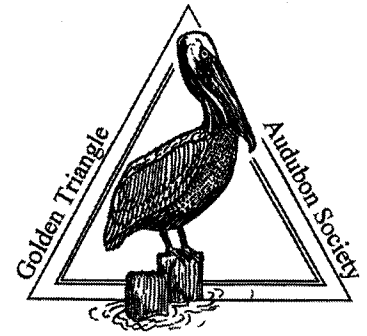


Brown Pelican

Scanned from Originals

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 10 No. 1

January 2004

Membership Meeting

Thursday, January 15, 2004

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

Texas Ornithological Society and its Sanctuaries

Dr. Brent Ortego

Brent Ortego is immediate Past President of Texas Ornithological Society and continues as its Sanctuary Committee chair. Full details of his talk were not available at press time, but Brent indicated earlier that he would talk about Texas Ornithological Society and its sanctuaries.

Brent is a conservation scientist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, currently based in the Victoria office. He is well known by hummingbird enthusiasts for the hummingbird banding program that he carries out at his home in Raisin, Texas. He is co-compiler of the Mad Island Christmas Bird Count, and also Texas coordinator for the USGS Breeding Bird Survey.

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.

A Few Thoughts for the New Year

Because this is Christmas Count Season, this issue is filled with even more bird information than usual. We make no apology for the focus on birds, because birds are an indicator species. Bird population data are critically important to monitoring the status of the various species of bird. Only when the population falls to very low levels, *e.g.* Whooping Cranes, or there is widespread economic interest, *e.g.* waterfowl, is it practical for the various wildlife agencies to carry out the population studies themselves. Essentially all other bird population data derive from volunteer efforts. The Christmas Bird Count data represents perhaps the most comprehensive data set anywhere in the world. The results of the Sea Rim Count are included in this issue. We hope to summarize some of the other local counts in the next issue.

Anyone concerned about the status of birds must also be concerned about the status of bird habitat. It is also interesting to note that much of the recent local birding focus has been on west Jefferson County rather than the coastal areas or Cattail Marsh. Rice fields are important as bird habitat (whether they in cultivation or fallow), just as much as the coastal wood lots, the salt and fresh-water marshes, and the piney woods. Respect and conserve all bird habitat!

John A. Whittle

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 10, No.1 January 2004

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

RARE BIRD ALERT AND
SOCIETY INFORMATION
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Calendar of Events

Thursday, January 15. Membership Meeting.

See page 1 for details.

Saturday January 17. Field Trip to West Harris County. TENTATIVE DETAILS. Please be sure to check at the Membership Meeting on January 15, or check the web-site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.com or call Steve Mayes at 722-5807 two or three days before to confirm details of both date and meeting place.

Although it is a two and one-half hour trip from the Golden Triangle, this has been a very popular trip in past years. We have scheduled the trip a little earlier in the year this time as there was some thought that the wintering birds had begun to thin out late in February.

Tentatively, the meeting time and place will be the same location as in previous years: 7:30 a.m. at the Randall's Supermarket on the northeast corner of Barker-Cypress Road and Clay Road, west of Houston. To reach this location, take IH-10 west through Houston and across Loop 610 on the west side to Barker-Cypress Road – exit 748. This exit is 15 miles west of Loop 610, is beyond Beltway 8 and just beyond Highway 6. Turn right (north) on Barker Cypress and proceed just under three miles to the Intersection with Clay. The Randall's parking lot can be entered from Barker-Cypress immediately north of the intersection.

The Randall's opens at 6 a.m. and has restrooms located immediately inside the door. There is a Starbucks just a little further inside the store. There is a Conoco station on the southeast corner of the intersection, which doubtless also has coffee. (Veterans of previous trips will recognize that the Randall's used to be an Albertson's and the Conoco used to be a Shell.)

The meeting place is about 105 miles from Beaumont (IH-10 and College St.), and the travel time at that hour of the morning is a little under 2 1/2 hours.

Car pooling from Beaumont is desirable. The fewer cars we have in the rural areas of west Harris County, the better. Maps and the opportunity to arrange car pooling will be available at

the February Membership meeting on Thursday January 15. Please let Steve Mayes know in advance if you intend to come, and please provide a cell phone number if there will be one in your vehicle on the way over.

Thursday February 19. Membership Meeting.

Dan Brooks of the Houston Museum of Natural History will be our speaker. The title of his talk is not yet available.

Thursday March 18. Membership Meeting.

Gerald Duhon will be our speaker. His talk will be titled "(Barely) South of the Border, Down Mexico Way."

Thursday April 15. Membership Meeting.

Sandy Komito will be the featured speaker.

Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on this issue. If the date on your label NOT prefixed by AU has passed, or there is no other date, 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.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. Volunteers are now urgently needed for meetings in 2004. 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!

Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count – 28 December 2003

A few rain showers around 6:30 a.m. very localized over Sabine Pass gave participants cause to wonder whether our local television meteorologists had blown the favorable forecast, but the clouds quickly passed to reveal a rather pleasant day. Warm for late December, a little windy in the middle of the day, but certainly very acceptable. The cold front did come through almost exactly at the predicted time of midnight, but by then, the count was long since over.

For a series of diverse reasons, many of our regular participants were unable to participate this year, leaving many sectors with below their usual number of observers, and unable to subdivide. This undoubtedly held down the overall number of birds observed, although the number of species seen was satisfactory in light of the results elsewhere along the coast this Christmas Count season.

This has been, so far at least, a very strange fall and winter birding season on the Texas Coast. The raptor species arrived on schedule in generally good numbers. A number of other wintering species, particularly the larger than warbler or sparrow-sized passerine species such as Blue-headed Vireo and Gray Catbird are present in normal to good numbers. Even American Robins are just to the north of the coastal areas in probably near normal numbers. But we saw almost no overshooting species – such as nuthatches and Brown Creepers, nor did we see many migrating sparrows. Most notably, Yellow-rumped Warblers failed to arrive *en masse*, although numbers are now creeping up slowly. Sparrows have been hard to come by this fall. On the other hand, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are everywhere in the coastal areas, but nowhere to be found a few miles north. And of course, as almost everyone has heard. “there are no ducks this year.” Actually, the duck numbers in areas that are off-limits to hunting may be close to normal – but it may also be that there is enough room for almost all of them to co-exist in these areas this year, with no need to venture to more dangerous areas! Duck numbers in hunting areas along the coast are certainly abnormally low. Why the ducks are not here is not yet clear. Many of the passerine species lingered late up north because of warm weather and excellent natural food supplies. The abundance of natural food sources, particularly seeds, has also meant that the backyard birds have had plenty of dining areas to choose from and feeders, often patrolled by Sharp-shinned Hawks and/or cats, may not have been high on the list.

In view of the dismal reports of duck numbers, our final tally of waterfowl species was more than acceptable. We have not been able to find either of the Whistling-Duck species with any regularity, although both are around, and we struck out there. Geese numbers were low, and we missed Canada Goose, but there are plenty of geese around in west Jefferson County and just across the causeway in Louisiana. Numbers were generally average to quite low, but we found almost all the expected ducks. Canvasback numbers were high, Bufflehead and Ruddy Duck numbers were low. Not one but two Long-tailed Ducks (previously known as Oldsquaw) were found. They were seen from areas into which we had special access in the Keith Lake area.

Although only one bird was seen, we did record Northern Bobwhite for only the third time since the count was started.

Egrets and herons were generally present in unremarkable numbers. Reddish Egret has always been difficult to find on this count and we did not see one this year. On the other hand, Patrick Walther, the biologist at McFaddin and Texas point NWRs, seem to know where all the American Bitterns (and rails) are and we counted nine there and one in the Murphree area. We missed Cattle Egret for the second time in three years – this species seems to have become more strongly migratory, with fewer birds overwintering. Raptors were present in numbers that are within norms, and, although we missed Merlin – the bird that has wintered along Highway 87 for the past two or three years is seemingly not present this year -- we did see a Crested Caracara. Although not normally seen along the coast, there is now a small population in Jefferson County, centered around the Taylor Bayou and Hillebrandt Bayou areas, probably spending most of their time south of Highway 73.

The increasing number of rails – Yellow and Virginia in particular – recorded reflects better coverage stemming from increased understanding of the “micro-habitat” preferences of these species.

The glancing blows of two tropical storms in September played havoc with the beach in the count circle, with significant losses of shoreline along Texas Point Refuge. In many places, the water’s edge is decaying marsh vegetation. What effect this may have had on the shorebird food sources on the beach and along the Sea Rim beach unit is not clear. What we found were more or less normal numbers of plovers and beach sandpipers, but very few gulls and terns.

Least Sandpipers, normally to be found somewhat inland of the beach itself were in the decaying vegetation, and Dunlins did not seem to care. One Red Knot was seen, and the high number of Snowy Plovers on Sea Rim itself continues. There were six wintering Whimbrel on Texas point – something we have come to expect. Finding a Long-billed Curlew is touch and go on the coast, although there are large numbers in the rice field areas. We found one, and three Marbled Godwits. Finding non-beach shorebirds – changing bird names seems highly unpopular, but isn’t “wader” a better term than “shorebird” for the larger universe of these species? – is never easy on this count, and we had the unusual experience of two groups seeing Lesser Yellowlegs but no one finding a Greater Yellowlegs. Thirty one Wilson’s Snipe was the highest number in several years. Short-billed Dowitchers are easy to find in the circle, but Long-billed are not and no one was able to separate one.

Ring-billed Gulls have seemed particularly numerous this fall, and good numbers of them, as well as Herring Gulls and Bonaparte’s Gulls were seen along the beach. Royal Tern numbers were worryingly low, and there were no Sandwich Terns. Forster’s Tern numbers seemed a little low, although that species seems very mobile. No Common Terns were seen. The Black Skimmer Flock that had cooperated for a few years was not present again this year.

