Pasadena
 Pear - Pearland
 RP - Rollover Pass
 RU - Rice University
 SBNW - San Bernard NWR
 SLP - San Luis Pass
 SWH - Southwest Houston
 SWHC - Southwest Harris County
 Seab - Seabrook
 TCD - Texas City Dike
 UTC - Upper Texas Coast
 WC - Waller County
 WGI - West Galveston Island
 WH - West Houston
 WHC - West Harris County
 WMP - White Memorial Park
 WOB - White Oak Bayou

CH Contributors

Observers

BB - Bob Behrstock
 BH - Bob Honig
 BHo - Barbara House
 DW - Doug Williams
 JF - Joe Farrel
 JM - Jim Morgan
 MO - M.L. Owens
 Mu - Derek Muschalek
 PM - Peggy Milstead
 RU - Richard Uzar
 SW - Steve Williams
 TE - Ted Eubanks
 TM - Tommy Michaels
 WC - Wesley Cureton
 WS - Wanda Smith

Parties

DM - Mu, TM
 HA - BH, DW, Houston Arboretum Field Trip
 HC - BH, Caroline and Nancy Callery
 ME - TE, JM, Paul Lehman

Field Notes

RED-NECKED GREBE December 26, 1987

Notes not submitted by GCC compiler for publishing in the Clearing House - ed.

MASKED BOOBY December 19, 1987

Bird flying with 13 Gannets. All white but black tail and black trailing edge of wings. Mask.

David Dauphin

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT December 19, 1987

Species: White-collared Swift
Observers: Ted Eubanks Jr. and Jim Morgan
Time of day: 0945-1030
Length of sighting: 45 minutes
Weather: Cloudy and overcast; intermittent showers, wind N-10
Light conditions: Fair to good
Distance and elevation: 30 ft to 300 ft; elev- 6 ft to 100 ft
Optical Equipment: Zeiss 10X40 binocs; Nikon 560 mm and Canon 200 mm cameras.
Habitat: Coastal littoral zone, from water's edge to 150 m inland.
Voice: None
Size or comparison: Initial impression was of a very small falcon, but when recognized as a swift it was realized to be a very large swift.
Behavior: Hawking insects over coastal dunes. Bird followed coastal highway from Surfside to outside the count circle.
Description: Very large swift with mainly black plumage except for white collar extending around throat and nape. Collar somewhat buffy (dull white on nape), whiter below. Collar clearly encircled the bird. Tail was noticeably forked. Wings "saber" shaped. Flew with rapid, deep wing beats (not as rapid or shallow as Chimney Swift) with regular gliding with wings held in a downward arch. PHOTOGRAPHED!!
Similarly appearing species:
 1) Black Swift eliminated by white collar.
 2) White-naped eliminated by collar encircling bird.
 3) Chimney and Vaux have no white and are smaller.
 4) White-throated Swift has extensive white underparts and is much smaller.
Additional description (Eubanks): The bird was initially to my left rear as we drove south toward Surfside. My immediate impression was of a small falcon, and this sighting lasted only 1-2 seconds. We stopped the truck and headed back north on FM 3005. At my second glimpse of the bird I knew we had a swift,

and that it was too large to be a Chimney/Vaux/White-throated. My next conclusion, therefore, was Black Swift. We quickly stopped the car and jumped out, catching the bird as it circled overhead. The white throat was clearly visible, leaving only White-collared as a possibility. Several more banks confirmed that the collar extended onto the nape and completely encircled the bird.

Description: large, black swift with white collar encircling the throat. Long, bowed wings. Tail forked, though not so dramatically as one of the swallow-tailed swifts. The collar on the nape appeared to be slightly duller than the throat, almost buffy. Morgan and I followed the bird from 2 miles N of Surfside to San Luis Pass, a distance of 16 miles. This distance was covered by the bird in 45 minutes. The bird crossed San Luis Pass onto Galveston Island, where it was lost from sight.

Additional White-collared Swift Notes

All black swift-like bird, long narrow backward curved wings, cigar shaped body, short notched tail, white throat and nape forming collar, no distinct bill length but it was short, head did not extend beyond wings. Definitely a swift.

Wanda Smith, Peter Gottschling, Jerryann

Short stubby bill; black head (solid) with white under neck. Over all dark bird other than white shown above. Bird not observed from top side (underneath only), tail notched. Long, narrow pointed wings. Swallow shaped but longer and too large. Head did not protrude much.

Lynne Aldrich, Charlie Smith, Caroline Callery, Nancy Callery

Editor's Note - this represents the first record of White-collared Swift for the UTC, the third for Texas, and only the fifth for North America north of Mexico.

