



# THE SPOONBILL

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GREAT BLUE HERON SURVEY from Raymond J. Fleetwood

Currently, the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. 14850, is engaged in a nation-wide survey of the Great Blue Heron.

Since this species is at the top of the aquatic food chain, it may well be an important indicator species. The first step will be to compile an inventory of heronries. To this end, I would like to recommend that anyone with knowledge on this point write to the Laboratory of Ornithology. They have requested information which may be recent, or old, detailed, or sketchy, as long as the site is remembered well enough to locate on a topographic map. When the inventory is completed, they would like for it to contain the exact locality of the heronry, a general description of the site, and as much history as possible. They had hoped to have the program completed by winter, so that arrangements could be made for census work in the 1972 breeding season.

This appeal is the result of an exciting recent development in using nest-record card programs as an international monitoring device. The basic premise is that breeding success of birds is an index of the health of the environment. This premise has already been proven correct in the case of persistent pesticides, but they consider that there are wider implications. If there is attrition of the ecosystem, owing to any of numerous causes, then one might expect that it would be impossible for birds to sustain as high a production as previously. The nest-record card program, hopefully, will enable these changes to be noted early, before catastrophic changes occur.

The idea of international collaboration is being explored with the International Council for Bird Preservation and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural resources (IUCN). A study conference has been arranged to see if the various European programs can agree on a common approach. Following this, there will be discussions with the IUCN on the organization of a world-wide monitoring system.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The following Jim Lane guides to bird finding are available now through the Ornithology Group:

- "A BIRDWATCHER'S GUIDE TO SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA"
- "A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA"
- "A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS"

Mr. Lane has most generously given OG a 40% commission on sales made by the group so both you and the Ornithology Group will be beneficiaries when you purchase a book. We can highly recommend them, and appreciate the opportunity of making them available to birders.

## YELLOW RAIL TRIPS

from Russell Clapper

Yellow Rails are now present in good numbers on the wet, salty prairie at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Tractor-drawn wagon rides with capacity of sixteen (16) people each trip are scheduled as follows for each weekend March 4, through April 30.

Trip Schedules: All scheduled trips are mornings, when conditions have averaged the best for seeing rails.

Time of departure--9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The first trip will be designate trip "A" and the second, trip "B". In case of an overflow crowd, a special trip will be made at 1:00 p.m., but 1:00 p.m. trips will not be regularly scheduled, since an important objective is to minimize the number of trips, to protect both birds and habitat. If morning trips are rained out, and the afternoon is fair, morning trips will be rescheduled for 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Reservations: All advance reservations must be made and confirmed through the office in Anahuac and not at the field. Reservations may be made by telephone (A/C #13 267-3337), in person or by mail. Office hours are 12:30 to 4:30 Mondays and 7:30 to 4:30 Tuesdays through Fridays. Cancellations are not required. Reservations will be honored only if groups are on time. Failure to appear on time will be considered the same as a cancellation and the reservation will be forfeited. Late arrivals will be given the opportunity to ride on space available basis, but may not "bump" riders who have reservations for the next trip. Space-available seating priority will be from a "sign in" record maintained at point of assembly and departure. Applicants for advance reservations will be assigned a number, which designates the trip and seating space, for example, A-1, A-2, A-3 through A-16 or B-1, etc. Wagon capacity and circumstances may require splitting birding parties between the first and second trip. Persons with 11:00 a.m. trip reservations may arrive early and sign up of space-available seating on the 9:00 a.m. trip, thus providing an opportunity for persons who have 9:00 a.m. trip reservations (but arrive late) to find space-available seating on the 11:00 a.m. trip.

Rules of Loading and Departure: The following policy will be followed for loading and departure:

Persons with reservations, if present and on time, will be seated first and others standing by next, until the wagon is loaded. Departure will be promptly at 9:00 a.m., if fully loaded by then. If not fully loaded, the driver will delay departure until 9:15 a.m. and then proceed with the trip. The same procedure will be followed for the 11:00 a.m. trip or any rescheduled trips. The trips will last for an hour or an hour and one-half as a rule. The objective will be to get a good look at a Yellow Rail. If success comes early in the trip, the driver will return to point of loading. This action will be taken to avoid trampling more habitat than necessary.

