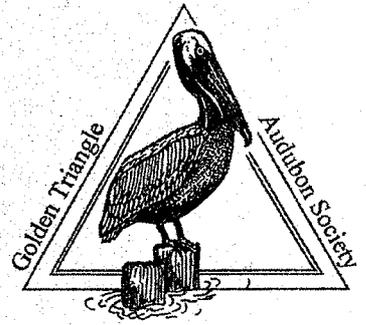


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 23 No. 12

December 2017

Christmas Bird Counts

Christmas Bird Count season is upon us again. This area has more CBCs than almost any other with 20 counts conducted within 100 miles. All birders are welcome to participate in all local counts, although some compilers require that you contact them in advance to obtain an assignment. It is a good idea to contact the compiler in advance in any case. A complete list of all Texas CBCs is available on the Houston Audubon website at <https://houstonaudubon.org/birding/christmas-bird-counts/cbc.html>
Details of near-by Southeast Texas counts are given below or on page 6.

The first Christmas Bird Counts were conducted in December 1900, and last season (2016-17) over 2500 counts were conducted worldwide, with 1902 in the United States. Each count is conducted in a 15-mile diameter circle on a single day between December 14 and January 5 selected by the individual organizers.

Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count Thursday 28 December 2017

Please contact John Whittle at johnawhittle@aol.com or 409-722-4193 (H), and let us know you plan to attend so we can make the best possible area assignments. Otherwise, meet in Sabine Pass at 7:00 a.m. at the intersection of Highway 87 and FM3322 in Sabine Pass if not preassigned to an area. This is at the stop sign in Sabine Pass, where Highway 87 turns west. Countdown dinner at 6:00 p.m., location to be confirmed. This count has been sponsored by Golden Triangle Audubon Society since 1995.

Orange County Christmas Bird Count Monday January 1, 2018

Contact Gary Kelley at garymke@sbcglobal.net or 409-679-1616 or meet in Orange at 7:00 a.m. at the Service Station at the intersection of Highway 105 and FM1442.

Bolivar Peninsula Christmas Bird Count Thursday, December 21, 2017

Contact Steve Mayes in advance at sgmayes@hotmail.com for assignment, since there is not a central meeting location for this count. The count covers the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge and the High Island area, and has been conducted since December 1962. Dr. William Graber compiled this count for its first 50 years.

See page 6 for details of other local counts.

The Brown Pelican

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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. 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.

Christmas Bird Counts. See the listing on page 6 of this issue.

Thursday January 18, 2018. Membership Meeting. Tentative: Program on Cattail Marsh. Harlan Stewart and John Whittle. Further details in next month's issue.

Saturday January 20, 2018. Field Trip to Cattail Marsh, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont. Meet at the parking lot for Cattail Marsh at 8:00 a.m. The parking lot is accessed from the loop road round the main picnic areas in Tyrrell Park. Many birds can be seen from the boardwalk with minimal walking, **but the group will probably make a leisurely three-or-so-mile hike round the various cells in the marsh. Be advised that, while you can turn around and retrace your steps at any point, there are no meaningful "shortcuts" after you start on the levee between cells 3 and 4.** If you don't want to walk that far, there will be someone on the boardwalk to help you identify the many birds in the near cells. Walking is on the levees; the main ones are graveled, but some of the interior ones are essentially mowed grass. This will be a good trip for beginning to intermediate birders, as most of the waterfowl and wading birds are relatively easy to study in the open water areas.

Directions to Tyrrell Park From the South

Go "north" on US69/96/287 around the south side of Beaumont.

Take Texas 124 (south or west, whichever it is signed) towards Fannett (left turn under the highway).

Travel about 1/2 mile to the first light. At the first light, turn left onto Tyrrell Park Road and go about 3/4 mile. Turn left into Tyrrell Park through the nice new arch.

Almost immediately turn left at the conservatory into the parking lot for the Garden Center.