The nearest resident population of this species is at El Salto, approximately 300 miles south of Brownsville near the city of Mante.

SAY'S PHOEBE

Although the compiler for the FCC supplied me with reams of field notes, those for the Say's Phoebe were somehow left out. Therefore as of this date the CH has received no notes on this bird - ed.

PYRRHULOXIA

January 3, 1988

Bill all-dark buff. Red on face and on thin curved crest. Buff brown underparts and upperparts. Red on tail. Associated with a flock of White-crowned Sparrows. Have seen thousands of Pyrrhuloxias in south and west Texas. This was a buff-brown bird with red restricted to face, tail, and on long, thin curved crest.

Peter Gottschling

BLUE BUNTING

December 19, 1987

Overall appearance of bunting, heavy seed-eating conical bill, metallic black. He had black wings with lighter blue in scapulars (blue was iridescent), primaries jet black. Belly blue-black. Forehead and cheeks showed light blue (same light blue as scapulars). Indigo Bunting was eliminated due to no brown on plumage, two tone blue coloration, voice - loud chip with a rising inflection.

Tom Collins, Tom Morris

Species: Blue Bunting (Confirmation - 21 Dec 87)
Observers: Jim Morgan, Tom and Sherry Collins, Sandy Dillard.

Time of Day: 1030

Length of Sighting: Off and on for over 15 minutes

Weather: Light rain

Light Conditions: Fair to good

Distance and elevation: 8-15 meters

Optical Equipment: 10X40 Zeiss, other binocs

Habitat: Yaupon, briars, and scrub thicket among scattered large hardwoods.

Voice: Distinct chip, not as "warbler-like" as Indigo Bunting.

Size or comparison: Same size as Indigo or Painted Bunting but noticeably "chunkier".

Behavior: Secretive, but responded to E. Screech-Owl and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and "pishing".

Description: Mainly dark blue, almost black in color with much brighter blue cheeks, crown (mainly forehead) and wing coverts; large, conical bill, in size between the Indigo Bunting and Blue Grosbeak bills; bill a metallic bluish-gray in color. Bird seen perched,

skulking and in flight. Always seemed heavier of body than Indigo Bunting - more robust, chunkier, heavier bill.

Similar Species: Complete lack of brown or rufous, darker blue (blue-black) and heavier bill and body, plus bright blue cheeks, crown and wing coverts eliminates Indigo Bunting. Lack of wing-bars, short tail, smaller bill and dark color eliminates Blue Grosbeak. Observer very familiar with this species from Mexico.

Jim Morgan

Conical blue-gray bill. Head, back, face, throat, breast uniformly rich cinnamon brown. Belly pale buff, wings dark, no hint of blue. Tail dark, slightly notched. Indigo Bunting eliminated bill odd bill, rich cinnamon brown above and below. No contrast between upperparts and underparts. Absolutely no hint of streaking below.

M J Austin, J Beard

The female Blue Bunting, first found at Lake Charlotte by Austin and Beard, continues to be seen as of this date (2/19/88). The male, first found near the Dow Nature Trail at Lake Jackson by Collins and Morse, was seen several times after the FCC but has not been recently located - ed.

LARK BUNTING

Field notes for this bird were not submitted to the Clearing House by the HCC compilers. However, it is my understanding that this individual was netted and banded by David Dauphin the day of the Count - ed.

1987 UTC Christmas Counts Spreadsheet Codes

- (a) Houston Christmas Count
- (b) Freeport Christmas Count
- (c) San Bernard NWR Christmas Count
- (d) Galveston Christmas Count
- (e) Buffalo Bayou Christmas Count
- (f) Cypress Creek Christmas Count
- (g) Brazos Bend Christmas Count
- (h) Total # of individuals for each species
- (i) Maximum count for each species
- (j) Mean count for each species where recorded
- (k) Counts recording each species (n=7)

AVIAN BOTULISM ON PLAYA LAKES

In the fall of 1987 179 waterfowl killed by avian botulism were found on a playa lake in Castro County and another 890 from a lake in Terry County. Avian botulism, avian cholera and other diseases can cause massive kills of waterfowl and shorebirds; in 1957 over 60,000 birds died on playas near Muleshoe, Texas. To control these diseases and reduce mortality, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., Texas Tech University and Texas Waterfowlers Association have formed the Interagency Playa Lakes Disease Council. Please report dead or dying waterfowl to Muleshoe NWR, P.O. Box 549 Muleshoe TX 79347; (806) 946-3341.