Lengthy search trips in the slim hope of flushing other species, such as the elusive Black Rail will not be made.

It is hoped that Yellow Rail trips can be perpetuated from year to year for the enjoyment of many birders. Minimum disturbance to the birds and habitat is desirable. Mottled Ducks are also nesting at this time and limiting trips to known productive habitat for Yellow Rails reduces the area of disturbance to nesting ducks.

Remember--all trips are subject to cancellation for severe weather or unavoidable equipment breakdown. We do not promise the Yellow Rail, but we try to please. Our shoe-string budget has been stretched to the limit and standby equipment is not within our reach at this time.

A REVIEW OF UPPER TEXAS COAST CHRISTMAS COUNTS/ 1913 - 1970 by Noel Pettingell

Sources: Bird-Lore, 1914-1940; Audubon Magazine, 1941-1946;  
Audubon Field Notes, 1947-1971.

	Total Counts	Highest Species Count (Year)	Years No. 1 in Texas	Most Obser- vers (Years)
<u>BOLIVAR PENINSULA (1962-1970)</u> (E. Galveston/SE Chambers Counties)	9	141 (1968)	--	28 (1965)
<u>COVE (1937-1942)</u> (NW Chambers County)	5	120 (1938)	2	1 ('37-'42)
<u>FREEPORT (1957 - 1970)</u> (SW Brazoria County)	14	204 (1970)	7	51 (1966)
<u>GALVESTON (1946-1969)</u> (W. Galveston County)	17	156 (1966)	--	20 ('64 & '66)
<u>HOUSTON (1913-1970)</u> (E. Harris/NW Chambers Counties)	36	192 (1963)	8	78 (1964)
<u>OLD OCEAN (1961-1964)</u> (SW Brazoria/NE Matagorda Counties)	4	79 (1964)	--	5 (1963)
<u>OLD RIVER (1965-1970)</u> (NW Chambers/S. Liberty Counties)	6	135 (1970)	--	20 (1970)
<u>RICHMOND (1942)</u> (N. Fort Bend County)	1	36 (1942)	--	1 (1942)

A total of 321 species were recorded on the 92 counts conducted in 38 of the 58 years from 1913 through 1970 at the above localities. 275 of the 321 species have been found on Houston counts and 264 by Freeport observers with both areas recording a combined total of 303 species.

Upper Texas Coast areas have produced a total of 111 species having the highest individual counts in North America from 1947 (when these tabulations were originated) through 1970. 81 of these 111 species were found on Houston counts and 48 by Freeport observers with both areas recording a combined total of 103 such species

Additional details on Upper Texas Coast Christmas Counts may be found in the following issues of The Spoonbill:

- March & April 1963 - Summary of UTC Counts/1913-1962.  
June 1965 - " " N. Am./Texas/UTC Counts/1964  
July 1966 - " " " " " " " /1965.  
Nov. 1968 - " " N. Am. & UTC Counts/1967.  
Dec. 1970 - All-time Top 10 N/ Am. Count Areas/1900-1969 and  
Summary of N. Am & UTC Counts/1969.  
Dec. 1971 - Highest individual Totals in N. Am./Freeport & Houston/1970

NOTE FROM SARAH GORDON

Like you, I look forward to each month's issue of the SPOONBILL. Last month when we asked for some extra help in order to get it in the mail a little sooner, these folks expressed their surprise at what it takes to get the issues ready for mailing so I felt that you might like to know just how many people and how many hours are given by members to get the SPOONBILL published and mailed to you.

