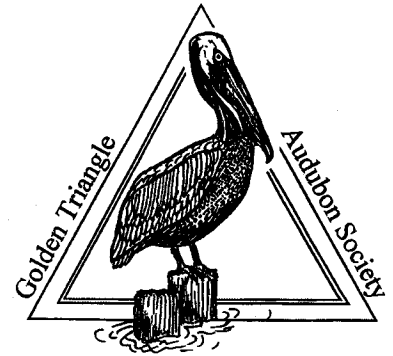


Brown Pelican

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The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 8 No. 1

January 2002

Searching for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers

Membership Meeting

Thursday, January 17, 2002

6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

Chester Moore

Port Arthur News and Orange Leader

Chester Moore is the outdoors columnist for the Port Arthur News and the Orange Leader. He has closely followed recent (post 1950s) reports of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in Texas and Louisiana. This promises to be an interesting and topical talk. See the article on page 3 about the upcoming search in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in Southeastern Louisiana.

As usual, the doors will be open no later than 6:30 p.m., and the proceedings will start at 7:15 p.m. approximately.

Christmas Bird Counts

Another Christmas has passed and a New Year arrived. For many birders, Christmas means Christmas Bird Counts. These counts are conducted within a 15-mile diameter circle. Christmas Bird Counts are without doubt the source of the longest term information on trends in winter bird populations. The counts have been going on for 102 years now, and, thanks to the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Laboratory for Ornithology and the wonders of modern data processing, the results of all counts ever held are available on the Internet at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr.html>. This represents probably the most massive "citizen science" project ever carried out, and it has much to contribute on into the future. Several of the counts along the Texas coastal plain have been conducted for several decades. We particularly salute Bill Graber's contribution in compiling the Bolivar Peninsula count for 40 years. This circle includes the very important Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge area as well as High Island and Rollover Pass. Two counts have been conducted in the Big Thicket since the National Preserve was established in the late seventies. These are also beginning to produce data on population trends. Bird counts are one of the easiest ways for you to participate in the processes for monitoring bird population trends. We encourage you to do so.

Inside, you will find brief results of our members' participation in two very local counts. For the Sea Rim count, we now have seven years of recent data and some historical data from the seventies in a circle which was somewhat further west. This count period, Ken Sztraky has re-instituted the Orange count. This was a count that was carried out for eight years in the seventies. Ken has moved the circle a little to correspond with current day realities of land use and access. We are already learning about the distribution of bird species in the local area from these efforts.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 8, No.1 January 2002

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

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Calendar of Events

If you can present a program of interest to a Membership Meeting, or know of some person who can, please contact Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193.

For more information on field trips, please contact Steve Mayes, (409) 722-5807 or the trip leader.

Thursday January 17, 2002 – Membership Meeting. See front page.

Saturday January 19, 2002 – Field Trip to Cattail Marsh. Meet in the parking lot at Cattail Marsh at 7:30 a.m. This trip will focus on waterfowl. Leaders John Haynes and Steve Mayes. Check at the membership meeting on January 17 to see if we have been able to arrange for the bus; if not, there may be two or three miles of walking to take full advantage of this trip.

Thursday February 21, 2002 -- Membership Meeting. Jace Stansbury of Nederland will give a presentation on Purple Martins.

Saturday February 23, 2002 (tentative) – Field Trip to West Harris County. Following last year's extremely successful trip, we plan to visit the area again. This area includes the Katy Prairie, and is good for raptors, sparrows and (if conditions are right) waterfowl. See next issue of the *Brown Pelican* for more details.

Thursday March 21 (tentative date) – Membership Meeting. Details later.

Saturday March 23, 2002 – Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. Meet at the vehicle barrier at 8:30 a.m. From Winnie, take TX 124 south to High Island. At the shoreline, turn right (west) on TX 87 and proceed through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you reach the intersection where Loop 108 turns right (north). At that intersection, turn left (the opposite way to Loop 108) along Rettillon Road. At the beach, if sand conditions permit,

turn right (west) following previously successful vehicle tracks, about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. We will probably leave the vehicle barrier at about 9:00 a.m., although the group will be visually obvious on the flats should you be a few minutes later than that. It takes about 90 minutes from Beaumont to the flats (if you do not stop and bird on the way).

Saturday April 20, 2002 – Field Trip. Our traditional April Field Trip in conjunction with Sea Rim State Park looking for Spring migrants starts at 7:30 a.m. at the headquarters building at Sea Rim State Park.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Lu and Grady Skillern and Mary and Herb Stafford for volunteering for January, and Joe Tibbs and Jack Baugh for February. We are looking for volunteers for March, April and May. We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! If you can just bring drinks and cookies or something similar, please call Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193 as soon as possible. Please help if you can!

Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on this issue. If the date on your label NOT prefixed by AU has passed, please remit your contribution of \$15 to Golden Triangle Audubon Society at P.O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292. Although this contribution towards the cost of the *Brown Pelican* is voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the official chapter territory, we will appreciate your support. Our official chapter territory is defined by zip codes, but is basically Jefferson, Hardin and Orange Counties and one or two localities close to those Counties.

