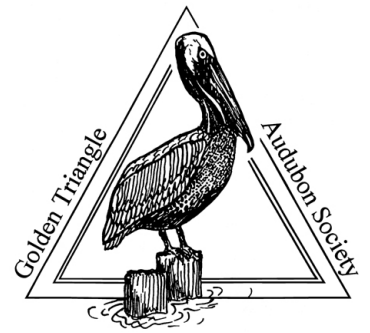


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 19 No. 2

February 2013

**Membership Meeting
Thursday February 21, 2013
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont 7:00 p.m.
Pacific Pelagic Birding
John Mariani**

John grew up in Northern California, where he started birding as a teenager. Since then he has traveled all over North America in search of birds, taught birding classes and led field trips for Santa Clara Valley (better known as "Silicon Valley") Audubon Society, and have been on so many pelagic trips that he claims he can't remember them all. After 40 years of living in California, he moved to Southeast Texas in 2003. He presently works for the City of Beaumont's Human Resources Dept. He is also an artist who paints birds and other wildlife.

His talk is going to be about pelagic birding, with the focus on California's Monterey Bay. He plans to do a sort of virtual pelagic trip from harbor to far offshore and back again, where you get to see all the birds and mammals without anybody getting wet, cold, exhausted, or seasick.

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. sharp. A light supper will be available from 6:15 p.m.

The Upcoming Spring Season

As winter gives way to spring, our activities begin to focus on the upcoming migration of neotropical songbirds, arguably the most exciting time for birding locally. It will not be long before we will be watching the stream of colorful warblers, vireos, orioles as they arrive and rest after crossing or circumnavigating the Gulf of Mexico en route to their more northerly breeding grounds. On page 2 are details of our work day at Sabine Woods, scheduled for March 9. Please come and assist in preparing the Woods if you are able.

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Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Important Note: Field Trip notices published here should always be regarded as needing confirmation just before the date. We want to be able to take advantage of any good concentrations of interesting birds and to adjust in cases where access has changed. Changes will always be posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. Confirmation of the location will also normally be available at the Membership Meeting that is usually, but not always, two days prior to each trip, or by contacting Field Trip Committee chair, Steve Mayes at 409-722-5807 or sgmayes@hotmail.com

Thursday February 21, 2013. Membership Meeting. John Mariani on Pelagic Birding in California. Full details on p.1.

Saturday February 23, 2013. Field Trip to Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana looking principally for sparrows and waterfowl, although there have been interesting raptors in the area. We will meet in the parking lot in front of the Louisiana Welcome Station on IH-10 one and a half miles east of the state line/Sabine River at 8:00 AM.

We have not yet decided on the exact route we will take. This will be decided nearer the time on the basis of scouting reports. However, it is likely that we will return to Texas and the Golden Triangle via Highway 82 from Johnson Bayou across to Pleasure Island, so car pooling – strongly encouraged – will need to be organized in advance as we will not be returning to the Welcome Station. This will be mainly a driving trip.

Saturday March 9, 2013. Sabine Woods Work Day. Please put this date on your calendar. We will prepare the Woods for the upcoming spring migration season. As usual, we will want to mow all the trails and generally prepare the woods for the influx of spring birders. If we have not completed the task before then, we will have some additional saplings to plant.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank the following for bringing refreshments: Lynn Otto, Jean Beavens, the Davis's, Sherry Gibson, the Giglios, Cindy Harland, the Kelley's, Steve Kuritz, Steve Mayes, Phil Rogers and the Staffords. **We need volunteers to bring items for all the remaining spring 2013 meetings.** Please do not wait until the last minute to volunteer! We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! Even if you would like to bring drinks and cookies or something similar, please call Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193 (or email her at janafw@aol.com) **as far in advance as possible.** Please help if you can! For February, desserts are already taken care of by a generous donation from Lu Skillern Keeler.

Saturday March 16, 2013. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. This is the Saturday BEFORE the Membership Meeting.

Important Note: Galveston County operates a parking permit program on the Bolivar Peninsula. Any one can drive on the beach for free. But if you park on the beach except for a few short stretches, you must have a parking permit on your windshield. The fee for the permit is \$10.00 a year and permits are obtainable from most merchants on the Bolivar Peninsula. (During January and February ONLY, permits may be purchased at a discounted fee of \$5 by mail from Galveston County Parks Department, 4102 Main St, La Marque, TX 77568. Enclose payment and a stamped self addressed envelope with your request.)

This trip will occur as spring shorebird migration is getting well under way, but while the wintering birds are mostly still present. Bolivar Flats is an important shore-bird location. We know that a lot of birders are intimidated by shorebirds, but they are not nearly as difficult to identify as is sometimes alleged! This trip offers an opportunity to compare many of the "true" shorebirds with lots of help in identifying them.