We begin with the Editors, Dorothy and David Lefkovits, who for the past three years have had the task not only of the typing of the masters but of assembling, editing, phone calls, etc. in connection with materials submitted (or not submitted). This requires many hours of their time each month. The masters were brought to the printers in Houston by John Tveten when he was in town, otherwise David had to make a trip to downtown Houston from Baytown. After Cardinal Printing Company ran the copies they were delivered to Ewell Bradley, who was joined by Julia to deliver the sheets to the mailers, Nell Lay and Melba Drake. Nell and Melba have to be sure to have a supply of stamps, which now requires a trip to both the bank and the post office, get the labels typed before they start getting the SPOONBILLS ready for mailing. Their job is to gather, staple, fold, stamp with return address, apply postage and labels, separate into city and out of town and get them to the post office.

As most of you know, since the masters do not work satisfactorily anymore, last month we obtained permission to use the Outdoor Nature Club mimeograph machine to run the copies. This necessitates the purchase of paper and ink supplies, etc. Margaret Jones has agreed to run the SPOONBILL and she delivers them to Nell for mailing.

This will give you an idea of how many of our members are involved in this vital part of the Ornithology Group and of the hours and work required for publication and delivery. I salute all of them for the consistently fine jobs they have done and express to each of them the thanks of the entire membership and subscribers.

RANCHO DEL CIELO TRIPS ANNOUNCED

Gorgas Science Society invites you to enjoy an incomparable nature-exploration week at Rancho del Cielo in the cloud forest of southwestern Tamaulipas, Mexico. Two separate trips are available--May 28 to June 3 and June 18 to 24. Guest lists will be limited to 18 persons per trip on a "first come" basis. The trips are being organized by Fred S. Webster, Jr., of Austin, to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

Your hosts at the rancho--operated as a biological field station by Texas Southmost College of Brownsville--will be Mrs. J.O.E. (Barbara) Warburton, station director and biologist, and students of the society. You will meet your hosts in the Tamaulipas town of Gomez Farias at noon on Sunday, May 28 (or June 18) and will be returned to Gomez Farias on the morning of Saturday, June 3 (or June 24).

Rancho del Cielo is located in the heart of Middle America's northernmost cloud forest. Myriad epiphytes, including many species of orchids and bromeliads, strange trees such as podocarpus, and other tropical plants not found farther north, add to the beauty of this verdant wonderland.

Avifauna is predominantly tropical. Of the species that breed in the cloud forest, less than a dozen nest anywhere in the United States. The most common breeding bird is the Black-headed Nightingale-thrush. Rufescent Tinamou, Singing Quail, Mountain Trogon, Blue-crowned Motmot, three species of woodcreepers, Blue Mockingbird and Flame-colored Tanager are some of the other Mexican species which nest here. Larger mammals include Black Bear, Coati, Tayra, Jaguar, Puma and Brocket Deer.

The Sierra de Guatemala offers a unique opportunity for comparing the ecology of a variety of vegetation zones within a distance of less than 20 miles (crow flight). Cloud Forest, Tropical Deciduous Forest and Tropical Semi-evergreen Forest occur no farther north; therefore, a number of plant and animal species reach their northern limits in this region.

As the crow flies, Rancho del Cielo is just over 200 miles south-southwest of Brownsville, nearest point in the United States. Nearest Mexican city is Cd. Mante.

Cost is \$100.00 per person for the period that you are guests of the college, with all proceeds going to upkeep of the field station. The stated sum covers lodging, meals and transportation up and down the mountain, plus a one-day tour of higher elevations in the range. In addition, a \$10.00 service charge is required to offset expenses of organizing the trips. Make check for \$100.00 payable to Gorgas Science Society and \$10.00 check payable to Fred S. Webster, Jr., and mail both checks to Mr. Webster. Send checks in full amount at once to assure a reservation. Checks will be held by Webster until May 10 (for the first trip) and May 31 (for the second trip) and will be refundable in full until those dates.

Housing at the ranch is in dormitory-type cabins, with women and men segregated. No electricity or telephone is available, but quarters are comfortable, and the basic conveniences are provided. Guests are required to bring only linen and towels in addition to personal items.