From IH10

Exit at Walden Road on the west side of Beaumont.

Go south of Walden Road for about 1/2 mile to the first light.

At the light go straight over Highway 124 onto Tyrrell Park Road and go about 3/4 mile.

Turn left into Tyrrell Park through the nice new arch.

Almost immediately turn left at the conservatory into the parking lot for the Garden Center.

Thursday February 15, 2018. Membership Meeting. Details in a future issue.

Saturday February 17, 2018. Field Trip to Anahuac NWR. We plan to meet at the Visitor Information Station just beyond the entrance at 8:30 a.m. There are clean public flushing toilets there, accessible even when the Information Station is not open. To reach Anahuac NWR from Winnie, take Highway 124 south to FM1985. (It is 11.0 miles from IH-10 and half a mile less from Highway 73.) Turn right (west) on FM1985 and proceed about **11 miles** to the well-marked **MAIN Anahuac NWR Entrance Road** on the left (south). (**Do not be tempted by your GPS to enter the East Unit which is only about four miles from Highway 124.**) The entrance to the Main Refuge is just over 3 miles down



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.com.

the Entrance road. Obey the speed limits, especially the 15 mph limit in the information station area! Watch along the entrance road, especially the west side, for Crested Caracaras, and nearer the entrance to the refuge on the east side for White-tailed Kites.

We will probably visit both the main unit ("Old Anahuac") and the Skillern Tract, looking primarily for waterfowl and other waterbirds but also raptors and sparrows. We may also bird some of the rice field areas in Chambers County, mostly north of IH-10.

On one memorable occasion (2012), this trip was spectacularly successful in seeing more than 35,000 geese flying over, seven Bald Eagles and one Golden Eagle among other species. There are geese and Bald Eagles in the refuge area this winter, and duck numbers and variety have been quite good recently. Vermilion Flycatcher is almost guaranteed near the Visitor Information Station, and Cinnamon Teal is a possibility.

While it is not anticipated that this field trip will necessitate extensive walking, it is a 400 yard (1/4 mile) walk from the Skillern Tract parking area to the observation platform. All roads that we will use will be easily passable in ordinary vehicles. However, car-pooling is very desirable, especially for the drive round Shoveler Pond because the road is one-car wide and there are only a few pull-offs most of which will accommodate only three or four cars. There is space to leave vehicles close to the meeting place.

Saturday March 17, 2018. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats.

Important Note: Galveston County operates a parking permit program on the Bolivar Peninsula. If you park on most parts of the beach, including the part next to the Flats, 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 including the Big Store, which opens at 7:00 a.m. Currently, the permit also entitles you to park at Rollover Pass.

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 internationally 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. 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.

The Flats in winter always have lots of plovers, sandpipers and other wading species. A large flock of American Avocets winters there.

Some walking is necessary on this field trip. If the tide is a long way out, the leaders may walk up to a mile from the vehicle barrier, but you can turnaround at any point. Depending on the mud flat conditions, we may visit to the North Jetty to view the birds from that side.

We normally stop at Fort Travis Park to eat lunch and use the facilities. We may stop at Rollover Pass and often stop at High Island on the way back to check in High Island for any "very early" Neotropic songbird migrants. Bring drinks and lunch (or buy locally, but that is not particularly easy), sunscreen and insect repellent.

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues remain at \$15 per year. We are now accepting 2018 dues. You may pay at any membership 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 31. 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 on line and selecting our Chapter code (W25), 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 (NAS) 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 also welcome NAS members in other nearby counties although their membership in NAS does not automatically bring them to our attention.

Electronic Delivery of the *Brown Pelican*

We currently mail most copies of the *Brown Pelican* to members by first class mail. While we certainly do not want to cut off any members who are unable to receive a copy electronically, we encourage you, if you are able, to receive your copy as a pdf attachment to an email. This way, you can save us both expense and volunteer time. To do this please send an email to johnawhittle@aol.com from the email address you want us to use. Be sure to include your name so we can find you in our membership records!

