



Volume 45, No. 7

August 1996

The Spoonbill

September 9 Meeting* Speaker

"Hawks of the Upper Texas Coast"

presented by
Jim Morgan

Raptor expert Jim Morgan plans to make migrating hawk identification easier for us all. Many will remember Jim's OG address on red tail hawk identification. At our next meeting Jim plans to cover more UTC species that migrate and winter here.

The meeting featuring Jim's talk will be held at St. Phillip's United Methodist Church, 5501 Beechnut at Renwick. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

**Due to the holiday this is a second Monday meeting.*

September 9 Learning Corner

Winnie Burkett: Hawk Identification

Winnie's annual treat for those of us trying to figure out our accipiter from our buteos. Recommended brush-up for participation in Hawk Watch.

October 7 Meeting Speaker

David Dauphin speaks in October.

Watch the next *Spoonbill* for details. The meeting will be held at St. Phillip's United Methodist Church, 5501 Beechnut at Renwick. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

Thoughts On The Passing of a Legend

by OG Vice Chairman Dan Coleman

"That's a Baltimore Oriole. Do you hear it?" Those words from my mother when I was a little boy are my first birding memories. The windows of the kitchen were always open during the spring in New Jersey, and I was just amazed that my mother could identify little, hidden birds by simply listening to them. Sometimes I heard and sometimes I didn't, and occasionally I saw.

That ember of birding fascination lay dormant within me until I was 24, at which time a loggerhead shrike fanned the flames. As the snow goose knows instinctively to head south in the winter, I knew instinctively that I needed binoculars and a field guide.

I knew of the existence of bird identification field guides from my childhood. I clearly remember studying that black-and-white plate of eagles, vultures and osprey in flight as seen from below, and imagining each of them flying down the ridge line of Turkey

see *Tribute to Roger Tory Peterson* pg. 8

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The Spoonbill

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Your reports, insights, mus-
ing, events, book reviews, clip-
pings, notes, personal journals or
anecdotes are all solicited.

Mail, fax or e-mail submis-
sions *by the 15th of every month* for
possible inclusion in the next month's
issue. ALL submissions must include
the author's or a contact name, address
and phone number.

OG News

Monthly Field Trip

David Sarkozi stepped up at the last meeting and volunteered to be Field Trip Coordinator. The OG will certainly benefit from his intensity, local birding expertise and keen interest. He is looking for trip leaders and ideas.

The September field trip is scheduled for Saturday September 28 at the Candy Abshire Wildlife Management Area at Smith Point. Meet at the "newly completed" platform at 8 a.m. David is VERY interested in getting field trippers to carpool. Think it's a good idea to carpool? Call David at 520-5906.

Membership Concierge

Not receiving *The Spoonbill*? Didn't receive the *new* ONC directory? Know someone who wants to join the OG? Mary Dodson is the person to call. She is our Membership Chair and the person who insures you're current and receiving the benefits of your membership. Mary is very accessible at (713)974-3089.

Out-of-pocket

Our leader Bob Luckner is in Alaska on business. His stay will last through the end of the year.

Bob is looking forward to the annual Christmas count there which is started with a coin toss. The loser has to go out and count the birds.

In his stead is Dan Coleman, Vice Chair. All the officers will be helping to pick up any slack. Contact Dan with OG questions, concerns or ideas for programs. Better still, volunteer to be program coordinator.

OG News

No Rest!

☼ **HAS Boy Scout Woods Work Day.** 8 a.m., Saturday, September 7. Bring gloves, sunblock and bug spray. *FREE lunch and drinks!*

☼ **ONC Little Thicket Sanctuary Work Days.** September 27-29. Trail and sanctuary maintenance. Meet at the sanctuary. Tools and refreshments provided. Adopt-a-road (highway near LTNS) cleanup is set for Sunday. For more details call Calvin Blakely 358-5407.

☼ **Texas Adopt A Beach Cleanup.** This year's Texas tradition is set for Saturday September 21 at your favorite slice of the Texas Gulf Coast. Land Commissioner Gary Mauro invites all Texans who use and care about the look and feel of our Texas shorelines. Call 800-85BEACH.

Calendar

September 12-14 - 8th Annual Hummer/Bird Celebration. Rockport, TX. Call 800-242-6445.

September 28 - OG Field Trip. Candy Abshire Wildlife Management Area at Smith Point. Meet at the observation tower 8a.m.