	HCC (a)	FCC (b)	SBNW (c)	GCC (d)	BuBCC (e)	CCCC (f)	BrBCC (g)	Total (h)	Max (i)	Mean (j)	Ct (k)
	18-Dec-87	19-Dec-87	22-Dec-87	26-Dec-87	26-Dec-87	01-Jan-88	03-Jan-88	*****	*****	*****	*****
Loon, Common	26	11	4	63				104	63	26	4
Grebe, Pied-billed	34	186	16	122	2	21	353	734	353	105	7
Grebe, Horned	1			3				4	3	2	2
GREBE, RED-NECKED				1				1	1	1	1
Grebe, Eared	15	1	4	74			4	98	74	20	5
BOOBY, MASKED		1		1				2	1	1	2
(sulid, sp.)				2				2	2	2	1
Gannet, Northern		61	26	43				130	61	43	3
Pelican, American White	278	1312	285	669		125	361	3030	1312	505	6
Pelican, Brown		111	38	51				200	111	67	3
Cormorant, Double-crested	485	1535	652	307	52	412	1705	5148	1705	735	7
Cormorant, Olivaceous	92	9	11	51				10	173	92	5
Anhinga	4	29	3					61	97	61	4
Bittern, American		18	11	1				30	18	10	3
Heron, Great Blue	128	255	148	108	12	74	105	830	255	119	7
Egret, Great	144	495	107	112	64	250	126	1298	495	185	7
Egret, Snowy	69	206	119	94	6	27	57	578	206	83	7
Heron, Little Blue	24	89	41	23		7		55	239	89	6
Heron, Tricolored	14	74	67	43				39	237	74	5
Egret, Reddish	1	12	9	10					32	12	4
Egret, Cattle	224	152	3	95	5	187	132	798	224	114	7
Heron, Green-backed		2	1	1				1	5	2	4
Night-Heron, Black-crowned	21	236	21	260		186	68	792	260	132	6
Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned	1	13	4	8					26	13	4
Ibis, White	9	529	241	53		97	1860	2789	1860	465	6
Ibis, White-faced		328	42	3		561	398	1332	561	266	5
Spoonbill, Roseate	2	281	85	96				1	465	281	5
Whistling-Duck, Fulvous		5							5	5	1
Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied		2				1	1526	1529	1526	510	3
Goose, Greater White-fronted	42	765	3010	20		19215	3441	26493	19215	4416	6
Goose, Snow	20	31879	36000	206	247	186653	27305	282310	186653	40330	7
(Goose, Blue)		5667	14000	50		25200	11700	56617	25200	11323	5
Goose, Ross'		4	1			19	4	28	19	7	4
Goose, Canada	65	494	513			2961	2460	6493	2961	1299	5
(goose, sp.)							160	160	160	160	1
Duck, Wood		115	11		13	55	34	228	115	46	5
Teal, Green-winged	162	3037	4148	29		72544	2347	82267	72544	13711	6
Duck, Mottled	130	250	116	33	6	55	109	699	250	100	7
Mallard	41	76	4	17	14	2039	87	2278	2039	325	7
Pintail, Northern	70	1974	173		30	97975	2043	102265	97975	17044	6
Teal, Blue-winged	7	564	768	67		1202	103	2711	1202	452	6
Teal, Cinnamon		4	37					41	37	21	2
Shoveler, Northern	48	2153	1620	90		28095	319	32325	28095	5388	6
Gadwall	92	711	418	49		1597	80	2947	1597	491	6
Wigeon, American	59	287	286	22		116	182	952	287	159	6
Canvasback	5	216	31			10	72	334	216	67	5
Redhead	4	323	2					329	323	110	3
Duck, Ring-necked	42	282		10		74	148	556	282	111	5
Scaup, Greater	13	33						46	33	23	2
Scaup, Lesser	3503	203	224	61		57	9	4057	3503	676	6
Scoter, Black	3	15	20					38	20	13	3
Scoter, Surf		15						15	15	15	1
Scoter, White-winged		100	2					102	100	51	2
Goldeneye, Common	49	5		33			3	90	49	23	4
Bufflehead	128	10	2	1				54	195	128	5
Merganser, Hooded	39	13	157			2	11	222	157	44	5
Merganser, Red-breasted	6	86	63	46				201	86	50	4
Duck, Ruddy	115	517	2	7		29	150	820	517	137	6
(duck, sp.)		307				17	10000	50	10374	10000	4
Vulture, Black	5	250	103		15	133	208	714	250	119	6
Vulture, Turkey	13	287	125		21	273	1045	1764	1045	294	6
Osprey	5	9	1	1				16	9	4	4
Kite, Black-shouldered	3	60	74	15		14	2	168	74	28	6

