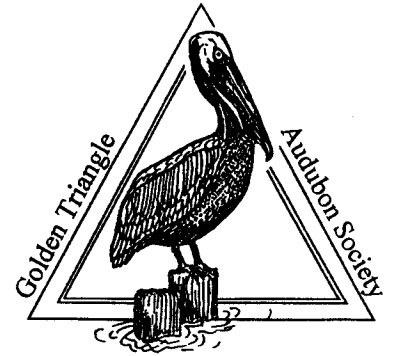


Brown Pelican

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The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 8 No. 6

June 2002

Summer Vacation!

As usual, there will be no membership meetings in June or July. Our next meeting will be on **THURSDAY AUGUST 15, 2002 at 6:30 p.m.** in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont, Texas. Topic: **Hawk Watching Workshop by Dick Benoit** Further details in the next issue.

The next issue of the *Brown Pelican* will be a combined July/August issue, to be published in early August.

Editorial: Important Conservation Issues

All too often, conservation issues appear to be distant regional, hemispheric or global issues. However, over the next few months, there will be several opportunities to influence important issues very close to home. On page 2 are details of public meetings that the Texas Chenier Plain NWR Complex is holding in connection with its Comprehensive Conservation Planning process. The end-product of this process will be a document which will guide the activities at the local Wildlife Refuges – Texas Point, McFaddin, Anahuac in particular – over the next fifteen years or more. The Refuge System genuinely wants to hear what you think the priorities should be. This includes such issues as additional land purchases, habitat management priorities, and public access to and use of the refuges. Those who would drain all our remaining unprotected wetlands and destroy the habitat will certainly be there and will let their feelings be known. Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to show up at the meetings. If you don't want to make a public statement, submit written comments. Written comments have the advantage that they will be entered into the record exactly as they were submitted. We often hear comments from those government officials who have to deal with public input that written submissions tend to carry more weight. One very effective method getting your point across is to make an oral statement, and provide a written copy of your remarks to the hearing officers. (Take along a few extra copies for the newspaper reporters!)

There are other local issues currently working their way through the process. The Highway 87 issue has not gone away. The current status is that an Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared. We have not heard when a draft of this is expected, but it probably will be relatively soon. The proposal to deepen, and in some places widen, the Neches ship channel from Sabine Pass up to Beaumont is currently being considered. This project has the potential to drastically increase the salinity of the waters north to Beaumont, and will probably impact the Bessie Heights Marsh and the marshes along the Sabine-Neches Waterway in the vicinity of Keith Lake and along the Intracoastal Waterway.

These projects have more at stake than merely the conservation and environmental impact issues. If they are ever undertaken, they will consume large amounts of public money. In each case, serious questions have been raised as to whether the benefits are worth the costs. And we have observed in the past that costs are usually greatly underestimated.

The Brown Pelican

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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.

Tuesday June 18 and Thursday June 20. Wildlife Refuge Public Meetings

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is hosting two public meetings in June to discuss working draft alternatives being developed for the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Texas Chenier Plain National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Upon completion, the CCP will guide management of the Anahuac, McFaddin, Texas Point and Moody National Wildlife Refuges for the next 15 years. The refuges are located in Chambers, Jefferson and Galveston counties. The meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, June 18th, 2002 at White Memorial Park in Hankamer (just south of IH-10 at the Highway 61 exit) and Thursday, June 20th, 2002 at the John Gray Center at Lamar University in Beaumont. Fish and Wildlife Service representatives will be available at both meetings from 1:00 pm in the afternoon to 10:00 pm in the evening. Formal presentations on the working draft alternatives being developed for analysis in the CCP/EIS will be offered at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm, followed by question and answer and general discussion sessions. The public also will have the chance to provide input and comments on the working draft alternatives. The working draft alternatives cover: 1) a range of possible expansions of the refuges through land acquisition from willing sellers, and 2) a range of possible management activities on the refuges, including habitat management and restoration; addressing coastal erosion and other threats to ecosystem health; and management of the waterfowl hunt program and other wildlife-dependent recreational uses. For more information about the public meetings or the CCP/EIS, please call Nancy Brown at Anahuac NWR office, (409) 267-3337.

Fall Programs.

We already have exciting programs lined up for the Fall with Dick Benoit giving a hawk watching workshop on August 15, and Nancy Newfield talking about hummingbirds and hummingbird plants on September 19.

Promoting Community Involvement in Bird Conservation

The First State Wide Annual
Meeting of Audubon Texas
Friday, September 13, 2002
The Rockport Beach Pavilion,
Rockport, Texas

Audubon Texas will hold its first-ever statewide meeting in conjunction with the Annual Rockport Hummer/Bird Celebration. This event is open to Audubon members and chapters, birding clubs and conservation organizations, as well as individuals interested in birds and wildlife and the conservation of their habitats.

This year's event will focus on sharing ideas and strategies on developing bird conservation programs at the community level, as well as how to get the community involved. We will have various Audubon leaders and presenters share their success stories relevant to community-based conservation as well as hold workshops for education and fun.

We will also conduct a meeting of the Audubon Texas Assembly on Saturday for our regional directors and chapter representatives to discuss key issues in conservation science, conservation education and public policy. On Sunday, the Audubon Texas Board of Directors will meet.