September 14 - October 20 - Smith Point Hawk Watch. Call Winnie Burkett at 992-5640 to sign-up.

October 6 - Book signing and Sanctuary Open House at Boy Scout Woods. Author Ann Cleeves will sign copies of her murder mystery "High Island Blues."

November 6-10 - Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival. Harlingen, TX. Call 800-531-7346.

Clearing House

May 1996 Report

Editors: Phyllis and Tony Frank

A total of 165 species were reported for the month including 16 warbler species and several lingering shorebird species. A late Prairie Warbler and a White-throated Sparrow were among the finds this month. All reports are due July 3rd. Readers are reminded that all decisions regarding checklist status are made by the checklist committee. Publication of a rarity does not imply acceptance of the record by the editors or the committee. The CH format remains the same this month. The listing uses the following format: bird name, early late dates, reports/total and summary by county or detailed listing. The format of the county summary is as follows: county designation - number of reports/number of birds. The detailed listing format is as follows: county-(number of birds) day, observer code. Very rare birds are underlined>. Birds with no previous record on date or vagrant status appear in bold>. Birds new to the checklist are capitalized and underlined>. Please remember to submit notes on all those good birds. And with all the reminders completed - on to the birds.

- Loon, Common 5-5 1/1 JE-(1)5,RW
 Grebe, Pied-bill 11-12/2/5 GA-HI(2)12,DS; JE-(3)11,JW
 Pelican, Amer Wht 11-11 1/40 JE-(40)11,JW
 Corm, Dbl-crested 11-11 1/43 JE-(43)11,JW
 Corm, Neotropic 5-12 4/156 JE-3/136 OR-1/20
 Anhinga 5-11 2/6 JE-(3)5,RW; JE-(3)11,JW
 Bittern, Least 11-11 1/2 JE-(2)11,JW
 Heron, Great Blue 5-12 3/24 JE-2/23 OR-1/1
 Egret, Great 5-24 5/314 JE-4/306 OR-1/8
 Egret, Snowy 5-12 6/124 CH-1/5 GA-1/4 JE-3/95 OR-1/20
 Heron, Little Blu 5-24 5/121 JE-4/113 OR-1/8
 Heron, Tricolored 5-12 3/59 JE-2/57 OR-1/2
 Egret, Cattle 5-24 6/1952 CH-1/21 JE-4/1881 OR-1/50
 Heron, Green 11-24/4/37 CH-1/1 JE-2/33 OR-1/3
 Nt-Heron, Blk-cm 11-11 1/6 JE-(6)11,JW
 Nt-Heron, Yel-cm 5-24 4/98 JE-(9)5,RW; JE-(79)11,JW;
 JE-(2)24,JW; OR-(8)12,KS
 Ibis, White 5-11 2/707 JE-(4)5,RW; JE-(703)11,JW
 Ibis, White-faced 5-11 3/391 JE-3/391
 Spoonbill, Roseat 5-12 3/108 GA-HI(10)12,DS; JE-(38)5,RW;
 JE-(60)11,JW
 Whsl-Duck, Fulvs 11-26 3/149 GA-HI(6)12,DS; GA-HI(6)26,DV;
 JE-(137)11,JW
 Whsl-Duck, Blk-bd 5-11 2/29 JE-(18)5,RW; JE-(11)11,JW
 Goose, Gr Wht-fm 12-12 1/1 OR-(1)12,KS
 Duck, Wood 11-11 1/4 JE-(4)11,JW
 Teal, Green-wing 11-11 1/2 JE-(2)11,JW
 Duck, Mottled 5-26 7/218 GA-2/20 JE-4/178 OR-1/30
 Teal, Blue-winged 5-26 4/173 GA-HI(6)12,DS; GA-HI(4)26,DV;
 JE-(22)5,RW; JE-(141)11,JW
 Shoveler, Northm 5-11 2/11 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(10)11,JW
 Gadwall 11-12/2/13 GA-HI(1)12,DS; JE-(12)11,JW
 Scaup, Lesser 5-26 3/21 GA-HI(4)26,DV; JE-(14)5,RW;
 JE-(3)11,JW
 Vulture, Black 11-24 3/8 CH-1/4 JE-2/4
 Vulture, Turkey 10-24 4/17 JE-4/17
 Kite, White-tailed 5-11 2/5 JE-(3)5,RW; JE-(2)11,JW
 Harrier, Northern 5-11 2/2 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(1)11,JW
 Hawk, Sharp-shin 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW
 Hawk, Cooper's 12-12 1/1 OR-(1)12,KS
 Hawk, Red-shouldr 12-24 3/22 CH-(1)12,DS; JE-(1)24,JW;
 OR-(20)12,KS
 Hawk, Swainson's 11-29 4/4 FB-(1)11,BH; FB-(1)26,BH;
 FB-(1)29,BH; JE-(1)24,JW
 Hawk, Red-tailed 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW
 Bobwhite, Northm 11-11 1/4 JE-(4)11,JW
 Rail, Clapper 11-11 1/2 JE-(2)11,JW
 Rail, King 11-11 1/3 JE-(3)11,JW
 Sora 5-5 1/1 JE-(1)5,RW
 Gallinule, Purple 11-11 1/6 JE-(6)11,JW
 Moorhen, Common 5-11 2/146 JE-(6)5,RW; JE-(140)11,JW
 Coot, American 5-12 3/151 CH-1/1 JE-2/150
 Plover, Blk-belli 5-26 4/115 GA-1/3 JE-3/112
 Plover, Wilson's 5-11 2/4 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(3)11,JW
 Plover, Semipalm 26-26 1/6 GA-HI(6)26,DV
 Plover, Piping 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW
 Killdeer 5-26 8/117 CH-1/5 GA-2/10 JE-4/96 OR-1/6
 Stilt, Black-neck 5-26 7/114 CH-1/11 GA-2/22 JE-3/78 OR-1/3
 Avocet, American 5-5 1/2 JE-(2)5,RW
 Yellowlegs, Great 5-26 4/6 CH-AW(1)12,DS; GA-HI(2)26,DV;
 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(2)11,JW
 Yellowlegs, Less 11-26 4/29 CH-AW(5)12,DS; GA-HI(2)26,DV;
 JE-(20)11,JW; OR-(2)12,KS
 Willet 5-12 3/28 JE-2/26 OR-1/2
 Sandprr, Spotted 5-26 4/6 GA-HI(1)12,DS; GA-HI(2)26,DV;
 JE-(2)5,RW; JE-(1)11,JW
 Whimbrel 10-11 2/231 JE-(39)10,JW; JE-(192)11,JW
 Godwit, Hudsonian 10-11 2/2 JE-(1)10,JW; JE-(1)11,JW
 Turnstone, Ruddy 11-26 3/86 GA-HI(4)12,DS; GA-HI(5)26,DV;
 JE-(77)11,JW
 Knot, Red 5-11 2/5 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(4)11,JW
 Sanderling 11-12/2/109 GA-HI(4)12,DS; JE-(105)11,JW
 Sandprr, Semipalm 11-26 2/8 GA-HI(3)26,DV; JE-(5)11,JW
 Sandprr, Western 11-12/2/12 JE-(8)11,JW; OR-(4)12,KS
 Sandprr, Least 5-12 3/17 CH-AW(5)12,DS; JE-(6)5,RW;
 JE-(6)11,JW