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). Turn left (the opposite way to Loop 108) along Rettilon Road. At the beach, if conditions permit, turn right (west) about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. It takes at least one and a half hours to drive from the Golden Triangle; more if you bird on the way! We will 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.

Some walking is necessary on this field trip. How much depends on how much mud flat is exposed, and this depends on both the tide and the winds that have prevailed over the previous day or so. There is a low tide on March 16 at 6:01 AM and a high tide at 12:58 PM. Usually we stay on dry or moist sand, but sometimes we might want to cross shallow channels.

Depending on the mud flat conditions, we may visit to the North Jetty to view the birds from that side.

We expect to stop at Rollover Pass and High Island on the way back. We will check in High Island for any "very early" Neotropic songbird migrants. Bring drinks and lunch (or buy locally), sunscreen and insect repellent.

Thursday March 21, 2013. Membership Meeting. Details in next issue.

Saturday March 23, 2013. Marsh Madness at McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge. Full details in next month's issue.



EarthShare of Texas represents Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll contribution programs in workplaces throughout Texas. For more information about how you can support Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society at your workplace, call 1-800-GREENTX, or visit www.earthshare-texas.org.

Membership Dues

Effective January 1, all memberships will run from January through December. Membership dues will remain at \$15 per year. You may pay at the February meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page.

Dues for all members will be for the period ending on December. For 2013, if you wish, you may deduct \$1.25 from your 2013 dues for each month remaining on your existing membership. However, if you paid in August 2012 or later, we will consider your existing membership to run through December 2013, to follow the system we will use for future new members. Going forward, the memberships of new members joining in August or later in the year will extend to the end of the following calendar year. For new members joining National Audubon using the membership blank printed on the back page of each printed issue of the *Brown Pelican*, we receive a rebate of the entire first year's national dues, and no Chapter dues are expected for that first year.

As a reminder, dues are voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the Chapter's official territory, which is defined by zip codes, but basically covers all of Jefferson, Orange and Hardin Counties and one or two zip codes adjacent to these counties. We do welcome members in other nearby counties!

Your dues cover the cost of printing and mailing the *Brown Pelican* to you, and help fund our other activities. We urge you to help us do more by receiving your *Brown Pelican* electronically if you do not already. We recommend you letting us send you a PDF copy as an attachment to an email, although we do also post the Newsletter on the GTAS website at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. The typical issue is about 300 KB so it is not a large file. (This could change in the future if we increase the content and/or include photographs.) Please send an email to johnawhittle@aol.com with your request, including the name we are currently send the printed copy to, and the email address you want us to use.

Christmas Count Reports

Lacking any extra space in this issue, we have posted Christmas Count results and narrative accounts for several local counts on the web-site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. These are posted in the form of PDF files. Go to the web site and click of Reports on the menu bar across the top.

Stop Press

Further to the article of the next page, we can now indicate what we learned from Sumita Prasad's banding of some of the hummingbirds in the Whittles' and Harlan Stewart's yards on February 2nd.

In all, ten birds were banded, seven at the Whittles' and three at Harlan Stewart's. The adult male Rufous Hummingbird at the Whittles' proved to already have a band! Full details of when and where it was banded are not yet available, but it was banded somewhere in the Greater New Orleans area.

A "new" immature "Rufous/Allen's" at Harlan's proved to be an Allen's Hummingbird, the second known record of an Allen's in Jefferson County. The immature male "Rufous/Allen's" at the Whittles' could not be identified with certainty to species, because it was the process of molting the tail feathers critical to identification. It had shed all of its tail feathers except R3 and R4 on one side. R1 and R5 are needed to make the identification. All the secondary features of the bird pointed to Allen's, but it must remain a "Rufous/Allen's" for now.

The female Buff-bellied Hummingbird at the Whittles' has been shown in photographs to have a band, but only three of the numbers on the band can be read. These three are consistent with it being the bird banded last February at the Whittles' but it was not recaptured. None of the at least two Broad-tailed Hummingbirds at the Whittles' were captured, but several Black-chinned Hummingbirds were.

We will have more details in next month's *Brown Pelican*.

Hummer Homes Field Trip 2013

The Hummingbird Tour was a wonderful event. What a thrill to be able to see so many hummingbirds in the dead of winter. It all started around 8:00 AM on Saturday, January 26th. The morning began very, very foggy. We had two people who braved the fog for an hour and a half, and others who endured 30 minutes of anxious travel. Thankfully, 16 people arrived safely at the Whittle's house in Nederland to tour the yards of four different hummer homes. This is the third year for us to tour hummer homes' yards in January. The first two years we had it on the Friday after our January meetings. Holding the tour on a Saturday this time just seemed to be better, so from now on we will try to do it on the 4th Saturday of January.