For more information on accommodations in Rockport and the surrounding area, please contact Linda Dreeland at ldreeland@audubon.org or at the Audubon Texas Office in Austin at 512-306-0225.

Bird Sightings – April 2002

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: The star of the spring migration season this year was the male Black-throated Gray Warbler which was present in Sabine Woods, although not always easy to find, from April 22 to 25. We will have our usual detailed analysis of the spring migration in the next issue, and more details of the warbler sightings will be included in it. For much of the season, birds seemed to home in on Sabine Woods while migrants traps to our east and west were experiencing mediocre to poor showings. Around the end of April, the pendulum seemed to swing towards the inland areas of central Texas, only to swing back again very late in the season.

LOON, Common	JEF-SRSP 4/20(1) FTSR
GANNET, Northern	JEF-SRSP 4/15(3) AM; JEF-SRSP 4/21(3) JAW; JEF-SRSP 4/26(11) AM
PELICAN, Amer. White	JEF 4 reps(162)
PELICAN, Brown	JEF 8 reps(207)
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 11 reps(150)
CORMORANT, Double-crested	JEF 1 rep(1)
ANHINGA	JEF 4 reps(6)
BITTERN, American	JEF-TX87 4/11(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 4/20(1) FTSR
BITTERN, Least	JEF-SRSP 4/26(1) AM
HERON, Great Blue	JEF 6 reps(7)
EGRET, Great	JEF 18 reps(308)
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 14 reps(176)
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 12 reps(18)
HERON, Tricolored	JEF 16 reps(67)
EGRET, Reddish	JEF 1 rep(1)
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 17 reps(505)
HERON, Green	JEF 17 reps(62)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.	JEF 3 reps(8)
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.	JEF 18 reps(46)
IBIS, White	JEF 9 reps(66)
IBIS, White-faced	JEF 4 reps(5)
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF 19 reps(587)
SPOONBILL, Roseate	JEF 12 reps(227)
VULTURE, Black	JEF 11 reps(42)
VULTURE, Turkey	JEF 18 reps(61); ORA 1 rep(1)
WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bell.	JEF-TX87 4/13(12) MW; JEF-TX87 4/20(2) FTSR
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous	JEF 4/13(2) MW; JEF-TX87 4/13(8) MW; JEF 4/21(2) JAW; JEF 4/25(1) JAW; JEF 4/27(13) JAW
DUCK, Wood	JEF-BMT 4/17(1) RAJ
DUCK, Mottled	JEF 8 reps(26)
TEAL, Blue-winged	JEF 9 reps(356)
SHOVELER, Northern	JEF 2 reps(47)
TEAL, Green-winged	JEF 1 rep(11)
SCAUP, Lesser	JEF 3 reps(80)
OSPREY	JEF 4/2(1) JAW; JEF 4/4(1) JAW; ORA 4/20(1) KS
KITE, Swallow-tailed	JEF 4/2(5) AM; JEF-SW 4/13(1) JAW
KITE, White-tailed	JEF 4 reps(5)
KITE, Mississippi	JEF 4/16(1) JAW
HARRIER, Northern	JEF 4/3(1) JAW; JEF 4/13(1) MW; JEF-SRSP 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF 4/21(1) JAW; JEF 4/27(2) JAW; JEF-SRSP 4/27(1) JAW
HAWK, Broad-winged	JEF 2 reps(19)
HAWK, Swainson's	JEF 4/21(1) KS; JEF 4/25(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP 4/26(1) AM; JEF 4/27(1) JAW; JEF 4/28(1) JAW
HAWK, Red-tailed	JEF-TX87 4/4(4) JAW; JEF 4/12(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 4/12(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 4/14(1) JAW
KESTREL, American	JEF-TX87 4/2(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 4/4(1) JAW
MERLIN	JEF-SRSP 4/15(1) AM
BOBWHITE, Northern	JEF 1 rep(1)