Travel is by 4-wheel drive vehicles as the roads are quite rough. However, trails and lumber roads offer endless opportunities for the hiker. Cameras and tape recorders can be put to good use. The wet season should be well under way in June. Most rainfall occurs in the form of overnight thundershowers, while the daylight hours are ideal for field exploration. Nights are cool.

Food and drink--judging from past experience--will be tastefully prepared and abundant.

You are responsible for your own transportation to Gomez Farias. It is suggested that participants assemble in Brownsville, Texas, early on Sunday morning and follow the leader to Gomez Farias. Vehicles will be parked at private homes.

Complete details will be furnished upon request. Write to Fred S. Webster, Jr., 4926 Strass Drive, Austin, Texas 78731, or call same at (512) 451-1669.

CLEARING HOUSE February, 1972

- Loon, Common: (1)2, Cove, C&DP; (2)24, Texas City Dike, (5)24, East Galveston Island, D&DL.
- Grebe, Eared: (3)5, (5+)8, Cove, AKM; (13+)20, (1)22, Cove, C&DP; (200+)24, Texas City Dike, D&DL.
- Pied-billed: (1)4, (2)8, Cove, AKM; (2)2, (1)22, 26, Cove, C&DP.
- Pelican, White: (3-4)4, 5, (85+)23, Cove, AKM.
- Cormorant, Double-crested: (1)2, 8, 11, (3)5, Cove, AKM.
- Olivaceous: (5)8, Cove, AKM.
- Heron, Green: (1)20, Sheldon Reservoir, Party "A".
- Egret, Reddish: (2)24, Galveston South Jetty, D&DL.
- Nightheron, Black-crowned: (NC)5, (14)8, Cove, AKM.
- Bittern, American: (1)21, Cove, C&DP.
- Spoonbill, Roseate: (10)5, (2)8, (1)23, Cove, AKM.
- Goose, White-fronted: (29)8, (250+)18, (90+)23, Cove, AKM; (250+)12, Cove, DH.
- Canada: (23)15, Cove, AKM.
- SWAN, WHISTLING: (4)20, Sheldon Reservoir, Party "A".
- Duck, Mallard: (9+)11, (2+)18, Cove, AKM.
- Mottled: (2)8, 18, 23, (5)11, Cove, AKM.
- Gadwall: (15-20)5, 8, Cove, AKM.
- Pintail: (NC)5, 11, Cove, AKM.
- Teal, Green-winged: (90-100)4, 5, (2)8, (20+)11, Cove, AKM.
- Blue-winged: (2)5, (4)21, Cove, C&DP.
- Cinnamon: (8)5, Anahuac Refugo, DH.