At the Whittles' house, some people sat inside in chairs and observed hummers through the kitchen window while others sat outside to see hummers and feeder birds. Hummingbirds that were seen and photographed at the Whittles' house were: Buff-bellied (one female), Rufous (one adult male), Broad-tailed (two), Black-chinned (two), Ruby-throated (one), and Rufous/Allen's (one immature male that may be an Allen's). The Buff-bellied was banded last year in February at this house and has returned again this year. It has been there for about two months so far. Birds that were seen in the yard were Broad-tailed and Rufous Hummingbirds, Red-breasted Nuthatch, House Finch, Pine Warbler, Goldfinch, White-winged Dove, House Sparrow, Tree Swallows, Blue Jay, and American Robins, as well as Merlin, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Herring Gull fly-overs. All of those birds were seen in 90 minutes.

We loaded up in our cars and drove a couple of miles to Harlan Stewart's home. There we saw one male Buff-bellied that had a brighter color than the female at the Whittle's house, one immature male Rufous, and two Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds (one female, one immature male). Above high in the sky were an adult Red-shouldered Hawk and an immature Red-shouldered Hawk. They were soaring and gave people great looks. Also there were Tree Swallows and Orange-crowned Warblers as well as a European Starling. One of the most interested things that happened there was that the male Buff-bellied hummer made its very distinctive "mew" sound occasionally and we all got to hear it. It was an awesome sound!

We loaded up in our cars again and drove to Steve Kuritz's home in Beaumont. There we saw at least three hummingbirds, all Rufous/Allen's, with one of them almost certainly an immature male Rufous, lots of great plants, a couple of mockingbirds, a few House Sparrows, and one Red-tailed Hawk with a missing tail feather that flew very low and it gave everyone really great views.

We loaded up for the third time and drove to Lumberton (Hardin County rather than Jefferson then) to the house of John Mariani. At John's house we saw American Goldfinch and Pine Siskin as soon as we got out of our cars. After that, we saw what appeared to be an *Archilochus* hummer that might have been a Broad-tailed. At least two other hummers were Rufous/Allen's as far as we know. This was the yard

that yielded the most species of birds for us. Here are the birds that we saw there other than the ones listed already. Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Sapsucker, Carolina Wren, Carolina Chickadees, Chipping Sparrows, Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Rock Pigeon, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Pine Warbler, Orange-crowned Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds, Turkey Vulture, and Double-crested Cormorant. This list contains a good selection of woodland birds and nicely points out that John lives on the edge of the Big Thicket.

The abundance of hummingbirds that we saw – all before lunch (!) – alludes to the increase in wintering hummingbirds that has been observed along the Gulf coast in recent years. This seems to be a real trend, reflected by the experience of hummingbird researchers who have banded hummingbirds over the last several decades. One may speculate that a somewhat warmer climate over the last 20-30 years might be a partial explanation. However, hummingbirds are tough little birds, probably not limited by most Gulf Coast winter temperatures or even the availability of insects that were present before the warming. In contrast to the Gulf Coast, warmer winters certainly might explain northern winter sightings (Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York). Certainly more people observing could play a role in the increase. Perhaps a great part of the phenomenon would be the exponential increase in winter hummingbird gardens and hummingbird feeders (hummingbirds have become “mainstream” and have captured the hearts of much of America). Better availability of caloric and basic nutritional resources could allow selection for hummingbirds that “remember” Gulf Coast wintering grounds, particularly given that some Mexican wintering grounds might be under stress. Attractive yards, certainly according to the sensibilities of hummingbirds, were consistently reflected in the hummingbird homes we visited. Hummingbird feeders in clean, pristine condition were a uniform feature of every home. Bright red decorative features (plants with red berries, red Christmas wreaths, red ribbons and bows) were common. And all homes featured carefully crafted gardens. Plants that were observed in the yards included: Abutilon (flowering maple), *Hamelia patens*, *Salvia greggi*, Shrimp Plant, Mexican Turk's Cap, Mexican Cigar Plant (Giant Cuphea), David's Verity Cuphea, Purple Porterweed, Winter Honeysuckle, Bottlebrush Bush, Loquat tree, Chaste tree, Coral honeysuckle, azaleas, Firespike, Scarlet Sage, Mexican Bush Sage, Passion Flower vine.

Not too bad for 4 1/2 hours!! We saw 37 bird species in four of our member's yards, including five species of hummers, although we may possibly have had six, representing at least eighteen individual hummingbirds. Hopefully, we will find out after next Saturday when a bird bander from Houston will band in Harlan's and the Whittle's yards. If she finds an Allen's hummer, then that will be six species of hummers (and 38 species of birds).

Jana Whittle and Harlan Stewart

Bird Sightings –December 2012

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 johnawhittle@aol.com or call (409) 722-4193. For "very rare" birds, or very much out-of-season species, 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." The range of dates for which the species was reported is shown in parentheses in a column before the sighting details or report summaries.