RAIL, Clapper	JEF 5 reps(7)
RAIL, Virginia	JEF-SW 4/27(1) JAW
SORA	JEF 1 rep(1)
GALLINULE, Purple	JEF 4/21(1) JAW; JEF 4/27(1) JAW
MOORHEN, Common	JEF 3 reps(15)
COOT, American	JEF 2 reps(6)
PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 7 reps(99)
GOLDEN-PLOVER, Amer.	JEF 3 reps(43)
PLOVER, Snowy	JEF-SRSP 4/14(10) JAW; JEF-SRSP 4/21(5) JAW; JEF-SRSP 4/26(3) AM
PLOVER, Wilson's	JEF 1 rep(3)
PLOVER, Semipalmated	JEF 3 reps(23)
PLOVER, Piping	JEF 2 reps(8)
KILLDEER	JEF 9 reps(45)
STILT, Black-necked	JEF 9 reps(60)
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF-TP 4/13(1) MW; JEF-TXPT 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF 4/21(7) JAW; JEF 4/21(2) KS
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	JEF 8 reps(209)
SANDPIPER, Solitary	JEF 4/27(1) JAW
WILLET	JEF 8 reps(91)
SANDPIPER, Spotted	JEF-TXPT 4/27(2) JAW
SANDPIPER, Upland	JEF 4/3(1) JAW
WHIMBREL	JEF-TX87 4/14(6) JAW; JEF-TXPT 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF 4/21(3) JAW; JEF 4/21(22) KS; JEF 4/27(18) JAW; JEF-TXPT 4/27(2) JAW
CURLEW, Long-billed	JEF 1 rep(1)
TURNSTONE, Ruddy	JEF 1 rep(1)
KNOT, Red	JEF-SRSP 4/26(8) AM
SANDERLING	JEF 4 reps(455)
SANDPIPER, Western	JEF 3 reps(12)
SANDPIPER, Peep	JEF 1 rep(5)
SANDPIPER, Least	JEF 5 reps(577)
SANDPIPER, Baird's	JEF-TP 4/13(2) MW; JEF 4/21(1) JAW
SANDPIPER, Pectoral	JEF 5 reps(417)
DUNLIN	JEF 3 reps(29)
SANDPIPER, Buff-breasted	JEF 4/21(26) JAW; JEF 4/21(3) KS; JEF 4/27(1) JAW
DOWITCHER, Short-billed	JEF-SW 4/13(40) MW; JEF-SRSP 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF 4/21(12) KS; JEF-SRSP 4/21(3) JAW
DOWITCHER, Long-billed	JEF 3 reps(302)
DOWITCHER species	JEF 2 reps(25)
SNIFE, Common	JEF 4/9(1) KS; JEF-SRSP 4/13(1) MW
GULL, Laughing	JEF 15 reps(393)
GULL, Bonaparte's	JEF-SRSP 4/14(1) JAW
GULL, Ring-billed	JEF 5 reps(17)
GULL, Herring	JEF 3 reps(57)
TERN, Caspian	JEF 3 reps(7)
TERN, Royal	JEF 2 reps(195)
TERN, Sandwich	JEF 2 reps(20)
TERN, Common	JEF-TXPT 4/13(1) MW; JEF-SRSP 4/14(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP 4/21(3) JAW
TERN, Forster's	JEF 7 reps(123)
TERN, Least	JEF 4 reps(50)

SKIMMER, Black JEF 3 reps(5)
DOVE, Rock JEF 13 reps(42)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian JEF 14 reps(29)
DOVE, White-winged JEF 15 reps(25)
DOVE, Mourning JEF 19 reps(316); ORA 1 rep(2)
DOVE, Inca JEF 4 reps(4)
CUCKOO, Black-billed JEF-SW 4/14(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/15(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/15(1) JFW; JEF-SW 4/16(1) JAW
CUCKOO, Yellow-billed JEF 19 reps(74)
ANI, Groove-billed JEF-SW 4/15(1) AM
OWL, Barn JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW
OWL, Barred HAI-SNDY 4/14(1) KS
NIGHTHAWK, Common JEF 12 reps(12)
WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck- JEF-SW 4/25(1) JAW
SWIFT, Chimney HAI 2 reps(17); JEF 13 reps(47)
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr. JEF 18 reps(233)
HUMMINGBIRD species JEF 4/5(1) KE
KINGFISHER, Belted JEF 7 reps(8)
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied JEF 6 reps(10)
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell. JEF 9 reps(10)
WOODPECKER, Downy JEF 18 reps(34); ORA 1 rep(2)
WOODPECKER, Pileated HAI 1 rep(1)
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern JEF-SW 4/4(4) GD; JEF-SW 4/4(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/5(1) KE; JEF-SW 4/10(3) JHH; JEF-SW 4/13(2) MW; JEF-SW 4/14(3) JAW; JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/27(2) JAW; JEF-SW 4/28(2) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Acadian JEF-SW 4/4(1) GD; JEF-SRSP 4/8(1) GD; JEF-SW 4/14(2) JAW; JEF 4/21(2) JAW; JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Traill's JEF-SW 4/21(2) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Least JEF-SW 4/14(1) JAW
EMPIDONAX species JEF 2 reps(2)
FLYCATCHER, Gt. Crested JEF-SW 4/4(1) GD; JEF-SW 4/14(1) JAW
KINGBIRD, Western JEF-SW 4/26(1) AM
KINGBIRD, Eastern JEF 24 reps(149)
FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed JEF 12 reps(28)
SHRIKE, Loggerhead JEF 18 reps(122)
VIREO, White-eyed HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 18 reps(156); ORA 1 rep(1)
VIREO, Yellow-throated JEF 6 reps(7)
VIREO, Blue-headed JEF 12 reps (13)
VIREO, Warbling JEF-SRSP 4/9(1) DQ; JEF-SW 4/9(1) GD; JEF-SW 4/9(1) KS; JEF-SW 4/10(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/26(1) JAW
VIREO, Philadelphia JEF-SW 4/11(1) JAW
VIREO, Red-eyed JEF 22 reps(61)
JAY, Blue JEF 18 reps(74); ORA 1 rep(2)
CROW, American JEF 1 rep(1)
CROW, Fish JEF 4/12(1) JAW; JEF-TP 4/13(3) MW; JEF-TXPT 4/21(2) JAW
CROW, species JEF 14 reps(42)
MARTIN, Purple HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 18 reps(122)
SWALLOW, Tree JEF 15 reps(943)
SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged JEF 10 reps(84)
SWALLOW, Bank JEF-SRSP 4/26(8) AM
SWALLOW, Cliff JEF 11 reps(46)
SWALLOW, Cave JEF-SRSP 4/26(4) AM
SWALLOW, Barn JEF 16 reps(211)
SWALLOW species JEF 1 rep(4)
CHICKADEE, Carolina JEF 3 reps(7)
TITMOUSE, Tufted JEF 1 rep(1)
WREN, Carolina JEF 3 reps(3)
WREN, House JEF-SW 4/2(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/4(5) GD; JEF-SW 4/11(1) RHJ
WREN, Sedge JEF-SW 4/4(3) GD; JEF-SRSP 4/20(3) FTSR; JEF-SW 4/25(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/26(1) JAW; ORA 4/20(1) KS
WREN, Marsh JEF-SW 4/4(2) GD; JEF-TXPT 4/13(1) MW; JEF-SW 4/19(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 4/28(1) JAW
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned JEF-SW 4/2(3) JAW; JEF-SW 4/5(2) KE; JEF-SW 4/11(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/13(1) MW; JEF-SW 4/14(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/15(1) JFW; JEF-SW 4/23(1) JJW
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 16 reps(102)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 1 rep(2)
VEERY JEF-SW 4/16(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/24(3) JJW; JEF-SW 4/26(2) JHH; JEF-SW 4/28(1) JAW

