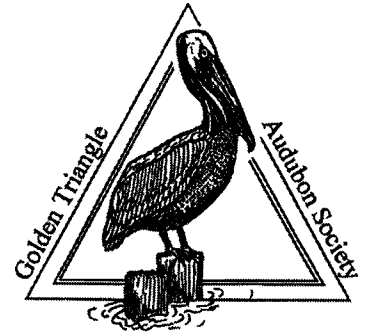


Brown Pelican

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The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 10 No. 2

February 2004

Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 19, 2004

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

Upper Texas Coast Migrants (mostly Warblers)

Dr. Dan Brooks

Dan Brooks has been Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Houston Museum of Natural Science since 1999, and is currently an Associate Faculty Member in the Biology Department at Sam Houston State University. His Ph.D. was based on the community ecology of Neotropical birds, and he graduated from Texas A&M University in 1998. Since 1985 he has been involved in over 35 research projects, and is currently co-advising students from University of Florida and University of Georgia on community ecology of Neotropical Gamebirds. Brooks serves on the Conservation Board for the World Galliforme Association (based in the U.K.).

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 More Thoughts for the New Year

Often, it seems to me that many of you are anxious to advance the cause of conservation, but are at a loss to know how to accomplish that goal. Here, then, are some suggestions. For most of us, the most valuable contribution we can make is to contribute our time. "On the ground" conservation efforts by those of you who help on Sabine Woods Work Days is very much appreciated, and represents a very significant As a practical matter, if we have to hire labor to carry out tasks there, because of the travel time and overhead and benefits costs for the contractor, it probably costs us about \$20 per person hour of actual work.

We are aware that many of you cannot physically help, or have scheduling problems. There are other things you can do. Find time to attend a public meeting and show your support for environmentally responsive course of action. It is great if you can make a comment, but those gauging public sentiment will recognize which side you are on just from your presence. Write to your elected officials and let them know what you think when an issue of importance comes up. Again, it is better to send a letter that you have composed yourself, but signing a prepared postcard or sending a short email will definitely be counted.

John A. Whittle

Sabine Woods Work Day, Saturday March 13. Please come help if you can.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 10, No.2 February 2004

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

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www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Tuesday February 10. Stark Foundation Program. "The Amazing World of Bats." Elaine Acker, Associate Executive Director of Bat Conservation International. At Lucher Theater, Orange at 7:00 p.m. Admission free.

Thursday February 19. Membership Meeting.

See front page for details.

Saturday February 21. Field Trip to Calcasieu Parish and Sabine NWR.

This month we repeat a trip that we have not undertaken in several years. The meeting time and place will be 7:30 a.m. at the Louisiana Welcome Station on the eastbound service road of IH-10, a mile or two inside Louisiana - *i.e.* a mile or two east of the state line/Sabine River bridge. We will bird the area of Calcasieu Parish south of IH-10 between Vinton and Sulphur both north and south of Highway 108, and then visit the Sabine NWR Marsh Trail 10 miles south of Hackberry (the "West Cove Wetland Walkway"). In Calcasieu Parish, we will be looking primarily for sparrows and raptors, although the area has produced other sought after birds in winter such as Vermilion Flycatcher and Couch's Kingbird. The area is also famous as the Louisiana "stronghold" of the Crested Caracara. Wintering Ferruginous and even Swainson's Hawks have been reported in years past.

The large oaks at the Headquarters of the Sabine NWR off Highway 27 in Cameron Parish have produced several good birds over the years, most recently (last year) a Townsend's Solitaire. The Marsh Trail can be relied on to produce a variety of ducks and other marsh dwelling species. There is also an observation tower.

This trip will involve a caravan of vehicles, and car pooling is highly desirable. Bring walkie-talkies if you have them. The full trip is normally operated on a loop basis and does not return to the starting point on IH-10, but returns to the Golden Triangle through Johnson's Bayou and Pleasure Island to Port Arthur. Those wishing to make a half day trip can use Highway 27 to return to IH-10 in Sulphur.

Saturday March 13. Sabine Woods Work Day. We will start about 7:30 a.m., and usually these work days do not run much beyond noon. Sabine Woods is located on Highway 87 about 4.1 miles west of the stop sign in Sabine Pass, on the north side of the highway just beyond the Petroleum Helicopters Base, and is across Highway 87 from Texas Point NWR near its western boundary. We will try to provide refreshments, but bring water and insect repellent. Also bring gloves, heavy duty pruning tools, machetes. We can use riding mowers, probably one chain saw and one or two push mowers for areas heavier equipment cannot reach.

Thursday March 18. Membership Meeting. Gerald Duhon will be our speaker. His talk will be titled "(Barely) South of the Border, Down Mexico Way."