- Duck, American Widgeon: (5+)4, (15+)15, (40+)11, Cove, AKM; (4)24, West Galveston Island, D&DL.
- Shoveler: (2+)5, (15+)11, Cove, AKM.
- Redhead: (10)24, Texas City Dike, D&DL; (11)20, Texas City Dike, Party "A".
- Canvasback: (200)5, East Bay, DH.
- Scaup, Lesser: (1)4, AKM; (2)12, (1)22, C&DP; (300+)7, AM, all at Cove; (500+)24, Texas City Dike, D&DL.
- Goldeneye, Common: (3+)5,8, Cove, AKM.
- Bufflehead: (21)20, Texas City Dike, Party A.
- Ruddy: (25+)23, Cove, AKM.
- Merganser, Red-breasted: (90+)4, (6)8, Cove, AKM.
- Vulture, Turkey: (1)7 days, (3)4, (2)18,20,23, (5)22, Cove, AKM; (200+)13, Cove, C&DP.
- Black: (11)23, Cove, AKM.
- Kite, White-tailed: (1)6 Highway 6 at DeWalt, near Stafford; (1)12, near Angleton; (1)12, Arcola, M&SW.
- Hawk, Red-tailed: (1-9)8 days, (10-19)6 days, (21-28)4 days, (4)8 (one of these a Krider's), Cove, AKM; (1)5, Inahuac Refuge, DH (see Clearing House Notes).
- Red-shouldered: (1)7, Cove, AKM.
- Marsh: (1-5)11 days, (7)11,18,25, (9)23, Cove, AKM; (1)1, Houston Baptist College, P&PN.
- Falcon, Peregrine: (1)20,25,26 (had a falconer's equipment on legs)Cove, AKM.
- Hawk, Sparrow: (1-9)17 days, (14)5, (18)8, Cove, AKM.
- Prairie Chicken: (6)27, F-M road 300 yards west of Highway 146, Near Houston Lighting & Power generating station, M&SW.
- Crane, Sandhill: (150+)13, Cinco Ranch, M&SW; (102)24, West Galveston Isle, D&DL.
- Oystercatcher, American: (4)27, Bolivar, DH; (3)20, Bolivar Peninsula, near North jetty, Party "A".
- Plover, Semipalmated: (100)27, Bolivar, DH.
- Piping: (2)27, Bolivar, DH.
- WILSON'S: (1)20, Bolivar Peninsula near N jetty, BF & NP (see Clearing House notes).
- Killdeer: (2)12, Katy Freeway, (1)24, Houston Baptist College, P&PN.
- Curllew, Long-billed: (50+)24, West Galveston Island, D&DL.
- KNOT: (5)20, Galveston S. jetty, (10)Bolivar Peninsula near N. jetty, Party "A". First February record reported for Upper Texas Coast.
- Godwit, Marbled: (8)20, Bolivar Peninsula, N. jetty, Party "A".
- Avocet, American: (170)20, Bolivar Peninsula, N. jetty, Party "A" (BF).
- Gull, Ring-billed: (2)11, (4)25, Houston Baptist College, P&PN.
- Bonaparte's Gull: (3)24, Galveston S. jetty, D&DL.
- Skimmer, Black: (300)27, Bolivar, DH; ((400+)24, Galveston S. jetty, D&DL; (400)20, Galveston S. jetty, Party "A".
- Dove, WHITE-WINGED: (1)20, Galveston County Courthouse, Party "A".
- Inca: (2)daily, (5)13, (3)19,20, (4)27, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Owl, Screech: (1)23, Cove, AKM.
- Short-eared: (10)22, Cove, C&DP.
- Kingfisher, Belted: (1)11, Cove, AKM.
- Flicker, Yellow-shafted: (1)7 days, Cove, AKM; (1)5,13, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied: (1)5,6,13,27, (2)20, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Woodpecker, Downy: (1)5,6, (4)20, (2)27, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Phoebe, Eastern: (1)2,23, Cove, AKM.
- Swallow, Tree: (15+)11, (2)23, Cove, AKM; (3)20, Sheldon Reservoir, Party "A".
- Martin, Purple: (4)22,26,27, Cove, AKM; (3)8 (2 males, 1 female), (15)29, Blalock-McCall Lumber Co., 1006 Evergreen Dr., SE Houston, RIM & NP; (2)22,23, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
- Crow, Fish: (2)20, Doussan Park, Lake Houston, Party "A" (by call).
- Chickadee, Carolina: (1)2,4, (3)9, Cove, AKM; (5+)13, (5)19,20,26,27, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Titmouse, Tufted: (10+)13, (10)19,20,26,27, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Creeper, Brown: (1)18, Cove, AKM; (1)5,6, (2)12,20, 7702 Westview, P&PN.
- Wren, House: (1)2,4,11,18, Cove, AKM.
- Short-billed Marsh: (3+)2, Cove, AKM.
- Thrush, Hermit: (1)1, Cove, AKM; (1)3,10, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.
- Bluebird, Eastern: (2)3,19, (3)18, Cove, AKM.
- Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray: (1-7)2,4,11, Cove, AKM.
- Pipit, Water: (25+)11, Cove, AKM.
- Sprague's: (6)5, Cove, AK.
- Waxwing, Cedar: (50+)2,3, (25+)5, Cove, AKM; (10+)14, Memorial Drive, P&PN.
- VIREO, WHITE-EYED: (5)20, SW Bell Station on John Ralston Rd west of Sheldon Reservoir, Party "A" (seen and heard).