THRUSH, Gray-cheeked JEF-SW 4/13(3) MW; JEF-SW 4/14(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/20(1) FTSR
THRUSH, Swainson's JEF 11 reps(21); ORA 1 rep(1)
THRUSH, Wood JEF 18 reps(135)
ROBIN, American JEF 13 reps(46)
CATBIRD, Gray JEF 19 reps(299)
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern JEF 19 reps(207)
THRASHER, Brown JEF 15 reps(39)
STARLING, European JEF 12 reps(152)
WAXWING, Cedar HAI 4/28(12) KS; JEF 4/16(10) JAW; JEF 4/18(10) JAW; JEF 4/24(20) JJW; JEF 4/25(50) JAW; JEF 4/26(20) JAW; JEF 4/30(20) JAW; ORA 4/29(6) KS; ORA 4/30(12) KS
WARBLER, Blue-winged JEF 18 reps(57)
WARBLER, Golden-winged JEF-SW 4/12(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/16(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/26(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/26(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/26(1) JHH
WARBLER, Brewster's JEF-SW 4/12(1) JHH
WARBLER, Tennessee JEF 26 reps(132)
WARBLER, Orange-crowned JEF-SW 4/2(2) JAW; JEF-SW 4/4(2) GD; JEF-SW 4/4(1) JAW; JEF 4/6(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/8(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/9(2) DQ; JEF-SW 4/10(2) JHH; JEF-SW 4/13(1) MW
WARBLER, Nashville JEF-SW 4/5(1) KE; JEF-SW 4/10(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/24(1) JJW
PARULA, Northern JEF 15 reps(43); ORA 1 rep(2)
WARBLER, Yellow JEF 21 reps(189)
WARBLER, Chestnut-sided JEF-SW 4/24(1) JJW; JEF-SW 4/27(1) JAW
WARBLER, Magnolia JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/24(1) JJW; JEF-SW 4/26(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/27(2) JAW; JEF-SW 4/28(1) JAW
WARBLER, Black-thr. Blue JEF-SW 4/27(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/28(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/29(1) JAW
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped JEF 13 reps(147)
WARBLER, Black-thr. Gray JEF-SW 4/22(1) JJW; JEF-SW 4/23(1) SKO; JEF-SW 4/24(1) JJW; JEF-SW 4/25(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/25(1) JHH
WARBLER, Black-thr. Green JEF 14 reps(25)
WARBLER, Blackburnian JEF-SW 4/4(2) GD; JEF-SW 4/4(1) JAW; JEF 4/6(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/8(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/8(1) RHJ; JEF-SW 4/9(4) DQ; JEF-SW 4/10(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/26(2) AM; JEF-SW 4/26(2) JHH
WARBLER, Yellow-throated JEF 11 reps(16)
WARBLER, Prairie JEF-SW 4/5(1) KE; JEF-SW 4/13(1) MW
WARBLER, Palm JEF 12 reps(18)
WARBLER, Bay-breasted JEF-SW 4/8(3) GD; JEF-SW 4/8(1) RHJ; JEF-SW 4/29(1) JAW
WARBLER, Blackpoll JEF 16 reps(70)
WARBLER, Cerulean JEF-SW 4/4(1) GD; JEF-SRSP 4/8(1) GD; JEF-SW 4/8(1) RHJ; JEF-SRSP 4/9(1) DQ; JEF-SW 4/9(3) DQ; JEF-SW 4/9(1) DQ; JEF-SW 4/10(2) JHH; JEF-SW 4/12(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/13(2) MW; JEF-SW 4/14(2) JAW; JEF-SW 4/15(1) JFW; JEF-SW 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF-SW 4/23(1) JJW
WARBLER, Black-and-white JEF 25 reps(140)
REDSTART, American JEF 21 reps(87)
WARBLER, Prothonotary JEF 25 reps(449); ORA 1 rep(1)
WARBLER, Worm-eating JEF 19 reps(149)
WARBLER, Swainson's JEF 14 reps (21)
OVENBIRD JEF 24 reps(53)
WATERTHRUSH, Northern JEF 22 reps(57)
WATERTHRUSH, Louisiana JEF 15 reps(39)
WARBLER, Kentucky JEF 25 reps(100)
YELLOWTHROAT, Common JEF 30 reps(120)
WARBLER, Hooded JEF 27 reps(304)
WARBLER, Wilson's JEF 4/6(4) AM; JEF-SW 4/7(1) DQ; JEF-SW 4/8(8) AM; JEF-SW 4/9(1) DQ; JEF-SW 4/10(1) JHH
CHAT, Yellow-breasted JEF 14 reps(917)
TANAGER, Summer HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 29 reps(165)
TANAGER, Scarlet JEF 22 reps(111); ORA 1 rep(1)
TOWHEE, Spotted JEF-SW 4/4(1) GD; JEF-SW 4/5(1) KE; JEF-SW 4/9(1) DQ; JEF-SW 4/10(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/12(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/13(1) MW; JEF-SW 4/15(1) AM
SPARROW, Savannah JEF 7 reps(20)
SPARROW, Seaside JEF 1 rep(2)
SPARROW, Lincoln's JEF 14 reps(31)