Saturday March 20. - 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 Rettilon 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 8:45 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 to drive from Beaumont to the flats. Although it will still be early in the migration season, an opportunity will exist to visit High Island on the way back.

March 25-28. Texas Tropics Nature Festival in McAllen, Texas. This non-profit festival features expert speakers, guided field trips to all the Rio Grande Valley's best birding sites, a trade show, special events, pre and post festival tours, and there's also a festival which the McAllen Chamber of Commerce coordinates in Monterrey, Mexico immediately following. For

more information, contact the McAllen Chamber of Commerce toll free at 1-877-622-5536.

Thursday April 15. Membership Meeting. Sandy Komito will be the featured speaker. The talk will be about his Big Year in 1998 which set the present North American record of 748 birds. He notes that he originally claimed 745 while waiting for nearly three years for the various states and ABA to approve four additional birds he had sighted. They ended up approving three of them. Some brief highlights include his traveling 275,000 miles during the year and birding at least 270 days of that year.

Saturday April 12. Sea Rim SP Bird Walk. Jointly sponsored by Sea Rim State Park and Golden Triangle Audubon. Meet at Park HQ at 7:30 a.m. Easy walking (or driving) to the boardwalk at Willows. Later, drive to Sabine Woods to continue birding for those who wish. Easy walking on the boardwalks at both locations. This field trip is especially suited for not-very-experienced birders, and those who are unable to walk over rougher ground.

Sea Rim State Park is on Highway 87, 10 miles west of Sabine Pass.

Saturday May 8. Jefferson County Spring Migration Count. Contact John Whittle (john.whittle@lamar.edu or 409-722-4193) to volunteer to help in this county-wide count.

Thursday May 20. Membership Meeting. Details later.

Late May/early June. Field trip to Hardin County. We have not finalized details, but we expect to continue our very popular and very successful trips to search for breeding warblers and other species in the area of Hardin county just north of Silsbee.

New Local Hotline

New Golden Triangle Audubon telephone hotline is (409) 728-6957 or (409) 728-OWLS. This is a cell phone with voice messaging capabilities, so that the tasks associated with it can be shared!

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. We thank Andrea Billingsley, Sherry Gibson and Lu and Grady Skillern for stepping up and agreeing to provide refreshments for the February meeting. Volunteers are now urgently needed for subsequent 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!

Temporary Road Closure in Anahuac

The Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge will be closing the Shoveler Pond tour route to vehicular traffic from Monday, Feb. 9 through Saturday, Feb. 21, 2004. The popular tour route will be closed to vehicular traffic, but open to foot traffic, owing to the replacement of a water control structure in the southwest corner of the loop. Replacement of the structure will improve management, which will in turn benefit many wildlife species. The route will be reopened in time for the spring migration season.

Sponsor our Birdathon!

As most of you will know, the Chapters in Texas and Louisiana nominated me for the National Audubon Society (NAS) Board of Directors, and I was duly elected late last year.

As part of my duties, I am expected to help with fund raising. As such, I will be more than delighted to hear from anyone reading this who wishes to make a direct contribution to support the Audubon cause, either now or as a bequest in the future.

One of the most successful means of fundraising for Audubon, and the one I am most able to participate in, is a birdathon. Royce Pendergast has again graciously agreed to join with me in a Spring Birdathon.

A Birdathon is very similar to other "athons" you may be familiar with, such as telethons, walkathons, etc. The idea is for us to get up at the crack of dawn on a day in late April and make a run from the woods and lakeshores of East Texas by way of Cattail Marsh to Texas Point, Sabine Woods and Sea Rim State Park. Looking for as many species of birds as can be found. (We're aiming for at least 150 species.)

We're hoping you will sponsor us at \$.50, \$.75, or \$1.00 (or whatever amount you choose) per bird species. A flat donation is also welcome. Please take the time to make a pledge today -- your donation to our Birdathon will be earmarked to support Audubon's mission of protecting our natural heritage in Texas and the nation by supporting conservation, education and advocacy. This year, half of the funds we raise will be designated for Audubon Texas activities and programs, and the other half for NAS Checks should be made out to Audubon Texas and all contributions are, of course, tax deductible. Local businesspeople and businesses are often very receptive to this kind of fund raising and we would welcome any suggestions of where we might find receptive potential supporters. Please contact me at john.whittle@lamar.edu or 409-880-8276 (W) or 409-722-4193 (H) with your pledge and your suggestions.