The Search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area, Louisiana

Beginning on 17 January 2002, Zeiss Sports Optics is sponsoring an intensive search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area in southeastern Louisiana, one of the largest blocks of forest remaining in the southeastern USA. This is where David Kulivan reported seeing a pair at close range in April 1999. Although subsequent searches failed to confirm the initial sighting, Kulivan's report was sufficiently credible, and the area so large and relatively inaccessible, that many of us think that a systematic, intensive search of the area is imperative. This search will last 30 good-weather days.

The plan of the search is as follows. From a pool of 50 highly-qualified applicants, we have selected six people with a range of field skills, from expert birders with legendary skills at finding rare birds to professional biologists who have studied large woodpeckers, to spend 30 days in the Pearl and adjacent areas, starting 17 January. Mid-winter was chosen for the search because this is when the birds should be most vocal (in advance of the early spring breeding season) and when detectability is greatest (absence of leaves improves chances at visual and audio detection). A combination of satellite imagery, aerial photographs, timber data, and first-hand experience of some of the Planning Team members is being used to prioritize the 35,000 acres within the WMA in terms of likelihood of supporting Ivory-billed woodpecker. Prioritization is guided in part by what we know about Ivory-billed habitat preference from James Tanner's study of the last viable population of this species, in what is now Tensas National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Louisiana.

The Search Team will spend the first week visiting briefly as much of the area as possible to further refine the plan in terms of which areas will receive the most intensive surveys. Three two-person teams will then search the area, by foot and canoe, starting with the highest-priority areas. Each searcher will have a digital video-camera for documenting the presence of the birds, if found.

Additionally, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology will be deploying remote listening devices that will record sounds continuously in hopes of documenting the presence of the birds by sound recordings. If the search is successful, we will notify the public as soon as is feasible. The State of Louisiana is in the process of formulating a plan to control access to the site. Because the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is an Endangered Species, and protection of any remaining population would be critically important, access to the area will be limited by all applicable federal laws.

The Search Team consists of: Richard L. Knight, one of Tennessee's most active and experienced birders, with legendary field skills; Martjan Lammertink and Utami Setiorini-Lammertink, who over the past several years have studied woodpeckers together in Indonesia, mainly on Borneo -- earlier, Martjan made extensive searches for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Cuba and for the Imperial Woodpecker in Mexico; David Luneau (Professor of Electronics and Computers, Univ. of Arkansas at Little Rock who will assist in deploying electronic recording devices to detect wood-

peckers); Peter McBride, a habitat biologist who did his thesis research on the Magellanic Woodpecker (*Campephilus magellanicus*), and has extensive field research experience in several areas of North America and South America; Alan Wormington, one of the most experienced birders in North America, and past member of the American Birding Association Checklist Committee and the Editorial Board of *North American Birds*.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology team for deployment of the listening devices consists of Dr. John W. Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Dr. Kenneth V. Rosenberg, Director of Conservation Science, CLO; Dr. Chris Clark, Director, Bioacoustics Research Program, CLO.

An Ivory-billed Woodpecker Search Planning Team has been formed to maximize the efficiency and likelihood of detection, an official team has been formed to plan the search. So far, the team includes Dr. J. V. Remsen (Museum of Natural Science, LSU), the searchers (listed above), the two representatives from LA Dept. Wildlife & Fisheries Natural Heritage Program (Nancy Higginbotham and Dr. Gary Lester), Steve Shively (formerly LDWF Natural Heritage Program; currently U.S. Forest Service), David Kulivan (of the original sighting), Dr. Vernon Wright (LSU School of Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries), Dr. Keith Ouchley (Louisiana Nature Conservancy), Alison R. Styring (LSU Dept. of Biological Sciences); Dr. Jerome A. Jackson (Florida Gulf Coast University; world's leading authority on the history and biology of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker); and Dr. John W. Fitzpatrick (Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology).

Audubon Senior Vice President Lois Schiffer Statement on Forest Roads Policy Changes

Washington, D.C., Thursday, December 20, 2001 -- "The U.S. Forest Service has taken a giant step backward with its latest directive on managing roads in our national forests. The Bush Administration is planning changes that will harm birds and wildlife and dilute environmental protection on millions of acres of forestland.

"The Forest Service on December 14 issued interim directives on roads in forests, including roadless area management, that states it will be in effect for 18 months.

"These directives will eliminate the protection of many pristine roadless areas in national forests that provide important habitat for birds and wildlife. And they are likely to open up more forestlands to timber harvesting and road building.

"Each time they are asked, the American people say they want to protect the roadless areas of our national forests. In particular, more than 500,000 Americans called on the Administration to uphold the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

"Audubon urges the Bush Administration to listen to these voices. The Administration should do everything it can to stop the road building, clear-cutting, and mining in our nation's forests."