Clearing House

- Sandprr, Wht-rump 26-26 1/500 GA-HI(500)26,DV
 Sandprr, Baird's 11-11 1/3 JE-(3)11,JW
 Sandprr, Pectoral 26-26 1/1 GA-HI(1)26,DV
 Dunlin 5-26 3/12 GA-(1)26,DV; JE-(1)5,PW; JE-(10)11,JW
 Sandprr, Stilt 5-26 5/87 GA-HI(50)12,DS; GA-HI(2)26,DV;
 JE-(21)5,RW; JE-(13)11,JW; OR-(1)12,KS
 Dowitcher, S-bill 5-5 1/17 JE-(27)5,JW
 Dowitcher, L-bill 5-11 2/3 JE-(2)5,RW; JE-(1)11,JW
 Phalarope, Wilson 5-11 2/21 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(20)11,JW
 Gull, Laughing 5-12 4/525 JE-3/515 OR-1/10
 Gull, Ring-billed 5-5 1/2 JE-(2)5,RW
 Gull, Herring 12-12 1/2 OR-(2)12,KS
 Tern, Gull-billed 5-5 1/1 JE-(1)5,RW
 Tern, Caspian 5-12 3/19 JE-2/17 OR-1/2
 Tern, Royal 11-12 2/101 JE-(100)11,JW; OR-(1)12,KS
 Tern, Common 5-11 2/5 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(4)11,JW
 Tern, Forster's 5-12 3/44 JE-2/29 OR-1/15
 Tern, Least 5-12 3/64 JE-(45)5,RW; JE-(18)11,JW;
 OR-(1)12,KS
 Tern, Black 5-26 4/141 GA-HI(1)26,DV; JE-(3)5,RW;
 JE-(124)11,JW; OR-(13)12,KS
 Skimmer, Black 11-12 2/114 JE-(14)11,JW; OR-(100)12,KS
 Dove, Rock 5-12 3/84 JE-2/76 OR-1/8
 Dove, Mourning 5-24 6/398 CH-1/4 JE-4/370 OR-1/24
 Dove, Inca 5-12 4/7 GA-1/1 JE-3/6
 Cuckoo, Yel-billd 11-26 5/18 GA-HI(4)18,DV; GA-HI(5)26,DV;
 JE-(4)11,JW; JE-SR(2)12,DS; JE-(3)24,JW
 Owl, Barred 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW
 Nighthawk, Common 5-12 3/16 JE-(1)5,RW; JE-(10)11,JW;
 OR-(5)12,KS
 Swift, Chimney 11-12 2/134 JE-(124)11,JW; OR-(10)12,KS
 Hummer, Ruby-thrt 11-12 2/9 JE-(4)11,JW; OR-(5)12,KS
 Wdpeckr, Red-head 11-12 3/5 CH-(1)12,DS; JE-(3)11,JW;
 OR-(1)12,KS
 Wdpeckr, Red-bell 5-24 4/16 JE-3/6 OR-1/10
 Wdpeckr, Downy 5-12 3/7 JE-2/5 OR-1/2
 Wdpeckr, Hairy 12-12 1/2 OR-(2)12,KS
 Wdpeckr, Pileated 11-12 2/6 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(4)12,KS
 Flycatch, Oliv-sid 12-12 1/1 GA-HI(1)12,DS
 Wood-Pewee, East 11-26 6/15 GA-(2)12,DS; GA-HI(2)18,DV;
 GA-HI(1)26,DV; JE-(1)11,JW; JE-SR(7)12,DS;
 OR-(2)12,KS
 Flycatch, Yel-bel 11-12 2/2 JE-(1)11,JW; JE-SR(1)12,DS
 empidonax, sp. 26-26 1/1 GA-HI(1)26,DV
 Flycatch, Gr Crst 18-26 2/7 GA-HI(4)18,DV; GA-HI(3)26,DV
 Kingbird, Western 11-26 3/9 HA-(6)18,BH; HA-(1)26,BH;
 JE-(2)11,JW
 Kingbird, Eastern 5-26 9/212 CH-1/3 GA-2/5 JE-5/174
 OR-1/30
 Flycatch, Ss-tail 5-24 5/102 JE-(2)5,RW; JE-(11)10,JW;
 JE-(74)11,JW; JE-SR(2)12,DS; JE-(13)24,JW
 Martin, Purple 10-24 3/29 JE-(2)10,JW; JE-(7)24,JW;
 OR-(20)12,KS