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings – December 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) 880-7977. 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: Lots of interesting birds this month, including both birds seen on two of the area's Christmas Bird Counts, and in west Jefferson County. Result of two other local counts, which were conducted in January, will be included in next month's report. Common Goldeneye are generally very uncommon on our part of the Upper Texas Coast, but Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park hosted a female for a period, and more were seen on the Orange County count on January 1. Long-tailed Duck (a.k.a. Oldsquaw) were seen on the Sea Rim count.

GOOSE, White-fronted JEF 6 reps(357)
GOOSE, Snow JEF 9 reps(72743)
GOOSE, Ross's JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; JEF 12/13(2) JAW; JEF 12/23(10) JAW; JEF 12/26(6) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01
GOOSE, Canada JEF 1 rep(15)
DUCK, Wood TYL 12/20(2) TCCB
GADWALL JEF 8 reps(965)
WIGEON, American JEF 3 reps(24)
MALLARD JEF 4 reps(13)
DUCK, Mottled JEF 12/7(5) JAW; JEF 12/23(40) JAW; JEF 12/25(10) JAW; JEF 12/26(6) JAW; JEF 12/28(13) SR04; JEF 12/28(6) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/28(4) SR11; JEF-PI 12/28(20) SR01; JEF-SRSP 12/28(2) SR10
TEAL, Blue-winged JEF 7 reps(530)
SHOVELER, Northern JEF 9 reps(3529)
PINTAIL, Northern JEF 7 reps(1112)
TEAL, Green-winged JEF 5 reps(4325)
CANVASBACK JEF-PI 12/6(300) JAW; JEF 12/28(700) SR04; JEF-PI 12/28(2000) SR01
REDHEAD JEF 12/28(2) SR04
DUCK, Ring-necked JEF 4 reps(290)
SCAUP, Greater JEF-TP 12/7(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/23(3) JAW; JEF 12/28(2) SR04; JEF 12/28(1) SR07; JEF-PI 12/28(2) SR01; JEF-SRSP 12/28(1) SR10
SCAUP, Lesser JEF 8 reps(664)
SCAUP species JEF 2 reps(63)
SCOTER, White-winged JEF-SRSP 12/6(1) JAW
DUCK, Long-tailed JEF 12/28(2) SR04
BUFFLEHEAD JEF 6 reps(100)
GOLDENEYE, Common JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(1) JAW
MERGANSER, Hooded JEF-TP 12/13(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/23(4) JAW; JEF 12/28(5) SR04; JEF 12/28(4) SR07; JEF-TXPT 12/28(3) SR06
MERGANSER, Red-breasted JEF 1 rep(6)
DUCK species JEF 1 rep(4)
DUCK, Ruddy JEF 5 reps(1150)
BOBWHITE, Northern JEF 1 rep(1)
LOON, Common JEF 2 reps(2)
GREBE, Pied-billed JEF 10 reps(62)
GREBE, Horned JEF-SRSP 12/6(5) JAW; JEF-PI 12/28(3) SR01
GREBE, Eared JEF 4 reps(15)
PELICAN, Amer. White JEF 9 reps(1458)
PELICAN, Brown JEF-PI 12/6(2) JAW; JEF-SRSP 12/6(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/6(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 12/6(2) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF 12/28(4) SR07; JEF-PI 12/28(12) SR01; JEF-SRSP 12/28(6) SR10; JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08; JEF-TX87 12/28(7) SR05; JEF-TXPT 12/28(8) SR06; JEF-TX87 12/30(3) JAW; JEF-TXPT 12/30(1) JAW
CORMORANT, Neotropic JEF-PI 12/6(7) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/6(11) JAW; JEF-TXPT 12/6(13) JAW; JEF 12/7(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(5) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/23(2) JAW; JEF 12/28(10) SR04; JEF 12/28(25) SR05; JEF 12/28(18) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/28(3) SR11; JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01; JEF-SRSP 12/28(10) SR10; JEF-TX87 12/28(1) SR05; JEF-TXPT 12/28(6) SR06; JEF 12/30(17) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/30(10) JAW