Eurasian Collared-Dove populations continue to explode, while White-winged Doves have become much scarcer in Sabine Pass, and we were unable to locate any Inca Doves for the first time in a few years. Belted Kingfishers continued to be present in good numbers, while Woodpecker numbers were all on the low end of normal. We saw Fish Crow for the first time ever. Fish Crows have become increasingly common again along the ship channel in spring particularly, but have always withdrawn in the winter.

The dramatic increase in Sedge Wrens (and Seaside Sparrows) is undoubtedly the result of better coverage of their habitat, and probably also increased ability of the observers to identify them "on the fly." House Wrens are plentiful this year, and this our increased count reflects this.

We have already indicated above that there were a lot of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers around. There were also many Carolina Chickadees – sometimes a difficult bird to find on the immediate coast. Tufted Titmouse was a new species for the count. It has been a good year for Blue-headed Vireos. Beyond the expected warblers (Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned, Common Yellowthroat, Pine and Palm Warbler), there is always a chance of a lingering migrant warbler. This year, a nicely marked Prairie Warbler has been present in Sabine Woods, since at least September, and was seen again on count day.

Our sparrow totals are generally made up mostly of the species which frequent the wetter areas, and we often have a harder time with sparrow species that are easy to find a little further north away from the marshes. Nevertheless, we found a good selection including a Field Sparrow and many White-crowned Sparrows.

The count would not be possible without the help of many landowners, both public and private. We owe special thanks to Marty Bray and Patrick Walther of McFaddin and Texas Point National Wildlife Refuges for their active help in the count. We thank Sea Rim State Park for their help, and we also thank a number of landowners, particularly in the Backridge Road area, for granting us access to their property.

The Christmas Counts represent the longest running set of bird population data that exists anywhere. While there may be shortcomings because of varying coverage and other factors, it is all we have, and the large number of years that many counts have been run helps overcome the minor deficiencies. I know a lot of people miss the printed publication – as do I. But the web access is being improved every year, and hopefully will be improved further in the years to come.

Next year is a difficult one for Christmas Count scheduling, because Christmas Day is on a Saturday. This allows very few weekend days that are reasonable for Christmas Counts. We are tentatively scheduling the Sea Rim Count for Sunday January 2, 2005.

Count Totals (preliminary)

GOOSE, Greater White-fronted (30); GOOSE, Snow (450); GOOSE, Snow (White) (700); GOOSE, Snow (Blue) (71); GOOSE, Ross's (2); GADWALL (454); WIGEON, American (23); MALLARD (2); DUCK, Mottled (45); TEAL, Blue-winged (8); SHOVELER, Northern (503); PINTAIL, Northern (361); TEAL, Green-winged (825); CANVASBACK (2700); REDHEAD (2); DUCK, Ring-necked (220); SCAUP, Greater (6); SCAUP, Lesser (113); SCAUP, Species (60); DUCK, Long-tailed (2); BUFFLEHEAD (43); MERGANSER, Hooded (12); MER-

GANSER, Red-breasted (6); DUCK, Ruddy (80); DUCK, species (4); BOBWHITE, Northern (1); LOON, Common (2); GREBE, Pied-billed (29); GREBE, Horned (3); GREBE, Eared (4); PELICAN, American White (1462); PELICAN, Brown (40); CORMORANT, Neotropic (77); CORMORANT, Double-crested (250); CORMORANT species (1); ANHINGA (2); BITTERN, American (10); HERON, Great Blue (71); EGRET, Great (311); EGRET, Snowy (81); HERON, Little Blue (28); HERON, Tricolored (36); HERON, Green (3); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (6); IBIS, White (325); IBIS, White-faced (3); IBIS, Plegadis species (440); SPOONBILL, Roseate (46); VULTURE, Black (18); VULTURE, Turkey (23); OSPREY (3); KITE, White-tailed (7); HARRIER, Northern (36); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (3); HAWK, Cooper's (6); HAWK, Red-shouldered (3); HAWK, Red-tailed (33); CARACARA, Crested (1); KESTREL, American (18); FALCON, Peregrine (1); RAIL, Yellow (3); RAIL, Clapper (9); RAIL, King (2); RAIL, Virginia (11); SORA (5); MOORHEN, Common (42); COOT, American (653); PLOVER, Black-bellied (81); PLOVER, Snowy (43); PLOVER, Semipalmated (45); PLOVER, Piping (12); KILL-DEER (113); STILT, Black-necked (175); AVOCET, American (552); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (15); WILLET (190); SAND-PIPER, Spotted (5); WHIMBREL (6); CURLEW, Long-billed (3); GODWIT, Marbled (3); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (18); KNOT, Red (1); SANDERLING (282); SANDPIPER, Western (97); SANDPIPER, Least (222); DUNLIN (543); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (79); SNIPE, Wilson's (31); WOODCOCK, American (1); GULL, Laughing (312); GULL, Bonaparte's (187); GULL, Ring-billed (1164); GULL, Herring (76); GULL, TERN, Gull-billed (1); TERN, Caspian (71); TERN, Royal (20); TERN, Forster's (103); PIGEON, Rock (66); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (84); DOVE, White-winged (4); DOVE, Mourning (96); OWL, Barn (1); OWL, Great Horned (2); KINGFISHER, Belted (30); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (1); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (4); WOODPECKER, Downy (18); FLICKER, Northern (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (55); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (55); VIREO, White-eyed (1); VIREO, Blue-headed (9); JAY, Blue (32); CROW, Fish (1); SWALLOW, Tree; WREN, Carolina (6); WREN, House (12); WREN, Sedge (79); WREN, Marsh (7); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (66); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (88); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (10); THRUSH, Hermit (3); ROBIN, American (25); CATBIRD, Gray (5); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (46); THRASHER, Brown (14); STARLING, European (232); PIPIT, American (67); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (41); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (93); WARBLER, Yellow-r. (Myrtle) (115); WARBLER, Pine (1); WARBLER, Prairie (3); WARBLER, Palm (2); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (41); SPARROW, Chipping (1); SPARROW, Field (1); SPARROW, Savannah (169); SPARROW, LeConte's (4); SPARROW, Nelson's Sharp-tailed (11); SPARROW, Seaside (57); SPARROW, Song (14); SPARROW, Lincoln's (7); SPARROW, Swamp (70); SPARROW, White-throated (32); SPARROW, White-crowned (17); CARDINAL, Northern (34); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (1542); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (34); MEADOWLARK, species (17); GRACKLE, Common (130); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (457); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (173); GRACKLE, species (50); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (7); FINCH, House (5); GOLDFINCH, American (7); SPARROW, House (119); SPECIES, total (154); INDIVIDUALS, total (19725).