 Swallow, Tree 11-12 2/58 JE-(56)11,JW; OR-(2)12,KS
 Swallow, NR-wing 5-5 1/1 JE-(1)5,RW
 Swallow, Bank 11-11 1/10 JE-(10)11,JW
 Swallow, Cliff 11-11 1/64 JE-(64)11,JW
 Swallow, Cave 11-11 1/2 JE-SR(2)11,JW
 Swallow, Barn 5-24 5/612 JE-(20)5,RW; JE-(5)10,JW;
 JE-(536)11,JW; JE-(3)24,JW; OR-(48)12,KS
 Jay, Blue 5-24 5/70 JE-4/63 OR-1/7
 Crow, American 10-24 4/36 JE-3/29 OR-1/7
 Crow, Fish 11-12 2/17 JE-(9)11,JW; OR-(8)12,KS
 Chickadee, Carol 11-12 2/38 JE-(8)11,JW; OR-(30)12,KS
 Titmouse, Tufted 11-12 2/34 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(32)12,KS
 Wren, Carolina 11-18 4/12 GA-HI(2)12,DS; GA-HI(3)18,DV;
 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(5)12,KS
 Wren, Sedge 12-12 1/20 OR-(20)12,KS
 Wren, Marsh 5-5 1/1 JE-(1)5,RW
 Gnatcatch, Blu-gra 11-12 2/3 JE-(2)11,JW; JE-SW(1)12,DS
 Bluebird, Eastern 11-24 3/7 JE-(3)11,JW; JE-(1)24,JW;
 OR-(3)12,KS
 Veery 12-18 2/2 GA-HI(1)18,DV; JE-SR(1)12,DS
 Thrush, Gra-cheek 26-26 1/1 GA-HI(1)26,DV
 Thrush, Swainsons 12-26 3/12 GA-HI(1)12,DS; GA-HI(1)26,DV;
 JE-(10)12,DS
 Thrush, Wood 12-12 1/2 OR-(2)12,KS
 Robin, American 5-11 2/12 JE-(2)5,RW; JE-(10)11,JW
 Catbird, Gray 12-12 2/3 JE-SW(1)12,DS; OR-(2)12,KS
 Mockingbird, N 5-24 5/352 JE-4/332 OR-1/20
 Waxwing, Cedar 12-18 2/43 GA-HI(3)18,DV; OR-(40)12,KS
 Shrike, Loggerhed 5-24 4/157 JE-4/157
 Starling, Euro 5-24 5/259 JE-4/241 OR-1/18
 Vireo, White-eyed 11-12 2/17 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(15)12,KS
 Vireo, Red-eyed 12-18 2/7 GA-HI(1)18,DV; JE-(6)12,DS
 Parula, Northern 11-12 2/4 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(2)12,KS
 Warb, Yellow 12-18 3/7 GA-HI(5)18,DV; JE-SR(1)12,DS;
 OR-(1)12,KS
 Warb, Chstnt-side 12-12 2/2 JE-SR(1)12,DS; OR-(1)12,KS
 Warb, Magnolia 11-12 2/22 JE-(2)11,JW; JE-(20)12,DS
 Warb, Blk-thr Gm 12-18 2/2 GA-HI(1)18,DV; JE-SR(1)12,DS
 Warb, Blackburn 12-12 1/2 JE-(2)12,DS
 Warb, Prairie 11-11 1/2 JE-(2)11,JW
 Warb, Bay-breastd 12-18 3/6 GA-HI(2)12,DS; GA-HI(2)18,DV;
 JE-SR(2)12,DS
 Warb, Blackpoll 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW
 Warb, Blk-and-wht 12-18 2/4 GA-HI(1)18,DV; JE-(3)12,DS
 Redstart, Amer 11-26 4/28 GA-HI(1)12,DS; GA-HI(1)26,DV;
 JE-(1)11,JW; JE-(25)12,DS
 Ovenbird 18-18 1/2 GA-HI(2)18,DV
 Yellowthroat, Com 5-26 5/31 GA-2/3 JE-2/23 OR-1/5
 Warb, Hooded 18-18 1/1 GA-HI(1)18,DV
 Warb, Canada 12-12 2/3 JE-SR(1)12,DS; OR-(2)12,KS
 Chat, Yellow-brst 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW

Clearing House

Tanager, Summer 12-12/1 OR-(1)12,KS
 Tanager, Scarlet 12-12/1 JE-SW(1)12,DS
 Cardinal, Northrn 5-24 7/161 GA-1/4 JE-5/127 OR-1/30
 Grosbeak, Ros-brs 12-12/1 JE-SW(1)12,DS
 Grosbeak, Blue 11-11 1/2 JE-(2)11,JW
 Bunting, Indigo 11-12/15 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(13)12,KS
 Bunting, Painted 11-12/26 JE-(2)11,JW; OR-(4)12,KS
 Dickcissel 10-24 3/419 JE-(90)10,JW; JE-(321)11,JW;
 JE-(8)24,JW
 Sparrow, Savannah 5-12 3/15 JE-(5)5,RW; JE-(8)11,JW;
 OR-(2)12,KS
 Sparrow, Wht-thrt 11-11 1/1 JE-(1)11,JW
 Blackbird, Red-wg 5-24 5/744 JE-4/684 OR-1/60
 Meadowlark, East 10-24 4/185 JE-3/170 OR-1/15
 Grackle, Gr-tail 5-24 5/390 JE-4/385 OR-1/5
 Grackle, Bt-tail 11-12/213 JE-(183)11,JW; OR-(30)12,KS
 Grackle, Common 5-24 4/149 JE-3/145 OR-1/4
 Cowbird, Brn-head 5-12 4/65 JE-3/25 OR-1/40
 Oriole, Orchard 5-12 4/91 JE-(6)5,RW; JE-(47)11,JW;
 JE-(8)12,DS; OR-(30)12,KS