Bird Sightings - November 2001

Coverage: Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Tyler, Jasper, Newton, Angelina, San Augustine and Sabine counties. **Send Reports to:** John Whittle, 3015 Nashville Avenue, Nederland, Texas 77627-6749 by the 10th of the month after or e-mail to whittleja@hal.lamar.edu or call (409) 880-8276 or fax to (409) 880-8270. For "very rare" birds, please submit a brief account of your sighting, including a description of the bird (unless unmistakable), brief details of what it was doing, and where it was seen (if on publicly accessible property). **Format:** "Common" to "abundant" birds are shown in the fashion "JEF 4 reps(25)" which means four reports in Jefferson County totaling 25 birds. Less than "common", as

JEF-SW 7/5(2) ABC", which means seen in Jefferson County (JEF) at Sabine Woods (SW) on the 5th of July, two (2) birds, reported by observer "ABC"

Commentary: November 2001 brought very few lingering migrants but a reasonably normal flush of early wintering species. However, the follow-through seems to have been very anemic. Noteworthy during the month were a silent Couch's/Tropical Kingbird at the Willows at Sea Rim, and a variety of Hummingbirds, including a very cooperative fully adult plumaged male Calliope Hummingbird in Beaumont and a Buff-bellied in Orange along with several Rufous Hummingbirds in all parts of the Golden Triangle.

GREBE, Pied-billed	JEF 5 reps(26)
GREBE, Eared	JEF 1 rep(1)
PELICAN, Amer. White	JEF 6 reps(516)
PELICAN, Brown	JEF 11/4(2) JAW; JEF-SRSP
11/4(6) JAW	
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF-TP 11/3(2) JAW; JEF 11/4(7)
JAW; JEF-PI 11/4(3) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/4(10) JAW;	
JEF-TXPT 11/4(29) JAW; JEF 11/10(3) MHW; JEF-PI 11/10(1)	
MHW; JEF-TXPT 11/10(63) MHW; JEF-TP 11/25(1) JAW	
CORMORANT, Double-crested	JEF 3 reps(13)
ANHINGA	JEF 2 reps(7)
BITTERN, American	JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW
HERON, Great Blue	JEF 9 reps(24)
EGRET, Great	JEF 9 reps(128)
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 8 reps(231)
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 2 reps(3)
HERON, Tricolored	JEF 4 reps(16)
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 2 reps(10)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.	JEF 1 rep(1)
IBIS, White	JEF 11/3(20) JAW; JEF-TP 11/3(17)
AM; JEF-TP 11/3(13) JAW; JEF 11/4(10) JAW; JEF-PI 11/4(2)	
JAW; JEF-TX87 11/4(30) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/4(75) JAW;	
JEF-TP 11/10(9) AM; JEF-TXPT 11/10(44) MHW; JEF	
11/11(5) MW JEF-TP 11/25(12) JAW	
IBIS, Glossy	JEF-TP 11/3(12) AM; JEF-TP
11/10(2) AM; JEF-TP 11/25(1) JAW	
IBIS, White-faced	JEF-TP 11/3(160) AM; JEF-TP
11/3(13) JAW; JEF-TP 11/10(16) AM; JEF-TP 11/25(50) JAW	
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF-TP 11/3(65) JAW; JEF-TXPT
11/10(1) MHW; JEF 11/11(50) MW; JEF 11/18(200) JAW;	
JEF-TP 11/25(13) JAW	
SPOONBILL, Roseate	JEF 11/3(5) JAW; JEF-TP 11/3(8)
AM; JEF-TP 11/3(34) JAW; JEF-PI 11/4(8) JAW; JEF-TX87	
11/4(1) JAW; JEF-PI 11/10(4) MHW; JEF-TP 11/10(7) AM;	
JEF-TX87 11/10(1) MHW; JEF 11/25(1) JAW	
VULTURE, Black	HAI 1 rep(13); JEF 6 reps(65)
VULTURE, Turkey	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 7 reps(42)
GOOSE, White-fronted	JEF 3 reps(424)
GOOSE, Snow	JEF 3 reps(507)
GOOSE, Ross's	JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW; JEF-TP
11/25(3) JAW	
GADWALL	JEF 6 reps(935)
WIGEON, American	JEF 2 reps(3)
MALLARD	JEF 4 reps(49)
DUCK, Mottled	JEF-TP 11/3(6) AM; JEF-TP
11/3(11) JAW; JEF-PI 11/4(2) JAW; JEF-TP 11/10(19) AM;	
JEF-TP 11/25(12) JAW	
TEAL, Blue-winged	JEF 5 reps(1447)
TEAL, Cinnamon	JEF-TP 11/10(4) AM
SHOVELER, Northern	JEF 6 reps(1342)
PINTAIL, Northern	JEF 5 reps(168)
TEAL, Green-winged	JEF 6 reps(4685)
CANVASBACK	JEF-TP 11/25(1) JAW
DUCK, Ring-necked	JEF 2 reps(450)
SCAUP, Greater	JEF-TP 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-TP
11/10(2) AM; JEF-TP 11/25(2) JAW	
SCAUP, Lesser	JEF 4 reps(67)
SCAUP species	JEF 1 rep(10)
BUFFLEHEAD	JEF-TP 11/25(3) JAW
MERGANSER, Hooded	JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW
DUCK, Ruddy	JEF 5 reps(208)