CORMORANT, Double-crested JEF 13 reps(268)
CORMORANT, Species JEF 1 rep(1)
ANHINGA JEF 12/7(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(2) SR05
BITTERN, American JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF 12/28(3) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/28(6) SR11
HERON, Great Blue HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 16 reps(102)
EGRET, Great JEF 16 reps(415); ORA 1 rep(1)
EGRET, Snowy JEF 15 reps(132)
HERON, Little Blue JEF 7 reps(17)
HERON, Tricolored JEF 11 reps(45)
EGRET, Cattle JEF 8 reps(39)
HERON, Green JEF 12/28(1) SR05; JEF-MCFW 12/28(1) SR11; JEF-SRSP 12/28(1) SR10
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr. JEF 4 reps(7)
IBIS, White JEF-PI 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/7(50) JAW; JEF 12/13(106) JAW; JEF 12/23(80) JAW; JEF 12/25(125) JAW; JEF 12/26(385) JAW; JEF 12/28(65) SR04; JEF 12/28(250) SR05; JEF-MCFW 12/28(10) SR11; JEF 12/30(200) FTWJ
IBIS, White-faced JEF-TP 12/7(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(5) JAW; JEF-TP 12/23(1) JAW; JEF 12/25(6) JAW; JEF 12/26(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF-TX87 12/28(2) SR05
IBIS, Plegadis JEF 12/7(346) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(33) JAW; JEF 12/13(96) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(10) JAW; JEF 12/23(85) JAW; JEF 12/25(705) JAW; JEF 12/26(633) JAW; JEF 12/28(190) SR04; JEF 12/28(250) SR05; JEF 12/30(2100) FTWJ
SPOONBILL, Roseate JEF 12/6(5) JAW; JEF-PI 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/7(10) JAW; JEF 12/26(2) JAW; JEF 12/28(32) SR04; JEF 12/28(14) SR05
VULTURE, Black HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(44); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(102)
VULTURE, Turkey HAI 1 rep(17); JEF 12 reps(69); ORA 1 rep(5); TYL 1 rep(8)
OSPREY JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01; JEF-TX87 12/28(1) SR05
KITE, White-tailed JEF 4 reps(6)
HARRIER, Northern JEF 17 reps(104)
HAWK, Sharp-shinned JEF 6 reps(6)
HAWK, Cooper's JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF 12/28(2) SR05; JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01; JEF-TX87 12/28(2) SR05
HAWK, Red-shouldered JEF 5 reps(7); ORA 3 reps(3); TYL 1 rep(1)
HAWK, White-tailed JEF 12/13(1) JAW
HAWK, Red-tailed HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 16 reps(124); TYL 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Red-tailed (Krider's) JEF-SRSP 12/6(1) JAW
CARACARA, Crested JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08
KESTREL, American HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 14 reps(114); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(2)
MERLIN JEF 12/13(1) JAW
FALCON, Peregrine JEF 12/7(1) JAW; JEF-MCFW 12/28(1) SR11
RAIL, Yellow JEF-MCFW 12/28(3) SR11
RAIL, Clapper JEF 4 reps(8)
RAIL, King JEF 12/28(2) SR05
RAIL, Virginia JEF 12/28(5) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/28(3) SR11; JEF-MCFW 12/28(2) SR12