SPARROW, Swamp JEF-SW 4/4(6) GD; JEF-SW 4/10(1) JHH; JEF-SW 4/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/13(1) MW; JEF-SW 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF-SW 4/21(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/22(1) JJW

SPARROW, White-throated JEF 10 reps(31)

SPARROW, White-crowned JEF 4/27(3) JAW

CARDINAL, Northern JEF 16 reps(72)

GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted JEF 21 reps(132)

GROSBEAK, Blue JEF 18 reps(96); ORA 1 rep(1)

BUNTING, Indigo JEF 35 reps(3596)

BUNTING, Painted JEF 24 reps (187)

DICKCISSEL JEF-TX87 4/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/15(1) JFW; JEF-SRSP 4/20(1) FTSR; JEF-TXPT 4/21(1) JAW; JEF-SW 4/26(1) JAW; JEF 4/27(13) JAW; JEF-SW 4/28(1) JAW

BLACKBIRD, Red-winged JEF 15 reps(220)

MEADOWLARK, Eastern JEF 3 reps(10)

MEADOWLARK species JEF 5 reps(15)

GRACKLE, Common JEF 14 reps(116)

GRACKLE, Boat-tailed JEF 12 reps(120)

GRACKLE, Great-tailed JEF 13 reps(143)

COWBIRD, Brown-headed JEF 5 reps(31)

ORIOLE, Orchard JEF 27 reps(490)

ORIOLE, Baltimore JEF 17 reps(87)

FINCH, House JEF-NEDR 4/19(3) JAW

GOLDFINCH, American JEF-NEDR 4/3(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 4/15(5) JFW; JEF-NEDR 4/16(3) JAW; JEF-NEDR 4/18(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 4/19(3) JAW; JEF-NEDR 4/28(2) JAW

SPARROW, House JEF 12 reps(41)

Number of Species 211
Number of Individuals 19172

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; DQ - Don Quaintance; FTSR - Field Trip Sea Rim SP and Sabine Woods; GD - Gerald Duhon; JAW - John Whittle; JFW - Jana Whittle; JHH - John H. Haynes; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; KE - Kreg Elzey; KS - Ken Sztraky; MW - Steve Mayes and John Whittle; RAJ - Rose Ann Jordan; RHJ - Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SKO - Sandy Komito.

Spring Migration Count – 11 May 2002

The number of species seen on this year's Jefferson County Spring Migration Count was a very disappointing 144. This is approximately 20 species below the norm of recent years. It is tempting to blame the dry conditions, but other recent years have also been dry.

Conditions of the beach, with large quantities of sargassum seaweed, were less than ideal for observing the smaller birds. On the other hand, the far southwest cell at Cattail Marsh was ideal for shorebirds and there was an excellent variety there. Perhaps the most unusual bird of the count was a Vermilion Flycatcher seen in the north central part of the county. Warblers and vireos were relatively few in number, but thrushes and were well represented. Small plovers were few, and the variety of gulls and terns was not up to the numbers of recent years. Woodpeckers were absent from many of the places we have found them in past counts.

A fuller tabulation and discussion is being mailed to participants and is available from the editor to others on request in hard copy or Excel spreadsheet format.

The Count totals were as follows:

PELICAN, Brown (23); CORMORANT, Neotropic (81); ANHINGA 2); BITTERN, Least (4); HERON, Great Blue (10); EGRET, Great (283); EGRET, Snowy (96); HERON, Little Blue (61); HERON, Tricolored (29); EGRET, Cattle (565); HERON, Green (42); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (13); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (43); IBIS, White (57); IBIS, Glossy (2); IBIS, White-faced (73); IBIS, *Plegadis* species (4); SPOONBILL, Roseate (90); VULTURE, Black (7); VULTURE, Turkey (18); WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (5); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (19); MALLARD (1); DUCK, Mottled (54); TEAL, Blue-winged (52); SHOVELER, Northern (2); TEAL, Green-winged (1); DUCK, Ring-necked (3); HARRIER, Northern (1); HAWK, Accipiter species (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (3); HAWK, Swainson's (1); HAWK, Red-tailed (1); FALCON, Peregrine (1); BOBWHITE, Northern (3); RAIL, Clapper (10); RAIL, King (1); GALLINULE, Purple (8); MOORHEN, Common (21); COOT, American (3); PLOVER, Black-bellied (51); PLOVER, Semipalmated (11); KILLDEER 106); STILT, Black-necked (87); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (21); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (15); WILLET 22); SANDPIPER, Spotted (10); WHIMBREL 47); CURLEW, Long-billed (2); GODWIT, Hudsonian (60); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (80); KNOT, Red (1); SANDERLING 202);