OSPREY	JEF 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/3(1)
JAW; JEF 11/4(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/4(2) JAW; JEF-TXPT	
11/4(1) JAW; JEF 11/10(1) MHW; JEF 11/17(1) JAW; JEF-TP	
11/25(2) JAW	
KITE, White-tailed	JEF 2 reps(3)
HARRIER, Northern	JEF 6 reps(25)
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	JEF 4 reps(6)
HAWK, Cooper's	JEF-TX87 11/4(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT
11/4(1) JAW	
HAWK, Red-shouldered	JEF 2 reps(2); ORA 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Red-tailed	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(47)
KESTREL, American	JEF 7 reps(36)
MERLIN	JEF-TP 11/3(1) AM; JEF-TP
11/10(1) AM	
FALCON, Peregrine	JEF-SW 11/10(1) MHW
RAIL, Clapper	JEF 2 reps(4)
MOORHEN, Common	JEF 4 reps(24)
COOT, American	JEF 3 reps(536)
PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 5 reps(180)
PLOVER, Snowy	JEF 11/4(2) JAW; JEF-SRSP
11/4(1) JAW	
PLOVER, Wilson's	JEF 11/25(1) AM
PLOVER, Semipalmated	JEF 1 rep(22)
PLOVER, Piping	JEF-SRSP 11/4(2) JAW
KILLDEER	JEF 9 reps(360)
STILT, Black-necked	JEF 8 reps(524)
AVOCET, American	JEF 7 reps(987)
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF 5 reps(32)
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	JEF 5 reps(80)
SANDPIPER, Solitary	JEF-TP 11/3(1) AM; JEF-TP
11/10(1) AM	
WILLET	JEF 4 reps(799)
SANDPIPER, Spotted	JEF-PI 11/10(1) MHW; JEF-TP
11/25(1) JAW	
CURLEW, Long-billed	JEF 2 reps(4)
KNOT, Red	JEF 11/25(6) AM
GODWIT, Marbled	JEF-PI 11/4(6) JAW; JEF-PI
11/10(6) MHW	
SANDERLING	JEF 1 rep(14)
SANDPIPER, Western	JEF 5 reps(632)
SANDPIPER, Least	JEF 5 reps(5846)
SANDPIPER, Baird's	JEF-TP 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-PI
11/4(2) JAW	
SANDPIPER, Pectoral	JEF-TP 11/3(3) JAW
DUNLIN	JEF 5 reps(802)
SANDPIPER, Stilt	JEF-TP 11/3(25) JAW; JEF-TP
11/10(1) AM	
DOWITCHER, Short-billed	JEF-TP 11/3(200) AM; JEF-PI
11/4(450) JAW; JEF-PI 11/10(500) MHW; JEF-TP 11/10(250)	
AM	
DOWITCHER, Long-billed	JEF 4 reps(1528)
DOWITCHER species	JEF 1 rep(8)
SNIFE, Common	JEF 4 reps(24)
GULL, Laughing	JEF 5 reps(1334)
GULL, Franklin's	JEF-TP 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-PI
11/10(2) MHW; JEF-TP 11/25(1) JAW	
GULL, Ring-billed	JEF 4 reps(78)
GULL, Herring	JEF 1 rep(2)
GULL, Lsr. Black-backed	JEF 11/25(1) AM
TERN, Gull-billed	JEF-SRSP 11/4(4) JAW
TERN, Caspian	JEF 5 reps(44)