Report on the Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting of Golden Triangle Audubon Society, held in the Mid Jefferson Extended Care Hospital Texas on 16 November 2017, the following were elected to the listed positions: The president's term is two years; all other are one year, and all start on January 1, 2018

President: Dana Nelson
Vice President: Sheila Hebert
Treasurer: Harlan Stewart
Secretary: John Whittle

Directors-at-Large: Edra Bogucki, Michael Cooper, Gerald Duhon, Sherry Gibson, John Haynes, Gary Kelley, Randy Lewis, Steve Mayes, and Christine Sliva.

Field Trip to West Jefferson County – 18 November 2017

Field trips are generally planned out well in advance with a specific destination and some idea of the expected species. Of course, things can change and good birds can pop up anywhere necessitating changes in those well laid plans! The November field trip for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society has traditionally been an outing to the western part of Jefferson County in search of Sandhill Cranes, waterfowl, raptors and sparrows. But this year, the group decided on an extra addition at the end!

One of the key attractions of this November field trip has been to view the large flock of Sandhill Cranes that has wintered in west Jefferson County in the last several years. The cranes have always wintered in Texas in a broad coastal swath south and west of Houston, as well as in the Panhandle, especially north and west of Lubbock. Cranes were first recorded in modern times in Jefferson County in March 1994, when 26 were found by Bessie Cornelius along FM1406. For the following five years, modest flocks were present about every other year. Thereafter, they have been regular, with flocks of at least 500 to 1000 birds present during each winter, with a spectacular 2500 in the winter of 2003-04. The Cranes are migratory, with some breeding as far north as Alaska and northern Canada. In winter, they usually settle down in a fairly large area, ignoring county boundaries, but typically finding an area with few, if any, public roads as a nighttime roosting area, often in relatively deep water in the river bottomlands where they are safe from predators. Each morning, they set out for a suitable feeding area, which may be the same for several days or may change every day. (They are omnivorous. Their diet varies widely with location and season. Major food items include insects, roots of aquatic plants; also eat rodents, snails, frogs, lizards, snakes, berries, seeds. May eat large quantities of cultivated grains, e.g. rice grains left over after harvest, when available.)

Because the exact location of the cranes' feeding area on any particular day cannot be predicted, there is always some trepidation as to whether this field trip will be able to get close enough to their feeding area or travel route to see them well. Sandhill Cranes turned out to be no trouble to find on the trip. From the start, small groups of cranes were flying overhead and everyone on the trip got good looks. Though the group never found any cranes on the ground, still the flying birds were impressive. Even an area as well supplied with public roads as west Jefferson County has areas where the cranes can feed and not be visible from them!

Geese were also easy as flocks flew over the meeting spot on Johnson Road which included Greater White-fronted, Snow and a few Ross's Geese. No Canada-type

geese were spotted on the day as these birds have become quite hard to come by in Jefferson County in recent years. Eventually, some other waterfowl were located including Northern Pintail, Mottled Ducks and Lesser Scaup, but areas with standing water are not particularly extensive this year. Not only has the fall been relatively dry in the weeks following Hurricane Harvey, but hunting and farming interests have not flooded many fields.

Raptors were also in fair supply in west Jefferson County on the day. Northern Harriers cruised low over the fields while Red-tailed Hawks soared higher overhead or surveyed from perches. A couple of Crested Caracaras flew by the birders giving good looks at these odd raptors. American Kestrels perched on nearby phone lines and there were Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures in several locations. A highlight of the day was an adult Bald Eagle that soared over the road allowing all of the group some nice looks.

Sparrows were not quite as cooperative possibly due to the windy conditions or perhaps they have just not arrived yet. Savannah Sparrows were very common as expected and were easily seen along the roadsides. A few White-crowned Sparrows were seen with some difficulty. A Song Sparrow tried to hide in plain sight but was eventually identified. A couple of Swamp Sparrows were located but they were not particularly numerous. A couple of birders in the group got a look at one or more Vesper Sparrows but they remained elusive for the rest of the birders.