Finch, House 1-31 1/2 HA-(2)1-31,LH

Sparrow, House 5-24 4/8 JE-3/6 OR-1/2

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS: 13279 No notes submitted for the following species which requires notes: Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, American Kestrel, Sora (very rare on on date, 12), Short-billed Dowitcher (very rare on dates 11 and 26)

LIST OF OBSERVER CODES: Bob Honig (BH); David Sarkozi (DS); Don Verser (DV); John Whittle (JW); Ken Sztraky (KS); Lois Henderson (LH); Royce Pendergast, John Whittle (RW)

LIST OF LOCATION CODES: Anahuac NWR (AW); High Island (HI); Sea Rim St. Park (SR); Sabine Woods (SW)

LIST OF CONTY CODES: Brazoria (BR); Chambers (CH); Fort Bend (FB); Galveston (GA); Harris (HA); Jefferson (JE); Orange (OR)

Pectoral Sandpiper - D. Verser May 26, 1996

Slightly larger than White-rumped Sandpiper with dark line through rump (in flight). Dark breast streaking ending abruptly and pale yellowish legs.

Dunlin - D. Verser May 26, 1996

Chestnut back and black belly with longish slightly decurved bill.

Stilt Sandpiper - D. Verser May 26, 1996

Considerably taller than White-rumped Sandpiper. Heavily barred below. Chestnut ear patch and white supercilium. Long slightly decurved bill.

Prairie Warbler - J. and J. Whittle May 11, 1996

Tyrrell Park, Beaumont. Shortly after the bird was seen the characteristic call was heard from two different parts of the woods. Medium sized warbler. Brownish above, yellow below, with prominently streaked flanks. Id based mostly on voice.

American Redstart - D. Verser May 26, 1996

Female with bold yellow patches on upper tail. Gray head and upperparts. White below. Yellow wing spots and yellowish sides of breast.

White-throated Sparrow - Jana Whittle May 11, 1996

Steinhagen Rd. Bird was perched on top of tall weeds, acting sluggish, and not appearing particularly healthy. Large sparrow. Brownish sparrow, with pale stripes on crown and through eye. White throat. Unstreaked off-white underparts.

House Finch - Lois Henderson May 1996

Male and female at feeder in Robindell - one mile south of Bayland Park. Male later seen feeding a fledgling. About the size of a sparrow. Male with bright red forehead, bib and rump. Top of head brown. Belly streaked with brown. Female and fledgling heavily striped. Observed daily at a distance of about 30 feet.

Birding Venezuela Part 2

by Rob Thacker

One evening Ramon our guide spotted two Giant Anteaters and herded one in front of the truck. A Black-collared Hawk flew in with a snake and landed in a tree. It turned out to be a five-month old Anaconda, three feet in length. We observed as the bird ate the snake's head, turning it into a bloody red pulp.

Earlier we had explored Henri Pittier National Park, encompassing 250,000 acres in the Coastal Cordillera of northern Venezuela's Aragua state. This park is explored by birding along two roads: the west Ocumare road and the east Choroni road. Both leave the city of Maracay and proceed over the mountains to the Caribbean. There is a wide range of habitats encountered: the dry interior, wet tropical forest, cloud forest at the summits and low coastal areas. The highlight is Rancho Grande, on the Ocumare road.