TERN, Royal JEF 2 reps(26)
 TERN, Sandwich JEF-SRSP 11/4(2) JAW
 TERN, Common JEF-SRSP 11/4(1) JAW
 TERN, Forster's JEF 8 reps(109)
 SKIMMER, Black JEF 2 reps(98)
 DOVE, Rock JEF 7 reps(155)
 COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian JEF 11/11(4) MW; JEF 11/18(1) JAW
 DOVE, White-winged JEF-SW 11/4(1) JAW; ORA 11/12(1) KS
 DOVE, Mourning HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 10 reps(150)
 OWL, Great Horned JEF-SW 11/4(1) JAW
 WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck JEF-SW 11/4(1) JAW
 HUMMINGBIRD, Buff-bellied ORA 11/17(1) RP
 HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr. JEF-TP 11/3(2) AM
 HUMMINGBIRD, Calliope JEF-BMT 11/1-30(1) CLL
 HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous JEF-NEDR 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 11/5(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 11/10(1) MHW; ORA 11/18(1) RP; ORA 11/18(1) RP
 HUMMINGBIRD species JEF-NEDR 11/10(2) MHW; JEF-NEDR 11/11(1) MW
 KINGFISHER, Belted JEF 6 reps(23)
 WOODPECKER, Red-bellied HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(10)
 WOODPECKER, Downy HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(1)
 WOODPECKER, Hairy HAI-SNDY 11/11(2) KS
 FLICKER, Northern HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(3)
 WOODPECKER, Pileated HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1)
 PHOEBE, Eastern HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 9 reps(75)
 KINGBIRD, Couch's/Tropical JEF-SRSP 11/21(1) AM
 KINGBIRD, Western JEF-TX87 11/10(1) MHW
 FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tail. JEF-TX87 11/4(4) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/4(1) JAW
 SHRIKE, Loggerhead JEF 10 reps(66)
 VIREO, Blue-headed HAI 1 rep(1)
 JAY, Blue JEF 7 reps(29)
 CROW, American HAI 1 rep(7); JEF 1 rep(8)
 CROW, Fish JEF-TXPT 11/4(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/25(29) JAW
 CROW, species JEF 5 reps(10)
 SWALLOW, Tree JEF 11/3(22) JAW; JEF-TP 11/3(6) JAW; JEF-PI 11/4(4) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/4(17) JAW; JEF-TP 11/10(12) AM; JEF-TXPT 11/10(3) MHW
 SWALLOW species JEF 1 rep(2)
 CHICKADEE, Carolina HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 2 reps(4)
 TITMOUSE, Tufted HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 2 reps(4)
 NUTHATCH, Brown-headed HAI-SNDY 11/11(2) KS
 WREN, Carolina HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 2 reps(4)
 WREN, House JEF-TP 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-SW 11/10(2) MHW; JEF-TP 11/10(1) AM; JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW; JEF-TP 11/25(1) JAW
 WREN, Sedge JEF-TXPT 11/10(2) MHW
 KINGLET, Golden-crowned HAI-SNDY 11/11(1) KS; JEF-TP 11/3(2) AM
 KINGLET, Ruby-crowned HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 4 reps(27)
 GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray JEF 2 reps(7)
 BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 1 rep(16)
 ROBIN, American HAI-SNDY 11/11(1) KS
 CATBIRD, Gray JEF-SW 11/4(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/10(1) AM; JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW
 MOCKINGBIRD, Northern JEF 8 reps(29)
 THRASHER, Brown JEF 2 reps(8)
 STARLING, European JEF 6 reps(375)
 PIPIT, American JEF 1 rep(36)
 WARBLER, Orange-crowned JEF 1 rep(1)
 WARBLER, Yellow-rumped JEF 2 reps(3)
 WARBLER, Pine HAI 1 rep(23); JEF 2 reps(10)
 WARBLER, Prairie JEF-TP 11/3(1) JAW
 WARBLER, Palm JEF-TP 11/25(1) JAW
 YELLOWTHROAT, Common JEF 4 reps(7)
 WARBLER, Wilson's JEF-TP 11/10(1) AM
 SPARROW, Chipping HAI-SNDY 11/11(23) KS; JEF-TP 11/3(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/4(2) JAW
 SPARROW, Clay-colored JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW
 SPARROW, Field JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW
 SPARROW, Vesper JEF-TP 11/3(1) AM; JEF-TP 11/10(1) AM
 SPARROW, Savannah JEF 7 reps(42)
 SPARROW, Nelson's S-tail. JEF 1 rep(1)

SPARROW, Seaside JEF 2 reps(15)
 SPARROW, Lincoln's JEF-TXPT 11/4(2) JAW; JEF-SW 11/10(1) MHW; JEF-TXPT 11/10(1) MHW
 SPARROW, Swamp JEF 3 reps(23)
 SPARROW, White-throated JEF 2 reps(12)
 SPARROW, White-crowned JEF-TXPT 11/4(1) JAW; JEF-SW 11/10(1) MHW; JEF-TP 11/10(1) AM; JEF-TP 11/25(2) JAW
 JUNCO, Dark-eyed HAI-SNDY 11/11(2) KS
 CARDINAL, Northern JEF 4 reps(17)
 BLACKBIRD, Red-winged JEF 7 reps(852)
 MEADOWLARK species JEF 3 reps(16)
 GRACKLE, Common JEF 6 reps(341)
 GRACKLE, Boat-tailed JEF 2 reps(87)
 GRACKLE, Great-tailed JEF 7 reps(201)
 COWBIRD, Brown-headed JEF 1 rep(1)
 SPARROW, House JEF 2 reps(3)

Number of Species 163
 Number of Individuals 31115

County Abbreviations:

HAI - Hardin; JEF - Jefferson; ORA - Orange.

Location Codes:

BMT - Beaumont; NEDR - Nederland; PI - Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SNDY - Nature Conservancy Sandyland Sanctuary; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TP - Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim; TXPT - Road to Pilot Station at Texas Point

Observer Abbreviations:

AM - Art MacKinnon; CLL - Carol Lynn Loker; JAW - John Whittle; KS - Ken Sztraky; MHW - Steve Mayes, John Haynes, John Whittle; MW - Steve Mayes and John Whittle; RP - Royce Pendergast.

Notes on Very Rare Species

Franklin's Gull – 25 Nov. 2001 – John Whittle.