One of the other targets of this field trip is always Vermilion Flycatcher. These brilliant little birds tend to come back to the same locations every winter so they are usually easy to find. A couple of these locations in western Jefferson County are known to the local birders and one of them revealed the target species! A bright red male Vermilion Flycatcher was found perched on a fence near a homestead that usually hosts one or more individuals of this species and the assembled birders got great looks! A female Vermilion Flycatcher was stumbled across in an unexpected area perhaps giving a new location to check next winter!

Many other interesting birds were also found on this portion of the trip. In a wooded area, Carolina Chickadee made its presence known along with a noisy House Wren. A White-eyed Vireo was coaxed out of the underbrush while a Pine Warbler stuck to its namesake trees. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was heard and seen while a Gray Catbird was only heard. Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen and American Goldfinch flew over. In more open areas, Sedge Wrens

were eventually persuaded to show themselves while American Crows and Tree Swallows flew overhead. Eastern Meadowlarks were located and Wilson's Snipe zipped past the group.

This trip has had a tendency to produce rare bird sightings in the past including such species as Mountain Bluebird and Red Phalarope. There was no ultra-rare bird seen on this trip but the pair of Western Kingbirds spotted along one road was a nice find as it is getting a bit late in the season for this always scarce species. So, as there were no rare species in west Jefferson County this year perhaps it was time to move the field trip elsewhere!

Having not found much suitable waterfowl habitat in west Jefferson County, it was decided to extend the field trip after lunch on to Tyrrell Park's Cattail Marsh in Beaumont to see the abundant waterfowl at this site. The group arrived and was not disappointed! Hundreds of ducks were easily seen from the boardwalk immediately upon entrance to this manmade wetland. The most numerous were Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal but there were others present as well. An incredible eleven(!) Cinnamon Teal were seen from this area. This is mostly a western duck so eleven is an unusually large number for any location on the upper Texas coast. Cattail Marsh has become the go to spot for this species in our area. Cattail Marsh, being inside Beaumont city limits, is a no hunting area, and the ducks quickly learn that they are safe from hunters there. They also become accustomed to people walking on the boardwalk, as long as they are relatively quiet and move at a normal pace, and the boardwalk has become the very best place in the area to observe and photograph the ducks.

A quick trip around the marsh produced many other good birds. Virginia Rails and Sora called from the reeds while Stilt Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitchers fed on the mud flats along with a number of both Western and Least Sandpipers. Tricolored, Little Blue and Great Blue Herons were seen along with Snowy and Great Egrets. A surprising number of Cattle Egrets gathered in the marsh late in the day. One of the nesting Bald Eagles perched near the nest tree giving the group a nice look while an American Pipit flew by and was identified by voice. One of our Least Grebes, normally rare birds for our area but regular at this location, gave the group a good look. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were easily heard and seen and it was nice to find a few Fulvous Whistling-Ducks still hanging around with them.

Circling around to cell one (the deep water cell where the water from the primary waste treatment process is initially introduced into the Marsh), many diving ducks were found. Lesser Scaup were common along with many Ring-necked Ducks and a few Ruddy Ducks. Searching produced single Redhead and Canvasback as

well. A handful of Hooded Mergansers were also present along with a few Buffleheads. These latter four duck species are relatively rare in Jefferson County and their presence is another attraction of Cattail Marsh. A single Horned Grebe played hide and seek but was eventually seen by the birders along with more easily seen Pied-billed Grebes.

So, even when birders don't quite end up where they originally intended to go, there are always good birds to be found. In this case, adding another birding spot to the end of the regular field trip greatly increased the bird numbers seen and gave a number of additional species to the trip list. Maybe Cattail Marsh will become a regular stop on the west Jefferson County field trip!