SORA JEF-TP 12/7(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/23(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF-MCFW 12/28(2) SR11; JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01; JEF-SRSP 12/28(1) SR10
MOORHEN, Common JEF 7 reps(49)
COOT, American JEF 9 reps(3361)
CRANE, Sandhill JEF 12/6(60) GD; JEF 12/7(120) GD; JEF 12/13(20) JAW; JEF 12/23(455) JAW; JEF 12/25(1205) JJW; JEF 12/26(2500) JAW; JEF 12/30(2500) FTWJ
PLOVER, Black-bellied JEF 9 reps(136)
PLOVER, Snowy JEF 12/6(15) JAW; JEF-SRSP 12/6(29) JAW; JEF-SRSP 12/28(43) SR10; JEF 12/30(3) JAW; JEF-SRSP 12/30(29) JAW
PLOVER, Semipalmated JEF 4 reps(45)
PLOVER, Piping JEF-SRSP 12/6(3) JAW; JEF 12/28(6) SR07; JEF-SRSP 12/28(6) SR10
KILLDEER JEF 14 reps(681)
STILT, Black-necked JEF 10 reps(475)
AVOCET, American JEF 5 reps(834)
YELLOWLEGS, Greater JEF 6 reps(699)
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser JEF 5 reps(29)
WILLET JEF 6 reps(195)
SANDPIPER, Spotted JEF-TP 12/23(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR05; JEF-PI 12/28(2) SR01; JEF-TXPT 12/28(2) SR06; JEF-TX87 12/30(1) JAW
WHIMBREL JEF 12/28(6) SR07
CURLEW, Long-billed JEF 7 reps(210)
GODWIT, Marbled JEF 12/28(3) SR07
TURNSTONE, Ruddy JEF 3 reps(18)
KNOT, Red JEF 12/28(1) SR07
SANDERLING JEF 5 reps(394)
SANDPIPER, Western JEF 8 reps(187)
SANDPIPER, Least JEF 9 reps(304)
DUNLIN JEF 10 reps(2829)
SANDPIPER, Stilt JAW JEF-TP 12/7(2) JAW; JEF 12/26(4)
DOWITCHER, Short-billed SR01 JEF 12/28(4) SR07; JEF-PI 12/28(75)
DOWITCHER, Long-billed JEF 5 reps(4412)
DOWITCHER species JEF 3 reps(2180)
SNIPE, Common JEF 6 reps(75)
WOODCOCK, American JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08
GULL, Laughing JEF 10 reps(1333)
GULL, Bonaparte's JEF 4 reps(191)
GULL, Ring-billed JEF 14 reps(2098)
GULL, Herring JEF 8 reps(84)
TERN, Gull-billed JEF-SRSP 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/26(22) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR07
TERN, Caspian JEF 4 reps(71)
TERN, Royal JEF 5 reps(49)
TERN, Sandwich JEF-SRSP 12/6(1) JAW
TERN, Common JEF-TX87 12/30(1) JAW
TERN, Forster's JEF 9 reps(137)
DOVE, Rock JEF 5 reps(109)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian JEF-TX87 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/7(5) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/7(10) JAW; JEF-BMT 12/9(1) RAJ; JEF 12/11(2) JAW; JEF 12/23(3) JAW; JEF-SW 12/28(7) SR08; JEF-TX87 12/28(66) SR05; JEF-TXPT 12/28(11) SR06
DOVE, White-winged JEF 12/28(1) SR05; JEF-TXPT 12/28(3) SR06
DOVE, Mourning HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 14 reps(394); ORA 2 reps(2); TYL 1 rep(1)
OWL, Barn JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08
OWL, Great Horned JEF 12/23(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR05; JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08
OWL, Burrowing JEF-MCFW 12/22(1) MCF
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous JEF-BMT 12/8(1) RAJ
KINGFISHER, Belted JEF 17 reps(55); ORA 1 rep(1)
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied HAI 1 rep(11); JEF 5 reps(7); ORA 9 reps(13); TYL 1 rep(1)
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied HAI 1 rep(10); JEF 3 reps(4); ORA 1 rep(1)
WOODPECKER, Downy HAI 1 rep(7); JEF 11 reps(26); ORA 2 reps(2); TYL 1 rep(1)
WOODPECKER, Hairy HAI 12/20(2) TCCB
FLICKER, Northern HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 4 reps(5); ORA 2 reps(2)

WOODPECKER, Pileated HAI 1 rep(6); ORA 2 reps(3); TYL 1 rep(2)
PHOEBE, Eastern HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 16 reps(82); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(4)
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion JEF 12/7(1) JAW; JEF 12/13(1) JAW; JEF 12/23(2) JAW; JEF 12/25(2) JJW; JEF 12/26(4) JAW; JEF 12/30(3) FTWJ
SHRIKE, Loggerhead JEF 17 reps(207); ORA 2 reps(2)
VIREO, White-eyed JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01; TYL 12/20(1) TCCB
VIREO, Blue-headed HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(9); TYL 1 rep(1)
JAY, Blue HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 6 reps(36); ORA 11 reps(29); TYL 1 rep(1)
CROW, American HAI 1 rep(44); JEF 1 rep(6); TYL 1 rep(14)
CROW, Fish JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) SR04
SWALLOW, Tree JEF-TP 12/7(30) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(200) JAW; JEF 12/23(2) JAW; JEF 12/28(9) SR02; JEF 12/28(30) SR04; JEF 12/28(6) SR05; JEF 12/28(2) SR07; JEF-SRSP 12/28(1) SR10; JEF-TX87 12/28(8) SR05; JEF 12/30(3) FTWJ
CHICKADEE, Carolina HAI 1 rep(26); JEF 8 reps(18); ORA 11 reps(15); TYL 1 rep(9)
TITMOUSE, Tufted HAI 1 rep(27); JEF 3 reps(3); ORA 12 reps(17); TYL 1 rep(1)
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed HAI 12/20(11) TCCB
WREN, Carolina HAI 1 rep(9); JEF 6 reps(10); TYL 1 rep(3)
WREN, House HAI 12/20(1) TCCB; JEF-SW 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/7(3) GD; JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF 12/28(8) SR05; JEF-SRSP 12/28(2) SR10; JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08
WREN, Sedge JEF 12/7(4) GD; JEF 12/28(5) SR05; JEF 12/28(48) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/28(13) SR11; JEF-MCFW 12/28(11) SR12; JEF-TXPT 12/28(2) SR06
WREN, Marsh JEF-TXPT 12/6(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/13(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(2) SR04; JEF-PI 12/28(1) SR01; JEF-SRSP 12/28(1) SR10; JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08; JEF-TXPT 12/28(2) SR06
KINGLET, Golden-crowned HAI 12/20(2) TCCB
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned HAI 1 rep(22); JEF 12 reps(79); TYL 1 rep(2)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray JEF 12 reps(104); ORA 1 rep(4)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(45); TYL 1 rep(8)
THRUSH, Hermit HAI 12/20(5) TCCB; JEF 12/28(1) SR05; JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08; JEF-TX87 12/28(1) SR05
ROBIN, American HAI 12/20(244) TCCB; JEF 12/28(24) SR05; JEF-TXPT 12/28(1) SR06; ORA 12/24(1) SBE; TYL 12/20(202) TCCB
CATBIRD, Gray HAI 12/20(3) TCCB; JEF 12/28(1) SR04; JEF 12/28(2) SR05; JEF-PI 12/28(2) SR01; TYL 12/20(1) TCCB
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 13 reps(88); ORA 3 reps(4); TYL 1 rep(2)
THRASHER, Brown HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 4 reps(17)
STARLING, European JEF 12 reps(945); TYL 1 rep(10)
PIPIT, American JEF 10 reps(236)
WAXWING, Cedar HAI 1 rep(30); JEF 1 rep(10); TYL 1 rep(21)
WARBLER, Orange-crowned HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 8 reps(50)
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped HAI 1 rep(39); JEF 14 reps(255); ORA 3 reps(8); TYL 1 rep(24)
WARBLER, Pine HAI 1 rep(6); JEF 5 reps(11); TYL 1 rep(5)
WARBLER, Prairie JEF-SW 12/28(1) SR08
WARBLER, Palm JEF-PI 12/28(2) SR01
YELLOWTHROAT, Common JEF 9 reps(45)
SPARROW, Chipping HAI 1 rep(50); JEF 5 reps(112); TYL 1 rep(60)
SPARROW, Field JEF-TX87 12/28(1) SR05
SPARROW, Vesper JEF 12/7(1) GD; JEF 12/13(1) JAW
SPARROW, Savannah JEF 15 reps(647)
SPARROW, LeConte's JEF 12/6(2) GD; JEF 12/7(5) GD; JEF 12/28(1) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/28(2) SR11