Participants

Nancy and Don Fisher, Ross Foreman, Bill Graber, John Haynes, Jeannie Heltzel, Brian Henderson, Don Jeane, Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan, Gary Kelley, Steve Mayes, Royce Pendergast, Ken Sztraky, Patrick Walther, Tex Wells, Jana and John Whittle.

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings – November 2003

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 john.whittle@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: Another interesting month. Although there were few lingering warblers with a Prairie Warbler in Sabine Woods being the most notable, with strong competition from the last known sighting of the female Black-throated Blue Warbler reported last month. Interesting sightings include Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles, Crested Caracaras and Vermilion Flycatchers, all of which are referred in in the bird alerts sections at the end of the listing.

WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bell.	JEF-TP 11/29(8) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(29) JHW	HERON, Little Blue	JEF 5 reps(11)
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous	JEF-TP 11/29(2) JAW	HERON, Tricolored	JEF 6 reps(10)
GOOSE, White-fronted	HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 8 reps(1220)	EGRET, Cattle	JEF 6 reps(59); ORA 2 reps(10)
GOOSE, Snow	JEF 9 reps(25720); ORA 1 rep(30)	HERON, Green	JEF-SRSP 11/1(1) JAW
GOOSE, Ross's	JEF 11/22(2) FTAN; JEF-TP 11/23(3) JAW; JEF 11/29(15) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(1) JAW	NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned	JEF 2 reps(3)
GADWALL	JEF 7 reps(4583)	IBIS, White	JAS 11/25(6) KS; JEF-TXPT 11/1(1) JAW; JEF 11/2(30) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/8(10) JAW; JEF 11/9(23) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(17) JAW; JEF 11/15(1) JAW; JEF 11/16(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(8) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/16(1) JAW; JEF 11/22(50) FTAN; JEF 11/23(800) JAW; JEF 11/23(75) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(2) JAW; JEF 11/28(6) AM; JEF-TXPT 11/28(12) JAW; JEF 11/29(209) JAW
WIGEON, American	JEF 5 reps(16)	IBIS, Glossy	JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(1) JAW
MALLARD	JEF 2 reps(12)	IBIS, White-faced	JEF 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(7) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(4) JAW; JEF 11/22(5) FTAN; JEF-TP 11/23(3) JAW; JEF 11/28(22) AM; JEF 11/29(56) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(2) JHW
DUCK, Mottled	JEF 11/1(4) JAW; JEF 11/8(20) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/8(8) JAW; JEF 11/9(6) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(2) JAW; JEF 11/16(10) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(2) JAW; JEF 11/30(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(2) JHW	IBIS, Plegadis	JEF-TXPT 11/1(12) JAW; JEF 11/9(140) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(90) JAW; JEF 11/15(50) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(20) JAW; JEF 11/22(100) FTAN; JEF 11/22(560) JAW; JEF 11/23(101) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(4) JAW; JEF 11/29(2965) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(9) JAW; JEF 11/30(4) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(5) JHW
TEAL, Blue-winged	JEF 8 reps(2509)	SPOONBILL, Roseate	JAS 11/14(1) SBE; JEF 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/8(5) JAW; JEF 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF 11/15(5) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(3) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(6) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/28(8) JAW; JEF 11/29(4) JAW; JEF 11/30(8) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(10) JHW
TEAL species	JEF 1 rep(3)	VULTURE, Black	JAS 2 reps(15); JEF 10 reps(86); ORA 3 reps(3)
SHOVELER, Northern	JEF 7 reps(15223)	VULTURE, Turkey	JAS 3 reps(22); JEF 10 reps(76); ORA 2 reps(3)
PINTAIL, Northern	JEF 6 reps(679)	OSPREY	JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/2(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/8(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-PI 11/16(1) LW; JEF-TP 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/16(2) JAW; JEF 11/28(1) AM; JEF-TX87 11/28(1) JAW
TEAL, Green-winged	JEF 5 reps(8091)	KITE, White-tailed	JEF 6 reps(10)
CANVASBACK	JEF-TP 11/9(11) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(5) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(2) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(2) JHW	EAGLE, Bald	JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(1) JAW; JEF 11/23(1) JHW
DUCK, Ring-necked	JEF 4 reps(115)	HARRIER, Northern	JEF 14 reps(50)
SCAUP, Greater	JEF-TP 11/9(7) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/28(14) AM; JEF-TP 11/29(5) JAW	HAWK, Sharp-shinned	JEF 3 reps(4)
SCAUP, Lesser	JEF 7 reps(1710)	HAWK, Cooper's	JEF 11/2(1) JAW
SCAUP species	JEF 1 rep(1)	ACCIPITER species	ORA 11/29(1) KS
BUFFLEHEAD	JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(2) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(4) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(1) JHW	HAWK, Red-shouldered	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 8 reps(14); ORA 6 reps(7)
GOLDENEYE, Common	JEF-TP 11/29(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(2) JHW	HAWK, Red-tailed	JEF 16 reps(104); ORA 3 reps(3)
MERGANSER, Hooded	JEF-TP 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(2) JHW	CARACARA, Crested	JEF 11/2(1) JAW; JEF 11/23(1) JAW
DUCK, Ruddy	JEF 5 reps(240)	KESTREL, American	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 17 reps(120); ORA 1 rep(1)
LOON, Common	JEF 1 rep(4)	MERLIN	JEF 11/8(1) JAW; JEF 11/9(1) JAW
GREBE, Pied-billed	JEF 4 reps(17)	RAIL, Clapper	JEF 4 reps(7)
GREBE, Eared	JEF 3 reps(11)	RAIL, King	JEF-TP 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(1) JHW
PELICAN, Amer. White	JEF 7 reps(313)	SORA	JEF 2 reps(2)
PELICAN, Brown	JEF-SRSP 11/1(2) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/1(4) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/2(3) JAW; JEF 11/8(12) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/8(4) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/8(4) JAW; JEF 11/16(4) JAW; JEF-PI 11/16(10) LW; JEF-TXPT 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-PI 11/28(6) JAW	MOORHEN, Common	JEF 3 reps(3)
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 11/1(28) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/1(11) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/2(3) JAW; JEF 11/8(3) JAW; JEF-PI 11/8(100) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/8(5) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/8(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/8(100) JAW; JEF 11/16(5) JAW; JEF-PI 11/16(20) LW; JEF-SRSP 11/16(3) JAW; JEF-TX87 11/16(8) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(2) JAW; JEF-PI 11/28(17) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/28(3) AM; JEF-TXPT 11/28(10) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(1) JHW	COOT, American	JEF 5 reps(5000)
CORMORANT, Double-crested	JEF 12 reps(47)		
CORMORANT, Species	JEF 1 rep(1)		
ANHINGA	JEF 1 rep(1)		
HERON, Great Blue	JAS 2 reps(2); JEF 14 reps(50)		
EGRET, Great	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 4 reps(6); JEF 16 reps(232)		
EGRET, Snowy	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 16 reps(471); ORA 1 rep(4)		