Commentary: Little space this month for comments. We have been able to photographically identify many of the individual continuing hummingbirds for this report. The Red-breasted Nuthatch irruption continued along with a good showing of Pine Siskins and a number of Purple Finches. The Long-eared Owl at Sabine Woods likely continued. The Big Thicket Christmas Counts are included in this month's report, while the other local counts were conducted in January and will therefore be in next month's report.

WHISTLING-DUCK, Blk.-bel (1-30)	JEF 5 reps(525)	IBIS, Glossy (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(2) JAW
GOOSE, White-fronted (8-8)	ORA-ORG 12/8(10) CSL	IBIS, White-faced (1-7)	JEF 2 reps(14)
GOOSE, Snow (11-30)	JEF 5 reps(409)	IBIS, Plegadis (1-26)	JEF 5 reps(189); ORA 1 rep(1)
GOOSE, Ross's (12-17)	JEF-TP 12/12(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/17(1) JAW	SPOONBILL, Roseate (7-17)	JEF 4 reps(12)
DUCK, Wood (8-22)	JAS-MDSP 12/22(1) BC07; ORA-ORG 12/8(1) CSL; TYL 12/22(7) BC05	VULTURE, Black (1-22)	HAI 3 reps(11); JEF 6 reps(85); TYL 9 reps(71)
GADWALL (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 3 reps(88)	VULTURE, Turkey (1-22)	HAI 6 reps(33); JAS 1 rep(12); JEF 8 reps(104); TYL 12 reps(130)
WIGEON, American (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(8)	OSPREY (1-22)	JAS-MDSP 12/22(1) BC07; JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW; ORA-ORG 12/8(1) CSL
MALLARD (1-22)	JAS-MDSP 12/22(3) BC07; JEF-TP 12/1(20) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(15) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(20) JAW	KITE, White-tailed (17-28)	JEF 2 reps(3)
DUCK, Mottled (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(20) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(19) JAW	EAGLE, Bald (1-22)	HAI-SILS 12/1 thru 12/15(1) MG; JAS-MDSP 12/22(1) BC07; JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; TYL 12/22(1) BC05; TYL 12/22(1) BC10
TEAL, Blue-winged (1-12)	JEF 3 reps(158)	HARRIER, Northern (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 3 reps(4)
TEAL, Cinnamon (1-1)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW	HAWK, Sharp-shinned (15-28)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1)
SHOVELER, Northern (1-12)	JEF 3 reps(552); ORA 1 rep(1)	HAWK, Cooper's (1-30)	JEF 5 reps(5)
PINTAIL, Northern (1-12)	JEF 3 reps(495)	HAWK, Red-shouldered (6-22)	HAI 3 reps(5); JEF 6 reps(6); TYL 6 reps(15)
TEAL, Green-winged (1-22)	HAI 1 rep(6); JAS 1 rep(25); JEF 3 reps(1480)	HAWK, Red-tailed (1-31)	HAI 3 reps(5); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 17 reps(97); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 4 reps(4)
CANVASBACK (1-22)	JEF-TP 12/1(14) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(6) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(2) JAW; TYL 12/22(25) BC09	CARACARA, Crested (5-22)	JEF 12/5(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/22(1) JM
REDHEAD (7-7)	JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW	KESTREL, American (1-26)	HAI 3 reps(3); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 10 reps(37); TYL 6 reps(8)
DUCK, Ring-necked (1-7)	JEF-TP 12/1(325) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(3) JAW	MERLIN (7-7)	JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW
SCAUP, Greater (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(17) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(4) JAW	RAIL, Virginia (1-1)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW
SCAUP, Lesser (1-22)	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(10); JEF 3 reps(212)	SORA (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(3) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(2) JAW
BUFFLEHEAD (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(5) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(6) JAW	GALLINULE, Common (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 3 reps(22)
MERGANSER, Hooded (15-15)	HAI 12/15(1) TC14	COOT, American (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(200); JEF 3 reps(1160); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 2 reps(125)
DUCK, Ruddy (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(1250)	CRANE, Sandhill (7-22)	JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/22(22) JM
BOBWHITE, Northern (5-5)	JEF 12/5(1) JAW	KILLDEER (1-28)	HAI 1 rep(3); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 9 reps(105); TYL 5 reps(32)
GREBE, Least (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/12(2) JAW	STILT, Black-necked (7-12)	JEF 2 reps(67)
GREBE, Pied-billed (1-22)	HAI 1 rep(5); JAS 1 rep(15); JEF 4 reps(38); TYL 2 reps(50)	AVOCET, American (1-12)	JEF 3 reps(26)
GREBE, Horned (1-7)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(2) JAW	SANDPIPER, Spotted (22-22)	JAS 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(1)
GREBE, Eared (1-7)	JEF-TP 12/1(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW	YELLOWLEGS, Greater (1-15)	JEF 2 reps(3); TYL 1 rep(5)
CORMORANT, Neotropic (6-31)	JEF 4 reps(61)	WILLET (17-17)	JEF-TX87 12/17(3) JAW
CORMORANT, Double-crest (6-22)	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(96); JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 2 reps(105)	SANDPIPER, Western (8-8)	JEF 12/8(8) JAW
CORMORANT, Species (8-8)	ORA 1 rep(1)	SNIPE, Wilson's (1-1)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW
ANHINGA (8-31)	JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 4 reps(6); ORA 1 rep(1)	GULL, Laughing (1-17)	JEF 5 reps(74)
PELICAN, Amer. White (8-22)	ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(5)	GULL, Ring-billed (6-22)	JEF 3 reps(7); TYL 1 rep(6)
PELICAN, Brown (6-31)	JEF 6 reps(29)	GULL, Herring (22-22)	JAS 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(1)
BITTERN, American (1-1)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW	TERN, Forster's (7-22)	JAS 1 rep(6); JEF 3 reps(19); TYL 2 reps(12)
HERON, Great Blue (1-26)	JAS 1 rep(8); JEF 4 reps(7); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(3)	PIGEON, Rock (8-31)	HAI 3 reps(44); JEF 4 reps(83); TYL 1 rep(6)
EGRET, Great (1-26)	HAI 1 rep(13); JAS 1 rep(18); JEF 9 reps(54); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(16)	COLLARED-DOVE, Euras. (5-22)	HAI 1 rep(6); JEF 2 reps(14); TYL 3 reps(16)
EGRET, Snowy (1-22)	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 8 reps(154); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(2)	DOVE, White-winged (2-31)	JEF 6 reps(125)
HERON, Tricolored (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(19)	DOVE, Mourning (1-30)	HAI 9 reps(103); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 8 reps(107); TYL 9 reps(62)
EGRET, Cattle (1-12)	JEF-TP 12/1(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/7(1) JAW; JEF 12/12(1) JAW	DOVE, Inca (5-22)	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 1 rep(5); TYL 2 reps(8)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr. (1-12)	JEF 3 reps(62)	OWL, Barn (6-31)	JEF 4 reps(9)
IBIS, White (1-22)	JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 8 reps(88); ORA 1 rep(1)	SCREECH-OWL, Eastern (15-15)	JEF 12/15(2) TC5-7
		OWL, Great Horned (6-31)	JEF 10 reps(13); ORA 1 rep(1)
		OWL, Barred (22-22)	TYL 12/22(2) BC09