HCC (a) FCC (b) SBNW (c) GCC (d) BuBCC (e) CCCC (f) BrBCC (g) Total (h) Max (i) Mean (j) Ct (k)
 18-Dec-87 19-Dec-87 22-Dec-87 26-Dec-87 26-Dec-87 01-Jan-88 03-Jan-88 *****

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)
Eagle, Bald						16	2	18	16	9	2
HARRIER, Northern	25	159	108	21	6	268	87	674	268	96	7
Hawk, Sharp-shinned	1	10	3		3		3	20	10	4	5
Hawk, Cooper's	3	5	2	2	1	6	6	25	6	4	7
(accipiter, sp.)					1	2	2	5	2	2	3
Hawk, Harris'		1						1	1	1	1
Hawk, Red-shouldered	24	94	28	4	11	55	36	252	94	36	7
Hawk, Swainson's							1	1	1	1	1
Hawk, White-tailed			3		2	2	2	9	3	2	4
Hawk, Red-tailed	38	114	19	10	29	254	97	561	254	80	7
(Hawk, Harlan's)						2		2	2	2	1
Hawk, Ferruginous						1	1	2	1	1	2
Hawk, Rough-legged				1				1	1	1	1
(buteo, sp.)		2						2	2	2	1
Caracara, Crested		5	11			17	6	39	17	10	4
Kestrel, American	159	301	152	79	51	289	217	1248	301	178	7
Merlin	2	2	2	1		1		8	2	2	5
Falcon, Peregrine	1	3	2	1				7	3	2	4
(falcon, sp.)		1					1	2	1	1	2
Bobwhite, Northern		110	24		43	133	122	432	133	86	5
Rail, Yellow		16	4					20	16	10	2
Rail, Clapper	6	21	2	7				36	21	9	4
Rail, King		4	1	4	1	1		11	4	2	5
Rail, Virginia		8	3					11	8	6	2
Sora		8				1	1	10	8	3	3
Moorhen, Common	1	27	4	4			927	963	927	193	5
Coot, American	349	10050	70	199	1	2477	4881	18027	10050	2575	7
Crane, Sandhill		650	159			1	1042	1852	1042	463	4
Plover, Black-bellied	6	294	106	99				505	294	126	4
Plover, Snowy		3	19	108				130	108	43	3
Plover, Wilson's				8				8	8	8	1
Plover, Semipalmated	1	32	3	123				159	123	40	4
Plover, Piping		11	12	67				90	67	30	3
Killdeer	288	875	358	203	136	2115	1286	5261	2115	752	7
Oystercatcher, American		3		12				15	12	8	2
Stilt, Black-necked	4	6		21				31	21	10	3
Avocet, American	36	285	253	413				987	413	247	4
Yellowlegs, Greater	33	169	55	78	28	47	16	426	169	61	7
Yellowlegs, Lesser	18	54	27	13	9	82	1	204	82	29	7
Sandpiper, Solitary		2						2	2	2	1
Willet	43	536	341	123				1043	536	261	4
Sandpiper, Spotted	100	17	4	24			6	151	100	30	5
Curlew, Long-billed	1	259	255	67		482	36	1100	482	183	6
Godwit, Marbled		2		14				16	14	8	2
Turnstone, Ruddy	1	108	23	82				214	108	54	4
Knot, Red		1		10				11	10	6	2
Sanderling	14	222	139	151				526	222	132	4
Sandpiper, Western	37	1297	3418	39		135	40	4966	3418	828	6
Sandpiper, Least	50	115	7	5		72	31	280	115	47	6
Dunlin	21	378	3111	210		109		3829	3111	766	5
(peep, sp.)		25						25	25	25	1
(sandpiper, sp.)		5				50		55	50	28	2
Dowitcher, Short-billed	10	555	675	30				1270	675	318	4
Dowitcher, Long-billed		308	2700			381	441	3830	2700	958	4
(dowitcher, sp.)	24	215				75	225	539	225	135	4
Snipe, Common	25	181	60	30	2	53	9	360	181	51	7
Woodcock, American	3	4	1		2	1	1	12	4	2	6
Gull, Laughing	4747	4928	2206	2740	2			14623	4928	2925	5
Gull, Bonaparte's	10	326	181	141				658	326	165	4
Gull, Ring-billed	1753	1215	608	1695	69	12	48	5400	1753	771	7
Gull, Herring	133	228	140	99				600	228	150	4
Kittiwake, Black-legged		1						1	1	1	1
(gull, sp.)		400						400	400	400	1
Tern, Gull-billed	2	13	52	5				72	52	18	4