CRANE, Sandhill JEF 11/9(15) JAW; JEF 11/22(250)
 FTAN; JEF 11/23(125) JJW; JEF 11/29(215) JAW
PLOVER, Black-bellied JEF 7 reps(61)
PLOVER, Snowy JEF-SRSP 11/1(27) JAW; JEF-
 SRSP 11/8(47) JAW; JEF 11/16(4) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/16(16)
 JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/28(17) AM; JEF-SRSP 11/28(7) JAW
PLOVER, Semipalmated JEF 3 reps(6)
PLOVER, Piping JEF-SRSP 11/1(4) JAW; JEF
 11/16(6) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/16(9) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/28(3)
 JAW
KILLDEER HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 17
 reps(218)
OYSTERCATCHER, American JEF-TXPT 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-
 TXPT 11/26(2) JAW
STILT, Black-necked JEF 8 reps(1009)
AVOCET, American JEF 8 reps(242)
YELLOWLEGS, Greater JEF 9 reps(75)
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser JEF 7 reps(89)
WILLET JEF 5 reps(108)
SANDPIPER, Spotted JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-PI
 11/16(40) LW; ORA 11/30(1) KS
CURLEW, Long-billed JEF 3 reps(9)
TURNSTONE, Ruddy JEF 1 rep(1)
SANDERLING JEF 6 reps(523)
SANDPIPER, Western JEF 4 reps(21)
SANDPIPER, Peep JEF 1 rep(50)
SANDPIPER, Least JEF 9 reps(225)
DUNLIN JEF 6 reps(163)
DOWITCHER, Short-billed JEF-TXPT 11/1(2) JAW; JEF-TXPT
 11/8(1) JAW
DOWITCHER, Long-billed JEF 3 reps(312)
DOWITCHER species JEF 4 reps(254)
SNIBE, Common JEF 3 reps(5)
GULL, Laughing JEF 13 reps(2274); ORA 1 rep(5)
GULL, Franklin's JEF-SRSP 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-
 SRSP 11/28(2) AM
GULL, Bonaparte's JEF-SRSP 11/28(14) AM
GULL, Ring-billed JEF 12 reps(1053)
GULL, Herring JEF 5 reps(15)
GULL, Lesser Black-backed JEF 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP
 11/28(1) AM
TERN, Gull-billed JEF-SRSP 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-PI
 11/8(25) JAW; JEF-TP 11/9(11) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(1)
 JAW; JEF 11/22(1) FTAN; JEF-TP 11/23(6) JAW; JEF 11/29(4)
 JAW
TERN, Caspian JEF 7 reps(134)
TERN, Royal JEF 7 reps(143)
TERN, Sandwich JEF 11/8(2) JAW
TERN, Forster's JEF 9 reps(210)
SKIMMER, Black JEF 1 rep(1)
DOVE, Rock JEF 10 reps(155); ORA 2 reps(19)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian JEF 9 reps(34)
DOVE, White-winged JEF-TP 11/9(4) JAW; JEF 11/22(3)
 JAW
DOVE, Mourning JEF 15 reps(343); ORA 2 reps(4)
DOVE, Inca HAI 1 rep(2)
OWL, Barn JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/28(1) JAW
OWL, Great Horned JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/28(1) AM
HUMMINGBIRD, Buff-bellied ORA-BC 11/16(1) JJW
HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tailed JEF-BMT 11/8(1) RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous JEF-BMT 11/8(1) RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD, *Selasphorus* HAI 11/2(1) KS; HAI 11/5(1) KS;
 HAI 11/12(1) KS; HAI 11/16(1) KS; HAI 11/30(1) KS
HUMMINGBIRD species ORA 11/6(1) SBE
KINGFISHER, Belted JEF 13 reps(49); ORA 2 reps(2)
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied JAS 3 reps(3); JEF 8 reps(14);
 ORA 9 reps(12)
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 1
 rep(1); ORA 3 reps(3)
WOODPECKER, Downy JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(8); ORA
 1 rep(1)
FLICKER, Northern JEF 4 reps(4); ORA 1 rep(1)
WOODPECKER, Pileated JEF 2 reps(3); ORA 2 reps(2)

WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern JEF-SRSP 11/28(1) AM; ORA
 11/16(1) SBE
FLYCATCHER, Least JEF-SW 11/1(1) SM
PHOEBE, Eastern JAS 2 reps(2); JEF 13 reps(59);
 ORA 4 reps(4)
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion JEF 11/2(1) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed JEF 11/1(3) JAW; JEF-SW 11/2(4)
 JAW
SHRIKE, Loggerhead JEF 17 reps(235); ORA 1 rep(2)
JAY, Blue JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(18); ORA
 3 reps(5)
CROW, American JAS 4 reps(28); JEF 3 reps(7)
CROW, Fish JEF-TP 11/9(2) JAW; JEF-TP
 11/16(41) JAW; JEF-TP 11/23(41) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(120)
 JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(200) JHW; ORA 11/8(1) SBE
CROW, species JEF 2 reps(2)
SWALLOW, Tree JAS 11/27(8) JAW; JEF 11/2(1)
 JAW; JEF-SW 11/8(20) JAW; JEF 11/9(135) JAW; JEF-TP
 11/9(25) JAW; JEF 11/15(88) JAW; JEF 11/16(6) JAW; JEF-
 SRSP 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(12) JAW; JEF-TX87
 11/16(25) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/16(100) JAW; JEF 11/22(93)
 FTAN; JEF 11/22(50) JAW; JEF 11/23(3) JAW; JEF-TP
 11/23(200) JAW; JEF-SRSP 11/28(30) AM; JEF-SRSP
 11/28(7) JAW; JEF-SW 11/28(16) AM; JEF 11/29(110) JAW;
 JEF-TP 11/29(9) JAW; JEF 11/30(3) JAW; JEF-TP 11/30(20)
 JHW
SWALLOW species JEF 2 reps(3)
CHICKADEE, Carolina HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 2 reps(3); JEF 3
 reps(4); ORA 10 reps(20)
TITMOUSE, Tufted HAI 1 rep(4); JAS 2 reps(2); ORA 9
 reps(25)
WREN, Carolina JEF 3 reps(4); ORA 2 reps(2)
WREN, House JEF-SRSP 11/8(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/8(1) JAW; JEF-SW 11/16(2) JAW
WREN, Sedge JEF-TXPT 11/8(1) JAW
WREN, Marsh JEF-SW 11/1(2) JAW; JEF-TXPT
 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW 11/2(3) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/8(12)
 JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/16(1) JAW; JEF-TP
 11/23(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/28(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(1) JAW;
 JEF-TP 11/30(1) JHW
KINGLET, Golden-crowned JEF-SW 11/28(2) JAW
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned JAS 2 reps(2); JEF 6 reps(27);
 ORA 2 reps(4)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray JEF 10 reps(60)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 3 reps(8); JAS 3 reps(9); JEF
 5 reps(8); ORA 3 reps(6)
THRUSH, Wood JEF-SRSP 11/1(1) JAW
ROBIN, American HAI 11/5(6) KS; JAS 11/15(12)
 SBE; JEF-TP 11/9(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 11/15(1) JAW; JEF-TP
 11/29(3) JAW
CATBIRD, Gray JEF-SW 11/1(15) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/2(10) JAW; JEF-TXPT 11/8(1) JAW
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 16 reps(129);
 ORA 6 reps(10)
THRASHER, Brown JEF 6 reps(13)
STARLING, European JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 10 reps(1097)
PIPIT, American JAS 1 rep(50); JEF 5 reps(328)