Bird was resting in a flock of Laughing Gulls at Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park in Beaumont, with a few Ring-billed Gulls until the flock took flight for no obvious reason. The gull was distinctly smaller than the Laughing Gulls, had a smudgy black back of head and nape, with white round eyes. Bill was much more delicate than the Laughing Gulls.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird - Nov. 2001 - Royce Pendergast

A Buff-bellied Hummingbird was noted at the Pendergast's cigar plant on November 17 and sporadically thereafter.

Calliope Hummingbird – Nov. 2001 – Carol Lynn Loker

A fully adult plumaged male Calliope Hummingbird was resident in the Loker's front yard in Beaumont throughout November and on into December, and was seen by many observers. Small hummingbird with almost no tail. Green back. Pale below; wings brownish. Gorget consisted of long purple feathers forming streaks down the throat. Tail very short, feathers worn. Bill fairly long.

Couch's/Tropical Kingbird -- 21 Nov. 2001 -- Art MacKinnon

An unfortunately silent *Tyrannus* kingbird was found by Art MacKinnon at the Willows at Sea Rim State Park on 21 November. The bird had a brown, slightly forked tail and lacked the white outer tail feathers of a Western Kingbird. Couch's is certainly the expected species, although the recent spread of Tropical Kingbirds in the Rio Grande Valley has made it necessary to rule out that species by call.

Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count – 30 December 2001

On a cold, somewhat windy day, 31 observers found 148 species. This is significantly lower than average, but is in line with expectations for a year in which most groups of normal winter resident birds have, so far at least, failed to arrive in any numbers. Warmer than normal November and early December weather further north has been widely described as the cause. Whether or not that is the whole story, it certainly seems that only wintering shorebirds and hawks are present in anything approaching normal numbers. Duck numbers in all places we know of (except Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park in Beaumont) are way below normal. Wintering woodland species are hard to find, and even Yellow-rumped Warblers seem not to be here. Similarly, sparrows have been difficult to find. By all accounts, marsh conditions are as favorable as they have been in several years, and, Cattail Marsh excepted, sparrow habitat appears to us to be plentifully supplied with food.

Only three “unexpected” species were recorded, a Magnificent Frigatebird which flew over South First Street in Sabine late in the afternoon, a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the shore of the Sabine-Neches Ship Channel and a Red-breasted Nuthatch which has been playing hide-and-seek at Sabine Woods for almost three months. Unusual “misses” included Green Heron, Ross’s Goose, King Rail, Lesser Yellowlegs, White-winged Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Eastern Bluebird.

The numbers of many shorebirds were high. A “validation” of a last year’s discovery was the finding of 12 Whimbrel wintering along the normally impossible to legally access beach along Texas Point Refuge near the Point itself. Small sandpipers and other small shorebirds were present in good numbers along this same stretch of beach. Gulls and terns were present in “high normal” numbers with Ring-billed Gulls prominent.

The reported duck numbers may be somewhat misleading as hard work and perseverance, particularly in the Murphree WMA, led to the finding of almost all the wintering species. What was missing were flocks of ducks on the distant horizon that usually, perforce, go uncounted.

It is more difficult to generalize about passerine species. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Gray Catbirds and Eastern Phoebes were perhaps the only species in normal numbers.

Species recorded (cw refers to a species seen during the count week, but not on the day of the count): LOON, Common (1); GREBE, Pied-billed (52); GREBE, Horned (3); GREBE, Eared (4); PELICAN, American White (2116); PELICAN, Brown (119); CORMORANT, Neotropic (183); CORMORANT, Double-crested (675); ANHINGA (4); FRIGATEBIRD, Magnificent (1); BITTERN, American (2); HERON, Great Blue (83); EGRET, Great (68); EGRET, Snowy (112); HERON, Little Blue (23); HERON, Tricolored (40); EGRET, Reddish (1); HERON, Green (cw); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (26); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (18); IBIS, White (145); IBIS, White-faced (134); IBIS, *Plegadis* species (4); SPOONBILL, Roseate (116); VULTURE, Black (16); VULTURE, Turkey (46); GOOSE, Greater White-fronted (157); GOOSE, Snow (3726); GOOSE, Snow (White) (71); GOOSE, Snow (Blue) (20); GOOSE, Ross’s (cw); GOOSE, Canada (12); GADWALL (1108); WIGEON, American (100); MALLARD (35); DUCK, Mottled (13); TEAL, Blue-winged (40); SHOVELER, Northern (940); PINTAIL, Northern (458); TEAL,