OWL, Long-eared (8-17) JEF-SW 12/8(1 probable) JAW; JEF-SW 12/17(1 probable) JAW

HUMMINGBIRD, Buff-bellied (1-31) JEF-NEDR 12/1 thru 12/31(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 12/4 thru 12/31(1) HS

HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr. (14-24) JEF-SW 12/14(1) GD; JEF-SW 12/17(1) JHH; JEF-NEDR 12/17 thru 12/31(1) JJW et al;

HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chin. (2-31) HAI 12/30(1) JM; JEF-NEDR 12/9 thru 27/12(1) JJW et al; JEF-NEDR 12/9 thru 12/31(1) JJW et al; JEF-NEDR 12/12, 12/18, 12/30 (1) JJW et al; JEF-NEDR 12/1 thru 12/4(1) HS

HUMMINGBIRD, Archil. (9-15) JEF-NEDR 12/9, 12/10, 12/25(1) JJW

HUMMINGBIRD, Anna's (18-23) JEF-NEDR 12/18(1 prob) SM; JEF-NEDR 12/21(1 prob) JJW; JEF-NEDR 12/23(1 prob) JJW

HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tail. (1-31) JEF-NEDR 12/1 thru 12/31(1) JJW et al; JEF-NEDR 12/10 thru 12/31(1) JJW et al; JEF-NEDR 12/1(1) HS

HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (1-31) JEF-BMT 12/1 thru 12/31(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/18, 12/25, 12/28(1 - a second bird) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 12/1 thru 12/31(1) HS; JEF-NEDR 12/12 thru 12/31(1) JJW

HUMMINGBIRD, Ruff/Allen's (2-31) JEF-NEDR 12/2 thru 12/6(1) HS; JEF-NEDR 12/16, 12/20 thru 12/25, 12/30, 12/31 (1) JJW

HUMMINGBIRD, Selasph. (30-30) HAI 12/30(1) JM

HUMMINGBIRD species (1-26) JEF 13 reps(18)

KINGFISHER, Belted (1-31) JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 7 reps(9); TYL 2 reps(3)

WOODPECKER, Red-head. (2-30) HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 2 reps(2); TYL 3 reps(7)

WOODPECKER, Golden-fr. (6-31) JEF-SW 12/6(3) JAW; JEF-SW 12/8(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/11(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/17(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/28(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/30(1) JM; JEF-SW 12/31(2) JAW

WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (1-30) HAI 8 reps(25); JAS 1 rep(6); JEF 4 reps(18); TYL 12 reps(60)

SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell. (11-30) HAI 5 reps(11); JAS 1 rep(6); JEF 5 reps(14); TYL 7 reps(14)

WOODPECKER, Downy (6-31) HAI 3 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 6 reps(12); TYL 8 reps(26)

WOODPECKER, Hairy (15-15) HAI 12/15(2) TC04

FLICKER, Northern (1-30) HAI 5 reps(8); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 4 reps(8); TYL 5 reps(14)

WOODPECKER, Pileated (1-30) HAI 14 reps(20); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 1 rep(4); TYL 6 reps(41)

PHOEBE, Eastern (1-31) HAI 5 reps(9); JAS 1 rep(14); JEF 11 reps(61); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 7 reps(42)

FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (5-28) JEF 12/5(1) JAW; JEF 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/28(1) JAW; ORA-ORG 12/8(1) CSL

SHRIKE, Loggerhead (1-31) JEF 9 reps(52); TYL 1 rep(1)

VIREO, White-eyed (2-15) HAI 4 reps(6); JEF 2 reps(2)

VIREO, Blue-headed (6-28) JEF 6 reps(7); TYL 4 reps(4)

JAY, Blue (1-30) HAI 11 reps(34); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 7 reps(27); TYL 11 reps(77)

CROW, American (11-22) HAI 3 reps(33); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 2 reps(18); TYL 12 reps(503)

SWALLOW, Tree (8-30) JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(58); ORA 1 rep(1)

CHICKADEE, Carolina (1-31) HAI 17 reps(43); JAS 1 rep(10); JEF 6 reps(38); TYL 10 reps(120)

TITMOUSE, Tufted (1-31) HAI 25 reps(60); JAS 1 rep(15); JEF 1 rep(30); TYL 9 reps(40)

NUTHATCH, Red-breasted (6-31) HAI 12/15(3) TC04; JAS-MDSP 12/22(3) BC07; JEF-SW 12/6(1) JAW; JEF-SW 12/8(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/11(2) JAW; JEF 12/15(4) TC5-7; JEF-SW 12/17(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/28(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/30(2) JAW; JEF-SW 12/30(1) JM; JEF-NEDR 12/31(2) JAW; TYL 12/15(2) TC02; TYL 12/15(1) TC09; TYL 12/22(3) BC09; TYL 12/22(2) BC10

NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (13-22) HAI 2 reps(3); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 1 rep(2); TYL 2 reps(6)

CREEPER, Brown (13-22) HAI 12/15(3) TC04; JEF 12/15(2) TC5-7; TYL-BTHC 12/13(1) JAW; TYL 12/15(1) TC13; TYL 12/22(1) BC02; TYL 12/22(4) BC09

WREN, Carolina (4-29) HAI 7 reps(22); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 2 reps(4); TYL 9 reps(29)

WREN, House (6-22) HAI 2 reps(5); JEF 3 reps(4); TYL 4 reps(11)

WREN, Winter (8-22) HAI 12/15(1) TC04; JAS-MDSP 12/22(2) BC07; JEF-SW 12/8(1) JAW; TYL 12/15(1) TC12

WREN, Sedge (15-15) JEF 12/15(2) TC5-7; TYL 12/15(1) TC8&10

WREN, Marsh (1-12) JEF 3 reps(6)

GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (1-28) JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 8 reps(33); TYL 1 rep(1)

KINGLET, Golden-crowned (6-31) HAI 2 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(8); JEF 7 reps(23); TYL 5 reps(9)

BLUEBIRD, Eastern (1-24) HAI 2 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(81); JEF 4 reps(43); TYL 9 reps(115)

THRUSH, Hermit (11-28) HAI 3 reps(14); JEF 3 reps(9); TYL 2 reps(2)

ROBIN, American (11-30) HAI 3 reps(572); JAS 1 rep(12); JEF 3 reps(344); TYL 11 reps(1085)

CATBIRD, Gray (6-28) HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 4 reps(9); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(1)

MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (1-28) HAI 7 reps(16); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 10 reps(47); TYL 8 reps(28)

THRASHER, Brown (1-31) HAI 4 reps(4); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 6 reps(10); TYL 3 reps(3)

STARLING, European (5-22) JEF 3 reps(70); TYL 2 reps(45)

PIPIT, American (1-12) JEF 3 reps(61)

WAXWING, Cedar (11-31) HAI 2 reps(52); JAS 1 rep(29); JEF 5 reps(60); TYL 7 reps(229)

WARBLER, Black-and-wh. (31-31) JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JAW

WARBLER, Orange-crown. (1-31) HAI 20 reps(24); JAS 1 rep(8); JEF 13 reps(32); TYL 6 reps(11)

YELLOWTHROAT, Common (6-17) JEF 4 reps(6)