SPARROW, Nelson's Sharp-tl.	JEF 2 reps(7)
SPARROW, Seaside	JEF 4 reps(37)
SPARROW, Song	JEF 3 reps(19)
SPARROW, Lincoln's	JEF 12/7(3) GD; JEF 12/28(5) SR05;
	JEF-SW 12/28(2) SR08
SPARROW, Swamp	JEF 13 reps(98); TYL 1 rep(1)
SPARROW, White-throated	HAI 1 rep(15); JEF 7 reps(49); ORA 7
	reps(12); TYL 1 rep(6)
SPARROW, White-crowned	JEF 12/7(8) GD; JEF 12/28(5) SR05;
	JEF-PI 12/28(12) SR01; JEF 12/30(10) FTWJ
JUNCO, Dark-eyed	HAI 1 rep(1)
CARDINAL, Northern	HAI 1 rep(26); JEF 12 reps(58); ORA
	14 reps(59); TYL 1 rep(2)
BUNTING, Painted	JEF-BMT 12/31(1) X
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 15 reps(70,891);
	ORA 2 reps(5); TYL 1 rep(10)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	JEF 7 reps(50)
MEADOWLARK species	JEF 9 reps(60)
BLACKBIRD, Rusty	TYL 12/20(5) TCCB
BLACKBIRD, Brewer's	JEF 12/13(3) JAW; JEF 12/23(6)
	JAW
GRACKLE, Common	JEF 5 reps(5431); ORA 1 rep(18);
	TYL 1 rep(10)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	JEF 10 reps(496)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed	JEF 9 reps(836)
GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed	JEF 3 reps(6050)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	JEF 5 reps(37627)
BLACKBIRD species	JEF 2 reps(5200)
FINCH, House	JEF-TXPT 12/28(5) SR06
GOLDFINCH, American	HAI 1 rep(24); JEF 2 reps(7)
SPARROW, House	JEF 4 reps(130)
Number of Species	182
Number of Individuals	259054

County Abbreviations:

HAI - Hardin; JEF - Jefferson; ORA - Orange; TYL - Tyler

Location Codes

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

Observer Abbreviations

FTWJ - Field Trip to West Jefferson County; GD - Gerald Duhon; JAW - John Whittle; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; MCF - McFaddin and Texas Pt NWRs (Patrick Walther); RAJ - Rose Ann Jordan; SBE - Sheri Berthard; SR01 - Sea Rim CBC Area 1; SR02 - Area 2; SR04 - Area 4; SR05 - Area 5; SR06 - Area 6; SR07 - Area 7; SR08 - Area 8; SR10 - Area 10; SR11 - Area 11; SR12 - Area 12; TCCB - Turkey Creek CBC