	HCC (a)	FCC (b)	SBNW (c)	GCC (d)	BuBCC (e)	CCCC (f)	BrBCC (g)	Total (h)	Max (i)	Mean (j)	Ct (k)
	18-Dec-87	19-Dec-87	22-Dec-87	26-Dec-87	26-Dec-87	01-Jan-88	03-Jan-88	*****	*****	*****	*****
Tern, Caspian	27	172	175	32	1		27	434	175	72	6
Tern, Royal	6	1067	107	73			2	1255	1067	251	5
Tern, Sandwich		2	7					9	7	5	2
Tern, Common	5	3	17	5				30	17	8	4
Tern, Forster's	271	1386	463	190	4		24	2338	1386	390	6
Skimmer, Black	219	44	266	1177				1706	1177	427	4
Dove, Rock	613	350	14	737	116	83	1512	3425	1512	489	7
Turtle-Dove, Ringed					4			4	4	4	1
Dove, White-winged	3			153				156	153	78	2
Dove, Mourning	311	1291	478	205	354	660	619	3918	1291	560	7
Dove, Inca	107	16	1	245	31		4	404	245	67	6
Ground-Dove, Common	1	20	11	6		9	16	63	20	11	6
(Parakeet, Monk)					26			26	26	26	1
(Parrot, Red-crowned)					1			1	1	1	1
Ani, Groove-billed		24	5	17				46	24	15	3
Barn-Owl, Common	4	9		2	5	5	4	29	9	5	6
Screech-Owl, Eastern	23	4		1	2	4	1	35	23	6	6
Owl, Great Horned	5	14	2		3	2	12	38	14	6	6
Owl, Burrowing		1						1	1	1	1
Owl, Barred	2	51	58		2	5	27	145	58	24	6
Owl, Short-eared	1	3	1			1		6	3	2	4
(owl, sp.)						1		1	1	1	1
Whip-poor-will		1						1	1	1	1
SWIFT, WHITE-COLLARED		1						1	1	1	1
Hummingbird, Buff-bellied		3						3	3	3	1
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated		1						1	1	1	1
Hummingbird, Black-chinned		1		1				2	1	1	2
Hummingbird, Anna's		2			1			3	2	2	2
Hummingbird, Broad-tailed		2						2	2	2	1
Hummingbird, Rufous	1	9			1			11	9	4	3
(Selaphorus, sp.)		1						1	1	1	1
(hummingbird, sp.)		3						3	3	3	1
Kingfisher, Belted	74	62	20	29	7	13	51	256	74	37	7
Woodpecker, Red-headed	4	10				2		16	10	5	3
Woodpecker, Red-bellied	40	200	36	5	67	30	200	578	200	83	7
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied	30	207	30	24	12	39	98	440	207	63	7
Woodpecker, Downy	14	151	26	5	27	39	48	310	151	44	7
Woodpecker, Hairy							6	6	6	6	1
Flicker, Northern	118	289	58	148	94	139	114	960	289	137	7
(Flicker, Red-shafted)		1	1					2	1	1	2
Woodpecker, Pileated	7	66	13		7		37	130	66	26	5
Flycatcher, Least		1						1	1	1	1
(empidonax, sp.)	1							1	1	1	1
Phoebe, Eastern	80	553	166	32	30	93	466	1420	553	203	7
PHOEBE, SAY'S		1						1	1	1	1
Flycatcher, Vermilion	1	20	10	2			12	45	20	9	5
Flycatcher, Ash-throated		2						2	2	2	1
(myiarchus, sp.)						1		1	1	1	1
Kingbird, Western				1				1	1	1	1
Lark, Horned		38	4	16			15	73	38	18	4
Swallow, Tree	4	3		3			5	15	5	4	4
Jay, Blue	141	176	27	21	183	153	66	767	183	110	7
Crow, American	205	806	245		188	451	3121	5016	3121	836	6
Chickadee, Carolina	156	989	106		130	44	433	1858	989	310	6
Titmouse, Tufted	8	574	66		42	23	193	906	574	151	6
Creeper, Brown	7	23	3	1	5	2	4	45	23	6	7
Wren, Carolina	71	202	29	10	36	11	93	452	202	65	7
Wren, Bewick's			3			1	1	5	3	2	3
Wren, House	46	79	25	8	16	3	16	193	79	28	7
Wren, Winter	2	12	5			1	4	24	12	5	5
Wren, Sedge	19	433	292	50	4	3	11	812	433	116	7
Wren, Marsh	1	135	32	30		1		199	135	40	5
(wren, sp.)					1			1	1	1	1
Kinglet, Golden-crowned	15	126	7	4	12	8	23	195	126	28	7