WARBLER, Palm (15-15) HAI 12/15(1) TC04

WARBLER, Pine (1-30) HAI 9 reps(48); JAS 1 rep(10); JEF 6 reps(37); TYL 9 reps(90)

WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (1-31) HAI 6 reps(34); JAS 1 rep(25); JEF 10 reps(89); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 11 reps(200)

WARBLER, Wilson's (1-31) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 8 reps(10)

TOWHEE, Spotted (15-15) TYL 12/15(1) TC02

TOWHEE, Eastern (15-28) JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 4 reps(5)

TOWHEE, Eastern/Spotted (15-15) TYL 12/15(3) TC02

SPARROW, Chipping (1-31) HAI 33 reps(1209); JAS 1 rep(132); JEF 4 reps(29); TYL 7 reps(414)

SPARROW, Field (11-22) JEF-SW 12/11(2) JAW; TYL 12/22(1) BC10

SPARROW, Vesper (5-15) HAI 12/15(3) TC04; JEF 12/5(1) JAW; JEF 12/15(1) TC5-7

SPARROW, Savannah (1-22) JEF 6 reps(146); TYL 1 rep(2)

SPARROW, Song (7-22) HAI 2 reps(2); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 2 reps(6); TYL 1 rep(2)

SPARROW, Lincoln's (11-28) JEF 3 reps(4); TYL 1 rep(1)

SPARROW, Swamp (1-28) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 8 reps(36); TYL 2 reps(6)

SPARROW, White-throated (1-31) HAI 11 reps(65); JAS 1 rep(40); JEF 9 reps(89); TYL 10 reps(116)

SPARROW, White-crowned (1-31) HAI 6 reps(16); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 8 reps(17); TYL 1 rep(10)

JUNCO, Dark-eyed (11-22) JEF 2 reps(12); TYL 3 reps(11)

CARDINAL, Northern (1-31) HAI 32 reps(1164); JAS 1 rep(14); JEF 10 reps(39); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 13 reps(136)

BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (1-31) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(40); JEF 8 reps(1844); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(75)

MEADOWLARK, Eastern (1-15) JEF 3 reps(13); TYL 1 rep(15)

MEADOWLARK species (5-5) JEF 1 rep(2)

BLACKBIRD, Rusty (11-31) JEF-SW 12/11(1) JAW; JEF 12/15(7) TC5-7; JEF-SW 12/28(1) JAW; JEF-SW 12/31(1) JAW

GRACKLE, Common (5-30) JEF 6 reps(532); TYL 2 reps(250)

GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (6-11) JEF 3 reps(32); ORA 1 rep(1)

GRACKLE, Great-tailed (1-31) JEF 9 reps(441)

COWBIRD, Brown-headed (5-5) JEF 12/5(20) JAW

FINCH, Purple (15-22) HAI 12/15(7) TC04; TYL 12/22(2) BC02

FINCH, House (6-31) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 8 reps(18)

SISKIN, Pine (15-22) JAS-MDSP 12/22(1) BC07; JEF 12/15(25) TC5-7; TYL 12/22(1) BC10

GOLDFINCH, American (6-30) HAI 7 reps(47); JAS 1 rep(16); JEF 8 reps(48); TYL 6 reps(117)

SPARROW, House (5-31) JEF 6 reps(50); TYL 1 rep(6)

Number of Species 160
Number of Individuals 46438

County Abbreviations

HAI — Hardin; JAS — Jasper; JEF — Jefferson; ORA — Orange; TYL — Tyler

Location Codes

BMT — Beaumont; BTHC — Big Thicket NP - Hickory Creek Savannah; BTTC — Big Thicket NP - Turkey Creek Unit; MDSP — Martin Dies State Park; NEDR — Nederland; ORG — Orange; SILS — Silsbee; SNDY — Nature Conservancy Sandyland Sanctuary; SW — Sabine Woods; TP — Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 — Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP

continued on page 7

Field Trip to Cattail Marsh – 19 January 2013

A beautiful day was matched with a terrific turn out for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society's January field trip to Cattail Marsh. More than a dozen birders turned out to view waterfowl, raptors and a few nice songbirds as well on this bright winter morning. As with any good field trip it was a combination of good numbers of birds along with a few rarities that made this one special.

Waterfowl are a main focus of any trip to Cattail Marsh. This manmade wetland is the terminus of the Beaumont water treatment process and gives city water a last cleansing before it is released back into the bayou. In addition, it attracts a large number of waterbirds and other wildlife. Winter is the prime time for ducks so the group was primed for these birds and they were not disappointed. Flocks of geese were noted early with Greater White-fronted, Snow and Ross's Geese all being seen. Green-winged Teal were the most abundant duck in the marsh and were easily seen by all. Blue-winged Teal were also found in smaller numbers along with two beautiful male Cinnamon Teal, a western species not always easy to find here. Gadwall and Northern Pintail were common while American Wigeon and Mottled Ducks were represented by only a few individuals. Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, Ruddy Ducks and Lesser Scaup rounded out the ducks seen on the day.