- Vireo, Solitary: (1)2, Cove, AKM.  
 Warbler, Orange-crowned: (2)2, (3+)18, Cove, AKM.  
 Myrtle: (NC)22 days, (100+)5,11, Cove, AKM; (2)5, (7)6, (15+)13, (15+)19, 20, (25)25,27, 7702 Westview, P&PN.  
 YELLOW-THROATED: (1)20, Deussen Park, Lake Houston, Party "A".  
 Pine: (1)2, (3+)18, Cove, AKM; (1)27, 7702 Westview, P&PN.  
 WILSON'S: (1)3,8,25, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.  
 Meadowlark, Western: (1)23, Houston Baptist College, SW.  
 ORIOLE, ORCHARD: (1)20, Galveston, Hutchings residence adjacent to Kempner Park, Party "A" (see Clearing House Notes); (1)29, M&SW at Williams' home. First February records for Upper Texas Coast.  
 Tanager, Western: (1)20, Hutchings home, Galveston, Party "A". First February record for Upper Texas Coast. Present at same time as Orchard Oriole. (see Clearing House notes).  
 Grosbeak, Black-headed: (1)daily through 20th, 701 Scenic Drive, Baytown, B&WT.  
 Finch, Purple: (2)2, Cove, AKM; (1)10,14, 7146 Ilex, SE Houston, NP; (20)12,13, (11)19, (7+)20, (23)22, (18+)26,27, 7702 Westview, P&PN; (15+)daily through 17th, (10-15)22-27, (5+)28,29, 1601 Woodlawn, Baytown, D&DL.  
 Goldfinch, American: (1-4)2,4, (10-35)3,8,18, Cove, AKM.  
 LESSER: (1+)2, Cove, AKM; (1)3,25, Cove, C&DP.  
 Sparrow, LeConte's: (8+)2, Cove, AKM.  
 Sharp-tailed: (1)20, Galveston, S. Jetty, BF & NP.  
 Field: (1)2, (10+)4, Cove, AKM.  
 White-crowned: (1)22, (2)23, Cove, AKM.  
 Fox: (3)20, Sheldon Rd. 1 mile S. of US 90, Party "A".  
 Swamp: (1)8, Cove, AKM.

#### CLEARING HOUSE CONTRIBUTORS

AKM	Arlie K. McKay	Party "A"	Ben Feltner, Dan Hardy, Elric
C&DP	Chuck & Dennis Peting		McHenry, Noel Pettingell
DM	Damon McKay	RIM	Robert L. Mills
AM	Arnold McKay	NP	Noel Pettingell
DH	Dirk Hagemeyer	P&PN	Phyllis & Paul Nimmons
M&SW	Laria & Steve Williams	BF	Ben Feltner
D&DL	Dorothy & David Lefkovits	B&WT	Betty & Wiley Tompkins

#### CLEARING HOUSE NOTES

From Dirk Hagemeyer: On Canvasback ducks--this is the greatest number of Canvasbacks I have seen at one time. There were several large rafts of Lesser Scaup along the north shore of East Bay adjoining the Anahuac Refuge. Amongst them were the Canvasbacks, one for every 4 or 5 Scaup. On Red-tailed Hawk--Seen at the entrance to Anahuac Refuge. This is a common hawk, but this one was a black or melanistic phase. The tail was unmistakably that of a Red-tail. A similar bird was there last winter, at the same location. All Bolivar sightings were along shoreline near North jetties. There were hundreds of Pelicans, many Gulls, and many and a great variety of shorebirds.