The following species were recorded by the field trip leaders: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (10); Fulvous Whistling-Duck (3); Snow Goose (160); Ross's Goose (5); Greater White-fronted Goose (13); Wood Duck (2); Blue-winged Teal (450); Cinnamon Teal (11); Northern Shoveler (135); Gadwall (3); American Wigeon (3); Mallard (20); Mottled Duck (12); Northern Pintail (90); Green-winged Teal (750); Canvasback (3); Redhead (5); Ring-necked Duck (50); Lesser Scaup (400); Bufflehead (3); Hooded Merganser (5); Ruddy Duck (20); Least Grebe (1); Pied-billed Grebe (30); Horned Grebe (1); Double-crested Cormorant (11); Neotropic Cormorant (5); American White Pelican (4); Great Blue Heron (5); Great Egret (32); Snowy Egret (51); Little Blue Heron (4); Tricolored Heron (4); Cattle Egret (100); Black-crowned Night-Heron (3); White Ibis (95); White-faced Ibis (5); Glossy/White-faced Ibis (35); Roseate Spoonbill (2); Black Vulture (11); Turkey Vulture (115); Northern Harrier (9); Bald Eagle (2); Red-tailed Hawk (10); Virginia Rail (3); Sora (10); Common Gallinule (65); American Coot (200); Sandhill Crane (130); Black-necked Stilt (35); American Avocet (50); Black-bellied Plover (10); Killdeer (7); Western Sandpiper (5); Least Sandpiper (70); Stilt Sandpiper (15); Long-billed Dowitcher (75); Wilson's Snipe (2); Greater Yellowlegs (1); Laughing Gull (200); Ring-billed Gull (10); Eurasian Collared-Dove (5); Mourning Dove (16); Red-bellied Woodpecker (3); Downy Woodpecker (1); Crested Caracara (2); American Kestrel (4); Vermilion Flycatcher (2); Eastern Phoebe (11); Western Kingbird (2); Loggerhead Shrike (4); White-eyed Vireo (1); American Crow (5); Blue Jay (1); Tree Swallow (85); Carolina Chickadee (1); House Wren (1); Sedge Wren (20); Marsh Wren (1); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (3); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4); Gray Catbird (1); Northern Mockingbird (5); European Starling (6); American Pipit (5); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Pine Warbler (3); Yellow-rumped Warbler (20); Common Yellowthroat (2); White-crowned Sparrow (5); Vesper Sparrow (3); Savannah Sparrow (225); Song Sparrow (3); Swamp Sparrow (4); Northern Cardinal (3); Eastern Meadowlark (6); Red-winged Blackbird (60); Brown-headed Cowbird (10); Common Grackle (25); Boat-tailed Grackle (10); Great-tailed Grackle (500); American Goldfinch (4).

Steve Mayes

with additional background material by John Whittle

Local Area Christmas Bird Counts

Listed below are all counts in Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Tyler, Jasper and Liberty Counties and the Johnson Bayou count in Cameron Parish. We thank Houston Audubon for compiling some of the information shown below.

Johnson Bayou in SW Louisiana: Thursday, December 14, 2017

Johnson Bayou CBC has a rich history beginning in 1976 to present. Though the count is located just across the state line in Louisiana, most participants are from Texas and everyone is welcome. While much of the area is private, local land owners have allowed access to their property for this count, areas rarely birded and normally inaccessible to birders at other times offering a good chance for rarities. Areas covered include beach, coastal cheniers, marsh and grasslands. Johnson Bayou is located off Hwy 82 in Louisiana just across from Pleasure Island, TX (east of Sabine Pass). From Port Arthur take Hwy 82 east for about 15 miles into LA. Please contact Gary Kelley (garymke@sbcglobal.net, telephone 409-679-1616) for more information, assignments and directions.