Green-winged (3575); CANVASBACK (1001); REDHEAD (15); DUCK, Ring-necked (8); SCAUP, Greater (2); SCAUP, Lesser (177); SCAUP, Species (241); BUFFLEHEAD (85); MERGANSER, Hooded (8); MERGANSER, Red-breasted (24); DUCK, Ruddy (260); OSPREY (7); KITE, White-tailed (10); HARRIER, Northern (50); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (2); HAWK, Cooper’s (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (1); HAWK, Red-tailed (51); KESTREL, American (19); FALCON, Peregrine (3); RAIL, Yellow (2); RAIL, Clapper (2); RAIL, Virginia (1); SORA (1); MOORHEN, Common (40); COOT, American (216); PLOVER, Black-bellied (156); PLOVER, Snowy (3); PLOVER, Semipalmated (90); PLOVER, Piping (4); KILLDEER (42); OYSTERCATCHER, American (2); STILT, Black-necked (110); AVOCET, American (564); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (13); WILLET (280); SANDPIPER, Spotted (8); WHIMBREL (12); CURLEW, Long-billed (6); GODWIT, Marbled (1); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (13); SANDERLING (231); SANDPIPER, Western (308); SANDPIPER, Least (180); DUNLIN (587); SANDPIPER, Stilt (3); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (253); DOWITCHER, Long-billed (20); DOWITCHER, species (146); SNIPE, Common (4); WOODCOCK, American (3); GULL, Laughing (1088); GULL, Bonaparte’s (30); GULL, Ring-billed (1676); GULL, Herring (74); GULL, Lesser Black-backed (1); TERN, Caspian (89); TERN, Royal (79); TERN, Forster’s (87); SKIMMER, Black (100); DOVE, Rock (3); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (12); DOVE, Mourning (91); DOVE, Inca (2); OWL, Barn (2); OWL, Great Horned (4); KINGFISHER, Belted (11); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (4); WOODPECKER, Downy (29); FLICKER, Northern (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (75); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (52); VIREO, Blue-headed (6); JAY, Blue (25); SWALLOW, Tree (34); CHICKADEE, Carolina (1); NUTHATCH, Red-breasted (1); WREN, Carolina (3); WREN, House (10); WREN, Sedge (16); WREN, Marsh (7); KINGLET, Golden-crowned (2); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (51); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (40); THRUSH, Hermit (1); ROBIN, American (10); CATBIRD, Gray (7); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (33); THRASHER, Brown (7); STARLING, European (165); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (19); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (83); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) (271); WARBLER, Pine (1); WARBLER, Palm (4); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (13); WARBLER, Wilson’s (3); TOWHEE, Spotted (cw); SPARROW, Chipping (1); SPARROW, Field (cw); SPARROW, Savannah (297); SPARROW, LeConte’s (2); SPARROW, Nelson’s Sharp-tailed (1); SPARROW, Seaside (32); SPARROW, Song (22); SPARROW, Lincoln’s (11); SPARROW, Swamp (102); SPARROW, White-throated (44); SPARROW, White-crowned (52); CARDINAL, Northern (33); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (795); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (44); MEADOWLARK, species (3); GRACKLE, Common (116); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (79); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (267); GRACKLE, species (40); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (36); GOLDFINCH, American (33); SPARROW, House (46); Total species (148); Total individuals (25,903).

Participants were: Jack Baugh, Joe Carona, Gerald Duhon, Don Fisher, Nancy Fisher, Bill Graber, Joe Halbrook, Dan Harmon, John Haynes, Ed Hunter, Lyn Hunter, Robert Hurt, Don Jeane, Pat Jeane, Harrison Jordan, Rose Ann Jordan, Linda Lang, Art MacKinnon, Patsy Malin, Steve Mayes, Royce Pendergast, Craig Provost, Dale Provost, Sherrie Roden, Thomas Sanders, Paul Shaw, Ken Sztraky, Patrick Walther, Tex Wells, Jana Whittle, John Whittle.

Robert Hurt and John Whittle, Co-compilers

Orange Christmas Bird Count – 1 January 2002

The Orange count was conducted just a day before this issue of the *Brown Pelican* closed for press. The following is an unofficial account based on what was reported at the countdown dinner.

This is a "new" count replacing an older count conducted in 1961 and from 1971 to 1978. The new circle is centered at the intersection of FM1442 and FM105 east of Vidor in Orange County. Ken Sztraky compiled this count.

This winter season was not an auspicious one to reinstitute a bird count along the Texas coast. Wintering populations are either down drastically, or more likely are still largely to our north. Not only that, but the Orange count suffered from the lack of any concentrations of shorebirds within the count circle. Duck numbers were also extremely low. Nevertheless, 128 species were reported by 10 observers – a very creditable result in the circumstances.

Interesting species reported included Black Skimmer (along the banks of the Neches River near the Veterans Memorial Bridge), both Red-breasted and Brown-headed Nuthatch and a Northern Parula. Unexpectedly missed were Northern Shoveler, Sedge Wren and American Pipit. The following is a provisional list of species recorded:

GREBE, Pied-billed; PELICAN, American White; PELICAN, Brown; CORMORANT, Neotropic; CORMORANT, Double-crested; ANHINGA; BITTERN, American; HERON, Great Blue; EGRET, Great; EGRET, Snowy; HERON, Little Blue; HERON, Tricolored; EGRET, Cattle; NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned; NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned; IBIS, White; IBIS, White-faced; IBIS, SPOONBILL, Roseate; VULTURE, Black; VULTURE, Turkey; GOOSE, Greater White-fronted; GOOSE, Snow; GADWALL; WIGEON, American; MALLARD; DUCK, Mottled; TEAL, Blue-winged; SHOVELER, Northern; PINTAIL, Northern; TEAL, Green-winged; SCAUP, Lesser; BUFFLE-