Rancho Grande is the remains of a half-built, semi-abandoned luxury hotel. This edifice nestles amid lush cloud forest near Portchuelo Pass. The road was built by Juan Vicente Gomez, a dictator with grand visions, as an escape route from his home in Maracay to the sea. All work stopped at his death in 1935. The building was

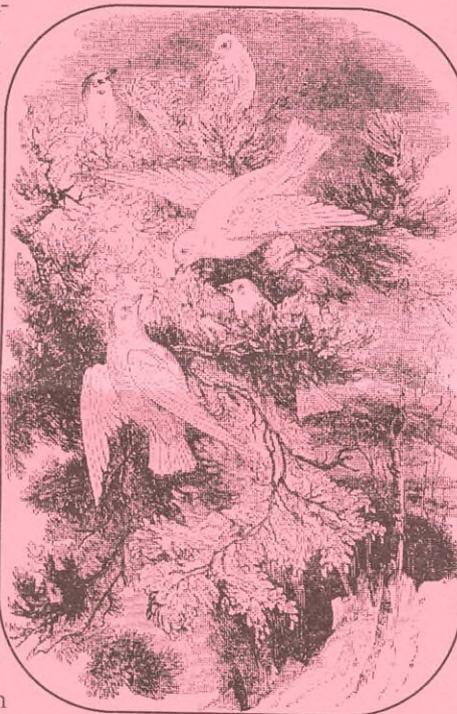
Birding Venezuela Part 2 cont'd

research station there, which occupies part of the building, and established the national park bearing his name.

The four-story building serves as an excellent photographic and observation post. There is a rooftop balcony from which visitors can sit and observe birds in the forest canopy overhead and at feeders (bring your own fruit). An endearing Cinnamon Flycatcher patrolled the building's base, a compact, puffed up ball of cinnamon feathers, ready to grab a passing insect. Faun-breasted Tanagers, with their blue crowns and red eyes, nested in holes of the building. Another cavity nester, the Swallow Tanager, also raises its young in the building's holes and crevices. We observed four of the young being banded.

Golden Tanagers ate fruit at the feeders. Behind the building a trail leads into the cloud forest. Along this path was a pair of nesting Collared Trogons. A Slaty Antwren skulked in the under story.

Down the Ocumare road is Portachuelo Pass. Dawn found us peering through the morning fog. Our guide, David Ascanio, is an expert recordist. He had heard the White-tipped Quetzal and after some searching we found it. A pair of Handsome Fruit-eaters perched for us. A Chestnut-crowned Becard went in and out of its nest. Blood-eared Parakeets called and flew over in flocks. A tiny Scaled Piculet flitted in the branches. Long-tailed Sylphs, fanning their streamer tails, explored the flower. We saw more tanagers; Speckled, Bay-headed, Beryl-spangled, Rufous-cheeked and Blue-winged Mountain. Band-tailed Guans flushed. Black-Hawk Eagle and Solitary Eagle expanded our raptor list.



David mentioned that we should try to see the Ochre-breasted Brush Finch. Upon learning it was an endemic which would respond to his previously recorded call, I had to see it! David played his tape and sure enough two Ochre-breasted Brush Finches appeared.

How I ignored this beautiful bird in my research I don't know, but Venezuela has some 1300 species in an area the size of Texas and Oklahoma. Then, we heard the call of the Black-throated Spinetail. This furnariid, with a black chin and rufous underbody, skulked in the undergrowth, occasionally showing itself. Recently split from Rufous Spinetail, it is another endemic.

The Ocumare road continues out of the cloud forest down to areas of old plantations or fincas before proceeding to dry coastal habitats. On a road that veers left at a military installation, we saw birds more characteristic of the lowlands.

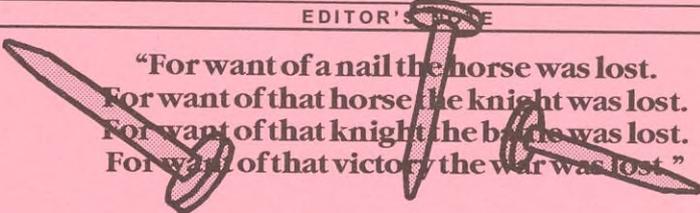
David heard the calls of Lance-tailed Manakins and said they were on a lek. We carefully climbed through the brush and were rewarded

with good views of this red-capped, blue backed manikin with its lance tail. At the beach at Ocumare we observed Brown Boobies, gracefully cruising the ocean skies and diving for fish.

At the Hotel Maracay, whose grounds yielded species we had not seen elsewhere, we found Russet-throated Puffbird and Spot-breasted Woodpecker. We left Venezuela eager to return to such areas as the Tepuis in the southeast and the Andes in the west.

Thanks Rob for a great talk and fine article. In the first part of this article a species was misprinted as "Sabin" when it should read "Jabiru." I apologize for the mistake. My OCR software received a severe tongue lashing for this obvious error.