Turkey Creek: Saturday, December 16, 2017

This count in Hardin and Tyler Counties includes the Turkey Creek and Hickory Creek Savannah Units of the Big Thicket National Preserve. Meet at the Big Thicket Visitor Center on US69 at FM420, about 7 miles north of Kountze at 6:30 AM. Sponsored by the Big Thicket National Preserve. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com, 409-722-4193) for more information.

Galveston: Tuesday, December 19, 2017

Although this count has very limited land area and a particularly small amount of wooded areas, it still typically is a top 20 or near top twenty U.S. CBCs. This count is open to anyone who would like to participate and all areas need more observers. If you want to see some great birds, join us. This count undoubtedly produces the most species for the available land area (much of the count circle is water) of all U.S. CBCs. To participate please contact Richard Mayfield (rrichardm@verizon.net).

Bolivar Peninsula: Thursday, December 21, 2017

This count circle in Chambers and Galveston Counties includes High Island and Anahuac NWR. Newcomers are welcome to join! Compilers this year are Steve Mayes and David Sarkozi. If you are interested in participating, please contact Steve Mayes at sgmayes@hotmail.com.

Beech Creek: Saturday December 23, 2017

This count takes places in Tyler and Jasper Counties and includes Steinhagen Lake, the Beech Creek unit of Big Thicket National Preserve and Martin Dies State Park. Meet at the Corps of Engineers Picnic Area on FM92 immediately north of the intersection with FM1746 in Town Bluff at 6:30 AM. Sponsored by the Big Thicket National Preserve. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com, 409-722-4193) for more information.

Sea Rim State Park: Thursday, December 28, 2017

This count in Jefferson County includes Sea Rim State Park, Texas Point NWR, and parts of J.D. Murphree WMA and McFaddin NWR as well as the Sabine Pass area. Please contact us in advance, as most groups go directly to their assigned areas. Sponsored by **Golden Triangle Audubon Society**. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com, 409-722-4193) for details.

Trinity River: Thursday, December 28, 2017

Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge will be hosting the 20th Annual Trinity River Christmas Bird Count for northern Liberty County. Areas to be counted include the Trinity River NWR, Tarkington Prairie, and Gaylor Lake. Some folks will bird the "bottoms" so be sure to bring a sack lunch, rubber knee boots and other appropriate outdoor clothing. The wrap-up dinner will be held at the Texas Seafood & Steakhouse restaurant in Cleveland. Birdwatchers of all levels are welcome. If you have any questions you can contact the compiler Stuart Marcus at 936-336-9786 or stuart_marcus@fws.gov.

Orange County: Monday, January 1, 2018

Habitat covers marsh, woodlands, and the Cow Bayou watershed. All are invited, even if you are only able to bird for part of the day. Feeder watchers are welcome to participate. Let us know in advance and we will find a suitable group for you to join. Contact Gary Kelley (garymke@sbcglobal.net, telephone 409-679-1616), for more information.

Old River: Tuesday January 2, 2018

The count covers all points within 7.5 miles of Lake Charlotte. This is less than an hour's drive east of Houston. The count circle for this count centers in Lake Charlotte in Chambers Co. and takes in almost all of the Wallisville Project, all the way out to the far back in of Trinity Bay and north into the southern part on Liberty Co. Please contact count compiler David Hanson (DHanson139@aol.com), if you'd like to participate or have any questions.

Bird Sightings – November 2017

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records for the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review, looking for very rare or vagrant species only, records for Chambers, Galveston (High Island and Bolivar Peninsula only) and Liberty Counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes (west of the Calcasieu River only) in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-more precise location if available – (number) – Observer(s)

Commentary: A rather interesting month. As always, there are some migrants seen significantly beyond their normal migration window, including not only Passerine species but also a number of hawks.

Over the last few months, birder activity in Southwest Louisiana has been notably greater than in previous years, even more so when areas east of the Calcasieu River that are beyond our normal coverage are included. This has shown an apparent spreading eastwards of a number of species of raptor, including White-tailed Kite, White-tailed Hawk and Crested Caracara. This is a continuation of a trend that began in extreme Southeast Texas shortly before the turn of the century.