HEAD; MERGANSER, Hooded; MERGANSER, Red-breasted; OSPREY; KITE, White-tailed; HARRIER, Northern; HAWK, Sharp-shinned; HAWK, Cooper's; HAWK, Red-shouldered; HAWK, Red-tailed; KESTREL, American; MERLIN; RAIL species; MOORHEN, Common; COOT, American; KILLDEER; STILT, Black-necked; YELLOWLEGS, Lesser; WILLET; SANDPIPER, Spotted; DOWITCHER, species; SNIPE, Common; GULL, Laughing; GULL, Bonaparte's; GULL, Ring-billed; GULL, Herring; TERN, Caspian; TERN, Royal; TERN, Forster's; SKIMMER, Black; DOVE, Rock; COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian; DOVE, Mourning; DOVE, Inca; SCREECH-OWL, Eastern; OWL, Great Horned; OWL, Barred; KINGFISHER, Belted; WOODPECKER, Red-headed; WOODPECKER, Red-bellied; SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied; WOODPECKER, Downy; FLICKER, Northern; WOODPECKER, Pileated; PHOEBE, Eastern; SHRIKE, Loggerhead; VIREO, White-eyed; VIREO, Blue-headed; JAY, Blue; SWALLOW, Tree; CHICKADEE, Carolina; NUTHATCH, Red-breasted; NUTHATCH, Brown-headed; WREN, Carolina; WREN, House; WREN, Winter; WREN, Marsh; KINGLET, Golden-crowned; KINGLET, Ruby-crowned; GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray; THRUSH, Hermit; ROBIN, American; CATBIRD, Gray; MOCKINGBIRD, Northern; THRASHER, Brown; STARLING, European; WAXWING, Cedar; WARBLER, Orange-crowned; PARULA, Northern; WARBLER, Yellow-rumped; WARBLER, Pine; YELLOWTHROAT, Common; SPARROW, Chipping; SPARROW, Field; SPARROW, Vesper; SPARROW, Savannah; SPARROW, Fox; SPARROW, Song; SPARROW, Lincoln's; SPARROW, Swamp; SPARROW, White-throated; CARDINAL, Northern; BLACKBIRD, Red-winged; MEADOWLARK, Eastern; GRACKLE, Common; GRACKLE, Boat-tailed; GRACKLE, Great-tailed; COWBIRD, Brown-headed; GOLDFINCH, American; SISKIN, Pine; SPARROW, House; Total species (128).

Participants were: Joe Halbrook, Don Jeane, Pat Jeane, Ray Jordan, Art MacKinnon, Gary Moore, Ken Sztraky, Jana Whittle, John Whittle and one other.

Proposal to raise levels of B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir

The Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA) is proposing to raise B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir (often referred to as Dam B) on the Neches River by seven to ten feet, flooding the Angelina/Neches Dam B Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Martin Dies, Jr., State Park and impacting wildlife habitat in the Big Thicket National Preserve downstream.

The minimum proposed increase would flood 9,500 acres of the Wildlife Management Area (almost all of it) and the higher elevation would flood the WMA in its entirety. The state-owned land features mature bottomland hardwood forest (a site designated Priority 1 for protection by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), wonderful cypress-tupelo swamps and sloughs, and rare beech-magnolia habitat, all of which support abundant native wildlife and provide important seasonal habitat for migratory waterfowl and neotropical migratory songbirds. The State Park, described by one park user as one of the "nicer" state parks in Texas, also protects excellent bottomland forests and swamps and provides valuable

recreational facilities for the region: campsites, shelters, boat ramps, fishing piers, a nature center, and an amphitheater.

Tampering with the seasonal flooding of the Neches River below Steinhagen could critically impact the Big Thicket National Preserve, whose units depend on natural flooding to maintain the forested terraces, bottomlands, baygalls, and other wildlife habitat.

Proponents of raising the reservoir claim it would help rid the lake of water hyacinth, but employees of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, when asked about water hyacinth management, said that increasing the size of Steinhagen would provide more surface area for the water hyacinth and would make it harder to draw the lake down to freeze the plants.

LNVA's plans for the lake are to use it for additional water supply, yet none of the regional water planning committees within reach of the reservoir have identified a need for the water. Should LNVA ever find a market for the water, the resultant drawdowns and fluctuations as water was removed could further impact recreational use of the lake.

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Below is a listing of Rare Bird Alert telephone numbers for nearby areas. Transcriptions of some current tapes are available on the World Wide Web on Siler's Birding on the Net at <http://birdingonthe.net/hotmail.html> Detailed information (maps and text) on birding sites on the Upper Texas Coast is also available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirding.net>. This includes all the Jefferson County hotspots published in early issues.

Golden Triangle (409) 768-1340

Texas (Houston)	(713) 369-9673
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