SANDPIPER, Semipalmated (6); SANDPIPER, Western (282); SANDPIPER, Least (211); SANDPIPER, White-rumped (660); SANDPIPER, Baird's (12); SANDPIPER, Peep (100); SANDPIPER, Pectoral (4); DUNLIN (37); SANDPIPER, Stilt (503); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (7); DOWITCHER species (3); PHALAROPE, Wilson's (13); GULL, Laughing (209); GULL, Ring-billed (1); GULL, Herring (8); TERN, Caspian (67); TERN, Royal (4); TERN, Forster's (9); TERN, Least (92); TERN, Black (318); DOVE, Rock (51); DOVE, Eurasian Collared- (12); DOVE, White-winged (11); DOVE, Mourning (255); DOVE, Inca (9); CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (18); OWL, Barn (4); OWL, Barred (1); NIGHTHAWK, Common (10); SWIFT, Chimney (75); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (5); HUMMINGBIRD, Species (1); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (26); WOODPECKER, Downy (11); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (5); FLYCATCHER, Acadian (4); FLYCATCHER, Willow (1); FLYCATCHER, Trail's (1); FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (1); KINGBIRD, Eastern (69); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (35); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (89); VIREO, White-eyed (5); VIREO, Red-eyed (6); JAY, Blue (64); CROW, American (16); CROW, Fish (12); CROW, Species (9); MARTIN, Purple (128); SWALLOW, Tree (30); SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged (1); SWALLOW, Bank (5); SWALLOW, Cliff (25); SWALLOW, Barn (212); SWALLOW species (4); CHICKADEE, Carolina (13); TITMOUSE, Tufted (4); WREN, Carolina (16); WREN, Marsh (1); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (16); VEERY (1); THRUSH, Gray-cheeked (1); THRUSH, Swainson's (2); THRUSH, Wood (1); ROBIN, American (25); CATBIRD, Gray (5); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (308); THRASHER, Brown (2); STARLING, European (362); WARBLER, Tennessee (2); PARULA, Northern (4); WARBLER, Yellow (2); WARBLER, Chestnut-sided (1); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (1); WARBLER, Bay-breasted (1); REDSTART, American (4); WARBLER, Prothonotary (5); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (1); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (13); TANAGER, Scarlet (9); SPARROW, Savannah (2); SPARROW, Seaside (7); CARDINAL, Northern (119); GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (5); BUNTING, Indigo (3); BUNTING, Painted (3); DICKCISSEL (43); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (337); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (77); MEADOWLARK species (5); GRACKLE, Common (276); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (96); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (189); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (41); ORIOLE, Orchard (35); ORIOLE, Baltimore (2); FINCH, House (7); SPARROW, House (105); TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 8329; TOTAL SPECIES 144; Number of Observers 14

Participants: Althea Bythewood, Bob Collier, Sandi Cook, Nancy and Don Fisher, Winette and Brad Hogue, Margo Holst, Ray Jordan, Steve Mayes, Ken Sztraky, Morgan Werner, Jana and John Whittle.

Parrots for a Pittance

Gerald Duhon

Quick- how many synonyms can you think of for the word "frugal"? How about "thrifty". Yup, thrifty is good. "Financially responsible"- well, that's two words actually, but still an admired quality. "Pennywise" might be OK, unless it's followed by "pound foolish". Then there's those monikers usually associated with a negative personal aura, such as "skinflint" and "cheapskate". For Birders who don't have their L.L. Bean cargo pants stuffed full of the long green, signing onto one of those glitzy, well promoted birding ecotours might mean mortgaging the family farm. Such forays can run into the mid four figures, depending of course on destination and amenities. Having been accused of falling somewhere between "thrifty" and "skinflint" on the tightwad scale, I am mostly looking for the cheap way out. So how does Worthen's Sparrow, Maroon-fronted Parrot, Black-vented Oriole, Flame-colored Tanager, Blue Bunting, Yellow-eyed Junco, Blue-crowned Motmot, Olive and Colima Warbler, all for 50 bucks sound to me? Like a penny pincher's dream!!

For several years now the Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) has been sponsoring field trips around the state, most covering a long weekend. I participated in one such outing this February, when 16 birders met in East Texas to search out the specialties there, including Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Henslow's and Bachman's Sparrow. We found all the birds we were searching for, and got especially great, feather level detail views of Henslow's. At least once a year in 2001 and 2002, TOS has scheduled more ambitious Birding adventures, spanning five days or so. When announcement of a post conference trip to the Saltillo-Monterrey area hit their web page, I was among the first to sign on board. I felt reasonably certain that the entire affair would be done on a shoestring budget. And I was right.