Bird Alerts

The western part of Jefferson County still has been the place to bird for the last two months or so! Unfortunately, however, the Sandhill Cranes, the big attraction for many of you, have, for the most part, moved elsewhere. There are still a few being seen, but eight or ten rather than 2,500. Not nearly as spectacular! It is not clear where the cranes are currently roosting, but it does not appear to be anywhere in Jefferson County or in the nearby northeast corner of Chambers County or the south east corner of Liberty County.

Bald Eagles have been a little more elusive of late, although we have a report from Gerald Duhon of an adult on the south part of South China Road on January 31. This area is near an extensively wooded area, with pine trees predominating, along the banks and flood plain of Ground Bridge Gully where it runs through the Gilbert Ranch. There are no public roads through this area - indeed we believe they are few roads of any kind - and it seems likely that this provides a preferred habitat for eagles.

The two males and one female Vermilion Flycatchers on Thompson Road, immediately south of the LNVA canal, at the entrance to the driveway of 4815 Thompson Road continue to be easy to find. 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 further south on Thompson Road, ranging as far as the corner where it turns south again after a short jog to the east. The male that was seen 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," has not been detected in a while, although the female is still around, typically some distance west of the road.

The large numbers of Snow Geese are also still around in the same general area, but seem to have moved into nearby Liberty County, possibly to escape hunting pressure. The area is also winter home of large numbers of sparrows. The vast majority of them are Savannah Sparrows, but White-crowned, Swamp and Vesper are also seen. It seems that the species other than Savannah are more partial to areas that have bushes and small trees. On January 31, Gerald Duhon found several Palm Warblers in woods on South China Road.

To bird this very active area of west Jefferson County, 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.

The approximately 30 Rusty Blackbirds that were found on the Orange County Christmas Count hanging around some horses at 2092 W. Bancroft Road in Orange were seen through mid-January. We have no subsequent reports from the area. 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 numbers of ducks in Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park have diminished from early January peaks, probably reflecting the end of the duck hunting season, with subsequent dispersal of the ducks out from the no-hunting areas. The largest number of ducks continues to be in cell 4. See www.cattailmarsh.org for a map.

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. There is nothing we can do if your ISP has filters which block multiple addressee messages, except encourage you to complain that messages you want are being blocked. We have experienced problems with aol, Roadrunner, and various SBC addresses. The bird alerts are all posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Correction to Sea Rim Count Report

Unfortunately, the report in last month's Brown Pelican contained a few data entry errors. Please change the overall count totals for the following species to: Savannah Sparrow 141; LeConte's Sparrow 3; Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow 7; Seaside Sparrow 37; Red-winged Blackbird 1512; Eastern Meadowlark 28; Boat-tailed Grackle 456, and the total for the count to 19,633.

Field Trip to West Harris County, 17 January 2004

Torrential rains and threatening skies could not stop a few determined birders from traveling to western Harris County for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society's annual trip to the Katy Prairie. Things did not start off well as the group drove through heavy sheets of rain on the way to Houston. Earlier weather predictions were dire for Saturday convincing most birders to sleep late instead of making the trip but the rain ended around sunrise and the day, though gray, was still fine for birding.

Past trips to Katy Prairie have started with a sparrow hunt on Gummert Road. Alas, a pre-trip email to David Bradford revealed that our sparrow fields are now a subdivision. This great birding area is disappearing at an alarming rate, being swallowed by suburban Houston. Thankfully, groups like the Katy Prairie Conservancy are trying to slow this trend as best they can and the area still holds great birding opportunities.

The start this year was Bear Creek Park. A well known hotspot in Houston, several specialty birds were our target in this park. Much of the park and its trails were inaccessible due to flooding (some of the park had become a swift flowing river!) but the rest still produced good birds. Swarms of Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice along with Eastern Bluebirds and Orange-crowned Warblers greeted us. A male Vermilion Flycatcher provided a distant look. Merlins have been reported in good numbers from this park and the group got good looks at two perched in the tops of the trees. A flock of blackbirds revealed at least one (and possibly more) obvious Rusty Blackbird. Good numbers of American Robins were also located along with Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Cedar Waxwings and Wood Ducks.