EDITOR'S NOTE



**"For want of a nail the horse was lost.
For want of that horse the knight was lost.
For want of that knight the battle was lost.
For want of that battle the war was lost."**

Growing up an Army brat left me understanding life with some of the lexicons, anecdotes and parables of the field of battle. I heard the parable above used by professional soldiers to express the worst possible frustration with shortsighted superiors trying to conserve resources. It is attributed to Ben Franklin but some say it dates to William the Conqueror. The civilian equivalent is perhaps Franklin's "Penny wise and pound foolish."

The Army brat in me muttered this when I heard of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Chairman desire to eliminate Texas' Partner in Flight Program (TXPIF). The PIF program is an international joint effort by North, Central and South American businesses, government agencies (state and federal) and private organizations to address the plight of migratory birds. In part, they sponsor International Migratory Bird Day and help monitor compliance with the International Migratory Bird Treaty. It is a true multi-cultural, inter-agency partnership. Many Houston area birders, businesses and organizations are involved with PIF.

Texas shares the longest expanse of border with Mexico. It has more species of bird than any other state and hosts the largest number of wintering birds. Texas is critical to migratory birds and a needed partner in any effort seeking to conserve and preserve bird populations. PIF strives to reach beyond borders (real or imagined) between entities that affect birds. Why? Because birds do not recognize borders. Those of us who cherish the migrating avifauna owe it to them to ensure their safe journey through the myriad of human endeavors they encounter every year. TXPIF needs to be a partner.

Ted Eubanks in an e-mail letter and in the Austin AS newsletter writes that Gov. Bush's chairman of TPWD is challenged to accept the importance of birders. They don't "consume" or "take" and

hence cannot be counted like the number of fishing or hunting licensees. Birds migrating to and through Texas are amorphous. Birds can't be accurately counted. Shortsighted? Or, simply focused too much on hunters and fisherman?

How much will cutting TXPIF from TPWD save citizens of Texas? \$50,000. One can imagine birders in Texas rallying to raise this money. The money isn't the issue. Chairman Lee Bass is making and moving TPWD away from conservation efforts to focus on consumptive activities.

Texas birders must be the "nail" on the issue of Texas' partnership and leadership in PIF. If Chairman Bass is refusing the mantle of leadership on this issue we must take up the challenge. Please call, fax or write the governor, Chairman Bass and your elected representatives supporting TXPIF.

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4200 Smith School Rd.
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Fax (512) 463-1879

The Honorable (Your State Senator)
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Fax (512) 463-0326

The Honorable (Your State Representative)
P.O. Box 2910
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Tribute to Roger Tory Peterson

Mountain. That plate looks the same way in today's editions that it looked then, and it is one of the strong reassuring images I have connecting me to that boy of so many years ago. I once got my hands on my mother's field guide and a pair of scissors. I carefully cut out dozens of the individual bird drawings and set them on the branches and leaves of a bush in the yard. The cutout birds came alive for me just as if every one was real. A birder's dream—I had redstarts, puffins and towhees all perched in the same tree. My bottom came alive under my mother's hand when the clever deed was discovered, and the entire experience remains with me still.

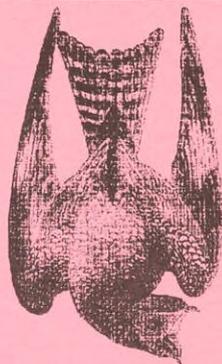
I never met Roger Tory Peterson, never saw him give a speech or presentation, never birded with him. But he is important to me in the way he popularized a passionate hobby that has led to many great friends and experiences, and in the images he created that will forever connect me to my childhood.

Dan's sentiments are meant to echo those of the OG, Roger Tory Peterson will be remembered for many accomplishments and epitomizing the love of birds many of us feel. It ALL started with his bird illustrations; his best legacy.

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Next Month's Spoonbill



Birding the InterNet. First in a series of articles on how the Internet is serving the birding community in our own backyard. David Sarkozi tells us his reasons for publishing a World Wide Web site which features maps of Upper Texas Coast birding spots.



All Caught Up. The Franks are working feverishly to get past Clearing House reports done. You'll need a forklift to pick-up your next *Spoonbill* containing two months worth of Clearing House reports which will include the fruitful month of April.

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