WARBLER, Tennessee JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/2(3) JAW; JEF-SW 11/26(1) JAW; JEF-SW 11/28(1) JAW
WARBLER, Orange-crowned JEF 5 reps(9)
WARBLER, Nashville JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/26(2) JAW; JEF-SW 11/28(1) AM
PARULA, Northern JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW
WARBLER, Magnolia JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW
WARBLER, Black-thr. Blue JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped HAI 1 rep(29); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 3
 reps(17); ORA 4 reps(18)
WARBLER, Black-thr. Green JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/1(1) SM; JEF-SW 11/26(1) JAW
WARBLER, Pine HAI 2 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(1)
WARBLER, Prairie JEF-SW 11/8(1) X; JEF-SW
 11/26(1) JAW; JEF-SW 11/28(1) AM
WARBLER, Palm JEF-SRSP 11/1(2) JAW
REDSTART, American JEF-SW 11/1(2) JAW; JEF-SW
 11/1(1) SM; JEF-SW 11/2(2) JAW

YELLOWTHROAT, Common	JEF 10 reps(33)
WARBLER, Wilson's	JEF-SW 11/1(2) JAW
SPARROW, Chipping	JAS 11/27(50) JAW; JEF-TXPT
11/8(1) JAW	
SPARROW, Vesper	JEF-TP 11/29(1) JAW
SPARROW, Savannah	JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 14 reps(295)
SPARROW, Nelson's Sharp-tail.	JEF 3 reps(27)
SPARROW, Seaside	JEF 3 reps(7)
SPARROW, Song	JAS 11/15(9) SBE; JEF-TP 11/9(1)
JAW; JEF-TP 11/16(2) JAW; JEF 11/23(1) JJW; JEF-TP	
11/23(1) JAW; JEF-TP 11/29(2) JAW	
SPARROW, Lincoln's	JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT
11/8(1) JAW	
SPARROW, Swamp	JEF 9 reps(18)
SPARROW, White-throated	JEF 1 rep(10); ORA 4 reps(17)
SPARROW, White-crowned	JEF 11/23(3) JAW; JEF 11/29(2)
JAW	
JUNCO, Dark-eyed	JAS 11/15(1) SBE; JEF-SW
11/28(1) JAW	
CARDINAL, Northern	JEF 5 reps(15); ORA 7 reps(28)
GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted	JEF-SW 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
11/2(1) JAW	
GROSBEAK, Blue	JEF-SRSP 11/1(1) JAW; JEF-SW
11/1(1) JAW	
BUNTING, Indigo	JEF-SRSP 11/1(4) JAW; JEF-SW
11/16(1) JAW	
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	JEF 10 reps(13387); ORA 3
reps(176)	
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 8 reps(43)
MEADOWLARK species	JEF 8 reps(41)
GRACKLE, Common	JEF 14 reps(2119)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	JEF 8 reps(152); ORA 1 rep(6)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed	JEF 17 reps(2035); ORA 2
reps(28)	
GRACKLE, Gt./Boat tailed	JEF 1 rep(9)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	JEF 6 reps(2749)
BLACKBIRD species	JEF 4 reps(20798)
ORIOLE, Baltimore	JEF-SW 11/2(2) JAW
SPARROW, House	HAI 2 reps(12); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF
5 reps(27)	

Number of Species 187
Number of Individuals 127,652

County Abbreviations:

HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; ORA - Orange

Location Codes:

BC - Bridge City; BMT - Beaumont; NEDR - Nederland; PI - Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TP - Tyrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP; TXPT - Road to Pilot Station at Texas Point.