	HCC (a)	FCC (b)	SBNW (c)	GCC (d)	BuBCC (e)	CCCC (f)	BrBCC (g)	Total (h)	Max (i)	Mean (j)	Ct (k)
	18-Dec-87	19-Dec-87	22-Dec-87	26-Dec-87	26-Dec-87	01-Jan-88	03-Jan-88	*****			
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	235	1652	201	131	224	155	524	3122	1652	446	7
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray	48	417	72	8	49	17	100	711	417	102	7
Bluebird, Eastern	237	581	14		27	159	627	1645	627	274	6
Thrush, Hermit	14	236	42	15	26	25	101	459	236	66	7
Robin, American	2420	13004	5075	454	1145	3153	5425	30676	13004	4382	7
Catbird, Gray	33	39	4	15		1	5	97	39	16	6
Mockingbird, Northern	298	516	89	145	129	230	308	1715	516	245	7
Thrasher, Brown	119	488	55	40	47	143	82	974	488	139	7
Pipit, Water	22	171	79	97	6	265	179	819	265	117	7
Pipit, Sprague's	1	38	4			1	9	53	38	11	5
Maxwing, Cedar	23	1804	117	63	297	191	163	2658	1804	380	7
Shrike, Loggerhead	169	363	174	101	63	203	409	1482	409	212	7
Starling, European	463	1493	168	1610	1817	918	2155	8624	2155	1232	7
Vireo, White-eyed		2	2	1			3	8	3	2	4
Vireo, Solitary	4	77	14	3	4	4	5	111	77	16	7
Warbler, Orange-crowned	62	235	53	45	45	41	69	550	235	79	7
Warbler, Nashville		1						1	1	1	1
Parula, Northern		1						1	1	1	1
(Warbler, Myrtle)						837		837	837	837	1
Warbler, Yellow-rumped	2228	1077	210	651	649		3184	7999	3184	1333	6
(Warbler, Audubon's)	1	1						2	1	1	2
(Warbler, Yellow-rumped form?)		1698						1698	1698	1698	1
Warbler, Pine	104	91	7	20	43	43	11	319	104	46	7
Warbler, Palm	3	11	9	3			1	27	11	5	5
Warbler, Bay-breasted				1				1	1	1	1
Warbler, Black-and-white	2	8	1		2			13	8	3	4
Redstart, American		1						1	1	1	1
Ovenbird		2		1				3	2	2	2
Yellowthroat, Common	15	184	47	36	1	4	40	327	184	47	7
Warbler, Wilson's	1	24	4	3	3			35	24	7	5
Cardinal, Northern	294	756	97	38	150	170	1085	2590	1085	370	7
PYRRHULOXIA							1	1	1	1	1
Grosbeak, Black-headed		1						1	1	1	1
BUNTING, BLUE		2						2	2	2	1
Bunting, Indigo				1				1	1	1	1
Towhee, Green-tailed							1	1	1	1	1
Towhee, Rufous-sided	10	23	4		3	7	3	50	23	8	6
(Towhee, Spotted)						3	1	4	3	2	2
Sparrow, Chipping	62	95	1	25		92	162	437	162	73	6
Sparrow, Field	28	48	8	6	28	101	51	270	101	39	7
Sparrow, Vesper	14	78	149	25	37	264	32	599	264	86	7
Sparrow, Lark		3	2	5				10	5	3	3
BUNTING, LARK	1							1	1	1	1
Sparrow, Savannah	146	1492	475	255	279	926	893	4466	1492	638	7
Sparrow, Grasshopper	2	2	12	1				17	12	4	4
Sparrow, Le Conte's	2	150	39	7	6	3	2	209	150	30	7
Sparrow, Sharp-tailed	4	60	11	58				133	60	33	4
Sparrow, Seaside	7	83	38	23				151	83	38	4
Sparrow, Fox	8	6	4		4	57	2	81	57	14	6
Sparrow, Song	59	81	43	19	45	65	70	382	81	55	7
Sparrow, Lincoln's	28	152	71	21	14	22	18	326	152	47	7
Sparrow, Swamp	249	480	218	265	27	42	190	1471	480	210	7
Sparrow, White-throated	1229	1303	286	88	324	709	533	4472	1303	639	7
Sparrow, White-crowned	64	123	16	11	30	21	11	276	123	39	7
Sparrow, Harris'		19	2	1	3	32		57	32	11	5
Junco, Dark-eyed	64	83	11	2	32	18	68	278	83	40	7
(sparrow, sp.)		115						115	115	115	1
Longspur, Lapland						302		302	302	302	1
(Longspur, sp.)						100		100	100	100	1
Blackbird, Red-winged	8068	9521	1731	1308	1423	31471	4000000	4053522	4000000	579075	7
Meadowlark, Eastern	192	526	955	205	136	69	574	2657	955	380	7
Meadowlark, Western			1					1	1	1	2
(Meadowlark, sp.)		497			33	960	1905	3395	1905	849	4