From Noel Pettingell: A total of 136 species (plus Rock Dove) were recorded on February 20 by Party "A" (BF 135, EM 127, NP 131, Rock Dove excluded from all totals), thus exceeding the previous Upper Texas Coast record by one party of 118 species recorded by 4 observers on February 15, 1969, in the Freeport Christmas Count circle. The 1972 party followed the standard "Big Day" route (i.e., Houston-Sheldon Reservoir-Lake Houston-LaPorte-Seabrook-Texas City Dike-Galveston Island) plus Bolivar Peninsula N. jetty area. 201 car miles were covered from beginning to ending at point of origin, 7146 Ilex in Houston.

On Wilson's Plover--Large black bill and face pattern compared with Piping and Semipalmated Plovers in immediate vicinity. This is the first February record for the Upper Texas Coast. On Orchard Oriole--All details carefully noted by all 4 observers. Bird was in female plumage, olive-green above and uniformly yellow below, with no trace of orange as in Baltimore or white as in Bullock's, and with two dull white wing bars. On Western Tanager--All details carefully noted by all 4 observers. Female plumage, greenish above, yellowish below, wings dark with wing bars and bill tanager-shaped.

From Arlie McKay: The Prairie Falcon reported by me for December was a mistake. This should have been reported as a Peregrine Falcon.

Steve Williams reported an addition to the January Clearing House of one Purple Martin seen at his home on January 26. He also reported that he heard that the Lesser Black-backed Gull had been seen at the Texas City Dike on a new road that runs east just at the north end of the dike, but we have had no actual report of a sighting.

PELAGIC TRIP

Linda Snyder is organizing a pelagic trip for Sunday, April 16, from Freeport. This time should be in the middle of the migration period, and in Lovett Williams' study of jaegers he found April to be his biggest month. Those going will meet at the Party Boats, Inc., dock in Freeport at 7:00 A.M. Bring your own lunch, drinks and motion sickness pills. The cost will be between \$10 and \$12, depending on the number of passengers. If interested contact Mrs. J.A. Snyder immediately since it is important for her to know how many are going. Her phone number is 713-471-1651 and address is Box 204, LaPorte 77571. Checks are to be made payable to Pelagic Trip.

COMING EVENTS

- Thursday  
April 6 Audubon Wildlife Film, 8:00 P.M., at greater Houston Builders' Association auditorium, 2710 West Alabama. Dinner preceding the film at 6:00 at Suzanne's Cafeteria. This, the last of this season's series, should be of particular interest to birders, being Migration Mysteries, presented by Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History. He is widely known in the fields of ornithology and herpetology. This film is a study of birds, their migration and the efforts of man to learn about migration.
- Sunday  
April 9 OG field trip to High Island for spring migration. Steve Williams will be leader of this trip, which will probably yield one of the largest bird counts of the year. Meet at the roadside park, west side of Highway 124, in High Island, at 8:00 A.M. Bring lunch.
- Tuesday  
April 11 Regular ONC meeting at 8:00 P.M. at Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Drive. Program will be "Bugs in Your Back Yard" presented by Jon Curtis.
- Thursday  
April 13 Regular OG meeting at 7:30 P.M. at Downtown Recreation Center. Program will be a series of bird slides with their matching songs and calls. This should be a big help in identification of birds by song. A great amount of effort has gone into the preparation of this presentation by Maxine Wenger and Dorothy Iefkovits.
- Saturday  
April 15 ONC field trip, "Southwest Conroe," with Raymond McDavid as leader. Details will be announced in April Nature Notes.
- April 16 Pelagic trip as announced above.
- Saturday  
April 22 Spring Big Day count. Announcement of details for the count will be made at the OG meeting April 13. We need a large participation in this annual event in order to make it successful. Last year's count resulted in a total of 201 species seen by 22 observers in nine parties.

OFFICERS

- Chairman: Miss Sarah Gordon, 1746 Wroxtton Court, Houston 77005  
Vice-chairman: Mrs. Harry L. (Avis) Brister, 2314 Saxon, Houston 77018  
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