Along with the El Cielo-El Naranja run, Monterrey has been a favorite destination for South Texas birders. (For details, see Webb and Howell's *A Birdfinding Guide to Mexico* -- most of the locations we visited are listed.) A short five-hour drive from Del Rio or Laredo the avifauna has a distinctly tropical flair. The two narrow ranging endemics found in these parts, Worthen's Sparrow and Maroon-fronted Parrot are what most tickers twitch after, but the overall birding is outstanding, as we shall see. Actually, two concurrent groups would make the trek after the main Del Rio TOS conference in mid April. There was a rustic, but probably birdier, camping trip as well as a contingent that would eschew roughing it for overnight accommodations in local motels. Having turned in my Boy Scout Camping Merit Badge some years ago in favor of electric lights and elevated mattresses, I opted for the motel trip.

The Del Rio Chamber of Commerce had worked hard to bring TOS to their area. (Traveling Birders spend money, you know, and the word is getting around.) This was a city I had always thought of, birdwise, as being on the way to, well, some other place. I had never paused on this stretch of the Rio Grande for longer than a fillup and lunch. However, after full days in the field Friday April 19th and Saturday April 20th, I can honestly say that the birding action is outstanding. Being

within easy reach of South Texas Scrub, the Edwards Plateau and Lake Amistad accounts at least in part for the city's diverse bird list. Gray and Black-capped Vireo, Golden-cheeked Warbler, Couch's and Western Kingbird, Brown-crested and Ash-throated Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, Lazuli Bunting and four different kinds of Orioles were on my personal tally. Birds traditionally considered more typical of Lower Valley environs, such as Kiskadee and Ringed Kingfisher, have been making their way north in recent years along the Rio Grande, and are now fairly easy in and near Del Rio. Olive Sparrow, Canyon and Bewick's Wren sang without pause from the tangles. We also had encounters with the (threatened?) inland races of Least Tern and Snowy Plover. The Rufous-capped Warbler banded and photographed in these parts did not put in an appearance, but I was surprised to learn of a group of Tropical Parula, four or five birds, that are regular in at least one of the sites visited.

Our leader for the motel-based excursion was Eric Finkelstein, Chief of Interpretation for Amistad National Recreation Area, a very good bird, plant and butterfly man. Eric has traveled extensively in Mexico, Central and South America, speaks fluent Spanish and is a genuine pleasure to be around. He arranged for the motel reservations, eatery stops, car to car communication (family radios or CB's highly recommended!), personal maps, entry process, and a myriad other details all for merely reimbursement of expenses. On a rather warm Del Rio Sunday morning, when the rest of the attendees were packing up to head home, 17 excited birders met in the parking lot of the Ramada Inn, with visions of Parrots, Trogons and Tanagers filling their consciousness. We split into five cars and headed toward Ciudad Acuna, our border crossing point.

We stopped in Saltillo for lunch, a fine feast of goat and beef. Just a little over 6 hours into our journey, in the early afternoon, we turned off onto a graded dirt road that is designated in Webb and Howell as "Tanque de Emergencia", one of the premier locations for the highly localized and little known Worthen's Sparrow. Worthen's is in the genus *Spizella*, and somewhat resembles a Field Sparrow, but sports a dark rusty cap and black legs. Here in the Yucca scrub we flushed Prairie Falcon- a bird on Webb's list but one I did not expect. The large dashing raptor was, however, emblematic of the mix we encountered- some western, some eastern, and many of what is considered by ABA-centric Birders as Arizona specialties. Another good find was Black-vented Oriole. Black-vented is a lot like Scott's, but dapper in yellow and black only, with nary a trace of white. Western Meadowlark was also instructive- Sibley's describes their call as "black bird like", and indeed the birds sounded like Redwing (a flat, dry "chack") when they were not offering their flutelike songs. We thought Worthen's might prove elusive, and were preparing to abandon the hunt. Then the bird was spotted directly across from where we parked (Gerald's traveling bird-finding rule No. 1 -- "Look around the car first"), not in the typical grassy habitat supposedly preferred. The sparrow was amongst a group of Horned Lark,

Savannah and **Vesper Sparrow** happily foraging away in an overgrazed field. (Gerald's traveling bird-finding rule No. 2 -- "Birds don't read books.") Tired but energized, we bedded down at a restored 17th century Hacienda for the night.

The next day, Monday April 22nd, just before dawn we caravanned out headed toward the mountains. At just about any distance beginning two hours out of Texas, isolated peaks begin to appear, and one is never far from the high country, even while passing through cactus forest. As we trekked toward Los Lirios, a small hamlet nestled in the range between Saltillo and Monterrey, it struck me how similar this country was to Arizona's "Islands in the Sky." Passing into Mesquite thickets, then apple orchards and finally topping out in Pine-Oak woodlands, the feel of the place was much the same. With neck craning vistas all around, we pulled over, donned our jackets, and raised our glasses. The dawn chorus was arresting- **Yellow-eyed (Mexican) Junco**, hordes of **Spotted Towhee**, **Hepatic Tanager**, **Audubon's** and **Colima Warbler** (very common) were singing their hearts out. **Cordilleran Flycatcher**, **Bridled Titmouse**, **Black-headed Grosbeak**, **Hutton's Vireo**, **Mexican (Gray-breasted) Jay**, **Bushtit**, **Western Bluebird**, **Red-shafted Flicker**, **Painted Redstart**, **Blue-throated**, **Magnificent**, and **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** underscored the fact that not just the ambience, but the birdlife itself carried strong affinities to southeast Arizona. Of course, more properly it is the other way around. Unlike Arizona or Big Bend though, where finding some of the above entails a stiff hike, these species were right alongside the road! Then there were the endemics, for that Salsa kick -- **Brown-backed Solitaire** ("the sound of Mexico", says Eric), **Crescent-chested** and **Rufous-capped Warbler** (the warbler that thinks it's a wren!), **Rufous-crowned Brushfinch**, and the bird with the mouth filling name, **Russet-backed Nightingale Thrush**.