	HCC (a) 18-Dec-87	FCC (b) 19-Dec-87	SBNW (c) 22-Dec-87	GCC (d) 26-Dec-87	BuBCC (e) 26-Dec-87	CCCC (f) 01-Jan-88	BrBCC (g) 03-Jan-88	Total (h)	Max (i)	Mean (j)	Ct (k)
Blackbird, Rusty					1	2		3	2	2	2
Blackbird, Brewer's	20	173	43		12	5838	487	6573	5838	1096	6
Grackle, Great-tailed	195	2233	55	1380	650	300	4620	9433	4620	1348	7
Grackle, Boat-tailed		989	56	4				1049	989	350	3
Grackle, Common	6084	9861	1286	515	4610	858	10461	33675	10461	4811	7
Cowbird, Brown-headed (blackbird, sp.)	4650	3455	1480	5702	738	5880	1000000	1021905	1000000	145986	7
Oriole, Northern (Bullock's)			1		2150	26000		50574	26000	12644	4
Finch, Purple	5							1	1	1	1
Siskin, Pine		5			6		38	5	5	5	1
Goldfinch, American	447	2546	495	75	623	325	2127	49	38	16	3
Sparrow, House	41	170	22	503	119	91	20	6638	2546	948	7
								966	503	138	7

Total Species	165	215	179	160	101	131	146	237	215	157	
Total Individuals	47140	170927	96061	27213	18373	540351	5112582	6012647	5112582	858950	
Total Observers	56	147	23	41	25	25	65	382	147	55	

MINUTES OF OG MEETING, FEB. 4, 1988

Chairman Robert Thacker opened the meeting at 7:30 PM.; then he turned the meeting over to Program Chairman, Robert Honig, who introduced the evening's speaker, Dr. John O'Neill of L.S.U.

O'Neill brought a number of his paintings and illustrations of North and South American birds for members to see. Among these were paintings illustrating the National Geographic Field Guide, and others for a new Golden Guide bird book. He also brought a painting of the White-winged Guan, considered extinct until his rediscovery of it in Peru in 1977. O'Neill has donated the painting to the Nature Conservancy for sale in support of Peruvian conservation efforts. His program described a joint scientific trip to an ancient mountain called Neblina, which straddles the border between Venezuela and Brazil. It is an isolated member of the Tepuis Mountains, and was unknown until quite recently. Slides of the geography, plants and birds illustrated a most interesting account of his expedition.

Jerry Patrick, Treasurer, then reported a balance of \$3,695 and a \$4000 C.D. He reminded members that the ONC is a tax-exempt organization, and that dues may be deducted from taxes.

Rene Franks, Field Trip Co-Chairman, discussed upcoming field trips. She asked members going on the March 26-28 Rio Grande Valley trip to notify her by the March meeting in order to make motel and camping reservations.

Bob Honig announced the March program will be given by Australian tour leader Simon Neville. Beavers and Allen Mueller will give the April and

May presentations. Rob Thacker asked for suggestions for OG officers and chairmen before the election to be held at the March 3 meeting. He asked members to send "road-kill" birds to the curator at the Museum of Natural Science, Jo Ann Gartig, Mrs. Gartig asked that we telephone her at the Museum at 526-1763, extension 120, to determine if they need the bird we have collected. Wrap the kill in a paper towel, bag it and freeze it after collecting it.

Ted Eubanks, Jr. discussed his updating of the Clearing House, and will have report forms at the March meeting. [If the form needs no changes, it

will be published in the March Spoonbill so that members can copy it to make their reports..Ed.] A volunteer to take over as Clearing House Editor is urgently needed, as March will be Ted's last month as interim Editor. He also asked for Piping Plover sightings, including band descriptions, to be reported to him.

John Zagorski, who has recently moved to Houston and lives in the W. Bellfort-Chimney Rock area, needs rides to go out birding. Anyone who lives in his area may reach him at 726-1178.

Peggy Milstead announced the February 12-15 ONC field trip to Lake Buchanan; and Libby Price brought schedules of local nature courses to the literature table. The uncertain status of the A.B.A. was discussed.