Observer Abbreviations

AM - Art Mackinnon; FTAN - Field Trip to Anahuac NWR; JAW - John Whittle; JHW - John Haynes and John Whittle; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; KS - Ken Sztraky; LW - Jeannie Lanclos, Jana Whittle; RHJ - Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SBE - Sheri Bethard; SM - Steve Mayes; X - Unknown.

Bird Alerts

The western part of Jefferson County has been the place to bird for the last two months or so! Since most of the birds seems to be staying around, we are publishing details.

Sightings of adult Bald Eagles have included one at Cattail Marsh on November 9, November 16 and January 1, one on Old League Road in west Jefferson County on November 23, one on US69 in Hardin County just north of Beaumont on January 1, and another was seen in the Bessie Height Marsh area during the Orange County Christmas Count also on January 1. It is conceivable that these sightings are of the same bird but more likely there is more than one around.

Crested Caracara are almost certainly resident in the Taylor Bayou area, probably mostly in the area south of Highway 73 just

west of Taylor Bayou. However, they are now being seen further afield. For a time, one was seen regularly in the area just south of FM365 between West Port Arthur Road and US69, but we have no recent reports from there. One was seen on November 2 on Todd Road in west Jefferson County. Another was on Steinhagen Road on November 23. One was seen on the Sea Rim Christmas Count on December 28 along Highway 87 just west of Sabine Woods, and two were along Thompson Road in northwest Jefferson County near the LNVA canal on January 1.

Sandhill Cranes have become more or less expected in winter in west Jefferson County, but this year the numbers have been spectacular. Furthermore, instead of flying off into southern Liberty County each night to roost, the birds have been roosting in Jefferson County. The favored roosting locations, at which to the birds congregate each evening, arriving between 4 p.m. and dark, are near FM1406, a couple of miles north of the Jefferson-Chambers County line. Up to 2,500 Cranes have been spending their nights there, They have sometimes been east of FM1406, just south of Willis Road, between FM1406 and League Road. At other times they have been west of FM1406, south of Willis between FM1406 and Ebner (and rather distant from any road). The best way to locate the flock is by call. The characteristic calls carry a great distance.

Also in west Jefferson County are no fewer than five wintering Vermilion Flycatchers, three males and two females. Two males and a female are on Thompson Road, immediately south of the LNVA canal, at the entrance to the driveway of 4815 Thompson Road. There are medium sized oaks on either side of the driveway, and utility wires along both Thompson Road and the driveway, but the males also use the top wires of the 3 ft fence outside the oaks. The female Vermilion Flycatcher is usually just a little further south (less than 100 yards) on Thompson Road. Another pair is on Ebner Road fairly close to the closed gate at its southern end, and perhaps 200 yards north of the entrance to "World Class Waterfowlers."

A large number of Snow Geese are also in the same area, often close to South China Road about two miles from FM365. They may be on either side of the road.

If you want to bird this very active area of west Jefferson County, which has numerous other raptors, and, in wet fields, shorebirds, you should drive all the public roads from US90 in the north; Ebner Road and the Jefferson-Liberty county line on the west, South China Road to the east and the Jefferson-Chambers county line to the south. This rice farming area is about 10 miles from north to south and six miles from east to west.

During the Orange County Christmas Count on January 1, about 30 Rusty Blackbirds were found hanging around some horses at 2092 W. Bancroft Road in Orange. Bancroft Road exits FM3247 to the west at the light immediately north of IH10 (exit 875). Follow it for 1.1 miles until you see a "Load Zoned Bridge" sign and immediately beyond it, the road makes a 90 degree turn to the left. Straight ahead is a (3 to 4 ft. high) chain link fence of Burton Cemetery. You can pull off the road up to this gate and park. There are horses in small pastures around the house on your right. The birds frequent both the tops of the nearby tall trees, and from time to time come down to the horse feed area. The birds were also seen there on January 2 and 3, but not on January 4.

Credits: Sheri Bethard, John Haynes, Brian Henderson, Don Jeane, Steve Mayes, Jana Whittle

Bird Alert Updates

We maintain a list of email addresses of those who wish to receive alert updates by email. If you are not receiving the email updates and would like to, please send your email address to john.whittle@lamar.edu. Some spam filters make it difficult for some to receive these multiple addressee messages, even though the messages come to you as "blind" copies. The bird alerts are all posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

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RARE BIRD ALERTS

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) 728-6957
Texas (Houston)	(713) 369-9673
Abilene	(915) 691-8981
Austin	(512) 926-8751
Ft. Worth (N. Cent)	(817) 329-1930
Lubbock	(806) 797-6690
N. E. Texas	(903) 839-4804
Rio Grande Valley	(210) 969-2731
San Antonio	(210) 308-6788
Waco	(254) 299-8175
Louisiana	(504) 768-9874

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