Later that afternoon, having almost nearly but not quite hardly gotten our fill of Andean-like mist draped pullouts, we tried for our final endemic, **Maroon-fronted Parrot**. These range restricted birds nest in depressions along the face of sheer cliffs, and feed on pinecone seeds. They are viewed by some as conspecific with **Thick-billed**. We found ourselves standing at the base of a thickly vegetated, gently sloping foothill. Thrust up before us in the near distance was an imposing knife edged hunk of bare buff colored rock, white fog swirling over the edge. After a bit of staring, we could see the birds launch themselves out from the cavities in pairs, fly in perfect tandem coordination into the low clouds, disappear and then reappear over and over again. An impressive aerial ballet. I muttered something to the effect "Looks like they're having fun". Eric's wife, Sally, who also helped guide our efforts, replied "Well, parrots do play, you know." In my next life, guess what I want to come back as.... Finally, after scanning the slopes, one scope wielder lucked upon a pair sitting side by side in a bare tree. We were treated to an intimate look at a large, truly "maroon fronted" Parrot.

Lodging that night was at a magnificent 5-star resort hotel, the "Hacienda Coba del Caballo." These digs had it all- beautifully landscaped grounds with bananas, blooming ginger and multitudes of tree sized hibiscus and bougainvillea. Multi-hued Mediterranean pastels dominated the décor -- two swimming pools, cobblestone verandas perched on thousand foot drops, mood lighting, even (get this) bungee jumping

facilities! The Hacienda would make for a great 4 or 5 day family friendly vacation. Best of all, the parking lot leads to the entrance to "Horsetail Falls." The falls are a popular retreat on the weekends, but for us it was all but deserted. The place is hard for me to describe, since I have never been anywhere quite like it. A cross between a wild tropical park and the Southeast Texas State Fair is the best I can do. The winding brick walkway is flanked by a rock-hopping stream. Vendors ply their wares in carts along the way, and more permanent establishments house leather goods and other indigenous craftwork. Benches and neat fire pits abound, and all areas are constantly being swept. About a fifteen minute walk amidst and around huge trees is required to reach the falls, a several hundred-foot drop of fan shaped water. Here, an early Tuesday morning stroll yielded **Yellow-green Vireo** (very common), **Flame-colored (Streak-backed)** and **Western Tanager**, **White-tipped Dove**, **Rose-throated Becard**, **Blue-crowned Motmot**, **Blue and Painted Bunting**, **Tropical Parula**, **Green and Brown Jay**, **Clay-colored Robin** (common), **Olive Sparrow**, **Crimson-collared Grosbeak**, **Audubon's Oriole**, **Buff-bellied** and **Broad-tailed (vs. White-eared) Hummingbird**, **Rufous-capped** and **Crescent-chested Warbler**, **Cassin's Vireo**, **Brown-backed Solitaire**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**, **Canyon Wren** and **Blue Grosbeak**. Below the hotel we ran up on **Ringed Kingfisher** and **Common Black-Hawk**, and a couple of folks got quick looks at **Plain Chacalaca**. (Gerald's traveling bird-finding Rule No. 3: "Try and cop shotgun in the lead car.")

Monterrey is a burgeoning metropolis of 3.5 million souls, with more Wendy's, Best Buys, Bennigan's and the like than you can shake a Big Mac at. The city itself has grown up around several of those isolated mountain Sky Islands, and one contains a great park. Winding ever upwards through a suburban district brings one quickly to "Parque Chapinque". Elevation varies from 2200 to 3600 meters. A fair number of joggers and families at outing populate the lower section, but by the time the road terminates at the top things have thinned out considerably. Here at a group shelter, Rene Garza, the resident naturalist presented a brief overview of the park's history, ecology, and the efforts underway by various national and international conservation organizations to preserve this urban oasis. A well marked, easy 2.5 mile loop trail winds it way among huge evergreens and oaks. Most notable here were the numbers of **Elegant Trogon** -- we heard and saw more than half a dozen on territory. **Pygmy Owl** hoots really brought 'em pouring in: **Brown Creeper**, **Bronze-winged** and **Acorn Woodpecker**, **Brown-throated** and **Northern House Wren**, **Sulfur-bellied Flycatcher** and **Painted Redstart**. We heard several birds singing "Hosea Maria" (**Greater Pewee**), but had no success actually spotting the critter. Responding to Owl toots, I found and identified **Olive Warbler**, which had not heretofore been officially recorded. Toward the end of our hike, several birders found and I identified a nesting pair of **Flame-colored (Streak-backed) Tanager**. Both of these will subsequently be added to the Chipinque list.

Almost as soon as our adventure began, an exhausted but satisfied, mostly silent group witnessed those same craggy slopes turn purple then azure, only to finally sink slowly below the horizon as we headed back north. Call me a tightwad, a pennypincher, or simply frugal. Whatever. A parrot for a pittance is an experience not to be missed.

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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.

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