Rene Franks reported that the Tundra Swan can still be seen near Bryan, as well as a cardinal with hot pink and white feathering nearby. The Allen's, Calliope, Rufous, Broad-tailed, Black-chinned and Buff-bellied Hummingbirds are still present in the Lake Jackson area, as well as female Blue Bunting. John O'Neill reported that the same hummingbird species are being seen at Louisiana feeders this winter. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Caroline Callery, Secretary

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

SEND bird sightings for Clearing House to: Ted L. Eubanks, Jr. c/o NOVA, P.O. Box 1024, Houston TX 77251-1024.

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

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

SEND dues, subscriptions and address changes to Jerry Patrick, 814 St. Francis, Houston 77079. Members' annual dues: \$15 (ONC \$5, OG \$10). Spoonbill subscriptions for non-members: \$13.

we had significant numbers of wintering warblers from the U.S. and Canada mixed in the flocks, which also included the beautiful Red Warbler (E) and a gorgeous Northern (Abeille's form) Oriole. Farther down-slope we found Black-vented (Wagler's) Oriole and heard the very rare Oaxaca Sparrow (E). I got a look at a sparrow that probably was this species, but I am holding off counting it until I feel more certain.

After two days around Oaxaca City, we flew to Tuxtla Gutierrez the following morning, rented a car and proceeded immediately to the Chiapas mountain city of San Cristobal de las Casas. We spent the remaining hours of the afternoon exploring the Biological Reserve west of town, where we found a huge flock of Rufous-collared Robins and incredible flocks of wintering warblers, mainly Townsend's, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) and Wilson's. The following morning we returned to the reserve and hiked further into the cloud forest where we found the stunning Pink-headed Warbler, one of my most-wanted trip birds. On the hike into the forest we also saw numerous Black-capped Swallows, Band-backed Wrens and Cinnamon-bellied Flower-piercers. White-eared Hummingbirds were everywhere and Amethyst-throated Hummingbirds were also quite common. These hummingbirds were feeding on numerous salvias, lobelia, columbine and thistles. The wildflowers were truly spectacular, and Bob commented that it was the best display he had ever seen in Mexico.

The next day we birded the road to Chanal, off the Ocosingo Highway, east of San Cristobal. Along this road we found the elusive Ocellated Quail (a lifer for Bob!) Strong-billed Woodcreeper (great bird!), the beautiful Black-throated Jay (spectacular looks!), plus flocks of Yellow-backed Orioles and Red Crossbills. Once again we had hundreds of wintering warblers, with Hermit Warbler being most common. Later that afternoon we went west of town and found Rufous-browed Wren.

The next morning was spent birding along the road which leads to the microwave tower west of town. Here we even got better looks at Black-throated Jays, along with great looks at male Amethyst-throated and Garnet-throated Hummingbirds,

and a leisurely study of a beautiful male Flame-colored (Stripe-backed) Tanager. Along this road we also saw Blue-and-white Mockingbirds, and numerous flocks of Gray-silky Flycatchers and Rufous-collared (Andean) Sparrows. We heard, but did not see the elusive Blue-throated Motmot. That afternoon we returned to Tuxtla Gutierrez, stopping along the way down to find Banded Wren.

For the next day and one-half we concentrated our birding within El Sumidero National Park, a truly spectacular area, which encloses a canyon with cliffs over 1,000 feet high and with the Rio Grijalva snaking along below. Many more Mexican species were added here, plus more wintering migrants. Bob called in both male and female Red-breasted Chat (E), a spectacularly beautiful warbler that must be seen to be appreciated. The highlight of our birding in El Sumidero had to be locating the little-known, local and rare Belted Flycatcher. Bob got a great tape of its call, as well as a fine photograph of one of the birds. Having learned its call, we later located eight individuals of this rare species within the park.

The Mexican mountains continue to be one of my favorite birding areas. In fact, my experience in other tropical highlands has been equally satisfying and, at times, equally rewarding. The climate in tropical highlands is great, the scenery often spectacular, and the birding very good. Specialties abound, migrants are common, and the local culture is most interesting. Even though we were never near marsh or water, and we concentrated on specialty species, we still recorded 214 species in just eight days.

Many Texas birders continue to ignore Mexico and the neotropics. This is hard to understand, since the birding dollar goes so much farther there than in the U.S. and other temperate birding areas. In addition, there are many more species in the tropics, and the density of individuals, their sheer numbers, can be at times so plentiful that every birding moment is complete and satisfying. If you are hesitant to arrange your own trip, why not contact Bob Behrstock about going on one of his organized tours? Once hooked, you will want to return to the tropics again and again.

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