Ducks are not the only waterbirds and those other species were easily found on the day. Huge American White Pelicans soared overhead while Double-crested Cormorants loafed on perches. There were plenty of American Coots swimming and diving while Common Gallinules (formerly called "Common Moorhens") were less numerous. Secretive Soras and Virginia Rails made themselves known by voice but did not feel like showing themselves. Pied-billed Grebes were present in several of the cells while one of the best birds of the day, a Least Grebe, was represented by a single individual. These tiny grebes are more easily encountered in south Texas but Cattail Marsh has hosted this species on numerous occasions and several of these birds have been seen on and off at this location for more than a year. A constant stream of gulls overhead included Laughing, Ring-billed and Herring while one small flock of Bonaparte's Gulls was also noted. Wading birds also love the water and a good selection of egrets and herons (like Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron) and ibis (including White and White-faced) were enjoyed by all.

Raptors are always favorites with birders and there were some nice birds seen on this trip. A small but colorful American Kestrel perched high in a tree along the nearby golf course. A Red-shouldered Hawk was seen perched, unusually, low down on a structure in the marsh. Red-tailed Hawks are common throughout southeast Texas so it was no surprise to find several individuals at Cattail Marsh. One nice find, however, was a "rufous morph" Red-tailed Hawk, an unusual color variety for this area. This individual has set up a territory in the same area for two straight winters now and easily located if one knows where to look. An exciting moment came when a Cooper's Hawk chased another smaller hawk (probably a Sharp-shinned Hawk) out over the marsh. It is not

clear if this was a predatory attempt or just a territorial dispute but it was good entertainment for the birders! No day of raptor watching is complete without an eagle. Luckily, Cattail Marsh has a nesting pair of Bald Eagles and one of the birds was located perched in a tree on the back side of the marsh. Later, a young eagle was seen soaring over the marsh. A field trip cannot go wrong with a Bald Eagle on the trip list!

Cattail Marsh may be more famous for waterfowl but song birds can be abundant here as well. The trees around the parking lot often host mixed flocks in the winter and, on this trip, provided Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Pine Warblers among other species. The parking lot itself hosted Savannah Sparrows and American Pipit. A quick trip out toward the interior of Tyrrell Park (which Cattail Marsh is adjacent to) provided looks at Northern Flicker. Sparrows can be abundant in the reeds and weeds along the levees and Swamp, Song and White-crowned Sparrows were seen by most if not all of the birders. A Harris's Sparrow, a very hard to come by species in Jefferson county, showed off for only one birder however! A couple of Palm Warblers (of the duller colored western race) were seen bobbing their tails in the brush along with Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Great-tailed and Boat-tailed Grackles mingled in the marsh to give good comparison looks. The usual Tree Swallows were joined by a single Cave Swallow zipping over the marsh to catch flying insects. A very nice find for January! A young male Baltimore Oriole also put in an appearance for some of the birders. Although not a common species this time of year, wintering orioles have become almost expected at Cattail Marsh/Tyrrell Park as there seems to be one or two present every year.

Another great day of birding at Cattail Marsh and another great field trip for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society! With birds like Bald Eagle, Least Grebe, Baltimore Oriole, Cave Swallow and Harris's Sparrow, it just shows that one never knows what might be found on a day's birding. Rarities can be anywhere! But the common species, beautiful ducks and raptors and warblers can be just as enjoyable especially on a beautiful day with the company of good birders and good friends!

Steve Mayes

Sightings December 2012 *cont. from p. 6*

Observer Abbreviations

BC01 — Beech Creek CBC Area 1; BC02 — Beech Creek CBC Areas 2,3,4,6; BC05 — Beech Creek CBC Area 5; BC07 — Beech Creek CBC Area 7, 8; BC09 — Beech Creek CBC Area 9; BC10 — Beech Creek CBC Area 10; CSL — Christine Sliva; GD — Gerald Duhon; HS — Harlan Stewart; JAW — John Whittle; JHH — John H. Haynes; JJW — John and Jana Whittle; JM — John Mariani; MG — Melanie Goetsell; RHJ — Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SM — Steve Mayes; TC01 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 1; TC02 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 2; TC03 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 3; TC04 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 4; TC5-7 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 5,6,7; TC8&10 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 8,10; TC09 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 9; TC11 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 11; TC12 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 12; TC13 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 13; TC14 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 14

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Brown Pelican

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The Texas-wide Rare Bird Alert, maintained by Houston Audubon Society, is available on their web-site at <http://www.houstonaudubon.org/> Email alerts are also available for a fee. Most rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds. It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives, which include all recent postings. Postings for the last two weeks are also available at <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/TX>.

Transcriptions of many current and recent email alerts are available on the 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>.