Leaving the park and heading into more rural areas, perched Red-tailed Hawks became almost as obvious as the numerous real estate signs. A large flock of geese was found off a busy road, containing both Snow and Greater White-fronted. Savannah Sparrows and Vesper Sparrow were noted on the roadside. Our "Night-Heron" pond, however, lived up to its tradition giving good looks at Black-crowned Night-Herons. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Lincoln's Sparrow were also located.

Longenbaugh Road is another Katy Prairie hotspot. This road borders wet fields known for harboring large numbers of waterfowl, sparrows and, often, Bald Eagles. The waterfowl cooperated with hundreds of ducks evident. Prominent among them were the large numbers of Northern Pintails, Northern Shovelers and Green-winged Teal. A Great Horned Owl was spotted, perched up prominently. The sparrows did not show (perhaps still recovering from the night's bad weather) and we struck out on the Eagle but the waterfowl were worth the stop.

Warren Lake is another must stop on this trip. Large numbers of waterfowl of numerous species call this lake home in winter. More Pintails and Shovelers mixed with Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy Ducks, Ring-necked Ducks and Bufflehead. Anhinga were seen perched in trees drying their wings. Huge American White Pelicans cruised around the lake along with the much smaller Pied-billed Grebes.

Even without Bald Eagles, the Katy Prairie always provides a good show of raptors. Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels are the most obvious but other species can

be found with diligence. On this day, Red-shouldered Hawk was located along with both of our local Accipiters, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks. Northern Harriers were numerous and excellent looks were had at White-tailed Hawks (hard to get in the Golden Triangle). Though we missed our nation's symbol, we did have the national bird of Mexico in good numbers. The Crested Caracara is becoming easier to find on the upper Texas coast and this unique scavenger was seen at numerous points on the field trip.

Other good birds seen on the day included large numbers of Wilson's Snipe, a small group of Sandhill Cranes, lots of Eastern Meadowlarks and flocks of Brewer's Blackbirds. We missed some of the rarities recently reported from the area including Great Kiskadee, Harris's Sparrow and Ferruginous Hawk. However, one of the roads traveled in the afternoon, produced great looks at a Couch's Kingbird proving once again that the Katy Prairie's reputation as a birding mecca is well earned.

The following birds were recorded on the trip: Pied-billed Grebe (11); Ring-billed Gull (3); Anhinga (2); Double-crested Cormorant (51); American White Pelican (45); Mallard (11); Gadwall (250); American Wigeon (8); Green-winged Teal (125); Blue-winged Teal (2); Northern Shoveler (1059); Northern Pintail (6114); Wood Duck (1); Lesser Scaup (4); Ring-necked Duck (10); Bufflehead (3); Ruddy Duck (30); Snow Goose (6855); Ross's Goose (36); Greater White-fronted Goose (201); (Cackling) Canada Goose (2); Goose Species (500); Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (43); White Ibis (109); Plegadis species Ibis (201); Great Blue Heron (7); Great Egret (27); Snowy Egret (6); Cattle Egret (3); Black-crowned Night-Heron (7); Sandhill Crane (28); American Coot (20); Black-necked Stilt (1); Wilson's Snipe (130); Long-billed Dowitcher (35); Dowitcher species (5); Least Sandpiper (22); Dunlin (50); Greater Yellowlegs (27); Long-billed Curlew (4); Killdeer (310); Northern Bobwhite (1); Rock Pigeon (27); Eurasian Collared-Dove (4); Mourning Dove (223); Turkey Vulture (36); Black Vulture (38); Northern Harrier (13); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Cooper's Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (64); Red-shouldered Hawk (1); White-tailed Hawk (3); Merlin (2); American Kestrel (24); Crested Caracara (8); Great Horned Owl (2); Belted Kingfisher (3); Downy Woodpecker (10); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (5); Northern Flicker (2); Couch's Kingbird (1); Eastern Phoebe (9); Vermilion Flycatcher (1); Blue Jay (10); American Crow (19); European Starling (409); Brown-headed Cowbird (16); Red-winged Blackbird (40); Eastern Meadowlark (124); Rusty Blackbird (1); Brewer's Blackbird (30); Common Grackle (125); Great-tailed Grackle (325); American Goldfinch (2); Vesper Sparrow (4); Savannah Sparrow (69); White-throated Sparrow (6); Lincoln's Sparrow (1); Swamp Sparrow (3); Northern Cardinal (12); Cedar Waxwing (50); Loggerhead Shrike (54); Yellow-rumped Warbler (24); House Sparrow (57); American Pipit (17); Northern Mockingbird (59); Brown Thrasher (1); Carolina Wren (3); Wren species (1); Tufted Titmouse (6); Carolina Chickadee (8); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2); American Robin (54); Eastern Bluebird (22). 94 species.

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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
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N. E. Texas	(903) 839-4804
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