Focusing as it does on rare species, this feature does not in any way address the numbers of individuals of the various species. The advent and general adoption of eBird increased the data available by an order of magnitude, and made continuation of our previous policy of providing compilations of all species, even the very common, impossible.

Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Least Grebe	Nov 1-29	JEF-TP (up to 4) HS et al
Horned Grebe	Nov17-18	JEF-Cattail Marsh Cell 1 (1) Harlan Stewart et al.
Common Goldeneye	Nov 17-20	JEF-Cattail Marsh Cell 1 (1) JM et al (male)
White-tailed Hawk	Nov 26	JEF-West Jefferson County (1) MC, TH
Broad-winged Hawk	Nov 18	JEF-SW (1) Davis Sarkozi
	Nov 28	JEF-SW (1) SM
Red-tail Hawk (Western)	Nov 19-20	JEF-Cattail Marsh (1) Harlan Stewart, JAW et al (north of cell 1)
Chuck-will's widow	Nov 21	JEF-SW (1) David Sarkozi, JHH
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Nov 20-21	JEF-SW (1) JHH, David Sarkozi
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Nov 5	JEF-Big Thicket Edgewater (1) SH
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Nov 26	JEF-West Jefferson County (1) MC
Great Kiskadee	Nov 10-24	JEF-SW (1) SM, MC, SH
American Redstart	Nov 20,22	JEF-SW (1) JHH (female)
Northern Parula	Nov 10-11	JEF-SW (1) SM, MC
Magnolia Warbler	Nov 11	JEF-SW (1) SM, MC
Clay-colored Sparrow	Nov 22	JEF-SW (1) JHH
Summer Tanager	Nov 10	JEF-SW (1) SM (female)

Nearby Counties (very rare species only)

Horned Grebe	Nov 24	CAM-Calcasieu River Mouth (1) Paul Conover
Least Bittern	Nov 4	CAM-Sabine NWR Wetlands Walkway (1) multiple obs
Mississippi Kite	Nov 2	GAL-BF (1) BF Shorebird Survey
Harris's Hawk	Nov10	CHA_Smith Pt Hawk Watch (1) Robin Mallett, Michelle Romydy et al
Broad-winged Hawk	Nov 4	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Casey Wright
	Nov 5	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Oscar Johnson et al (juvenile)
	Nov 15	CHA-Smith Pt Hawk Watch (1) Davis Hansen
Swainson's Hawk	Nov 21	GAL-High IS Smith Oaks (1) Daniel Elting
	Nov 30	LIB-5 mi N of Kenefick (1) Collette Micallef
Red-tail. Hawk (<i>fuertesi</i>)	Nov 4-5	CAM-LA82 0.5 mile west of Holly Beach (1) Jack Rogers et al

Red-tail Hawk (Western)	Nov 18, 21	CHA-FM1941 (1) JAW
Red-tail Hawk (Harlan's)	Nov 21	CHA-Fairview Rd (1) JAW
Gt. Black-backed Gull	Nov 14-16	GAL-Texas City Dike (1) Duke Liebler, James Rieman
	Nov 16-19	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Davis Sarkozi
Common Goldeneye	Nov 24	CAM-Hwy27 in Hackberry (7) William Flack
Pomarine Jaeger	Nov 20	GAL-Port Bolivar (1) David Sarkozi
Parasitic Jaeger	Nov 24	CAM-Calcasieu River Mouth (4) Paul Conover, Dave Patton
Couch's Kingbird	Nov13	CHA-Anahuac NWR (more exact location not given) (1) Dwayne Litteer
Gt. Crested Flycatcher	Nov 30	CHA-Turtle Bayou Nature Preserve (1) Shellie Ellerbe
Ovenbird	Nov 4	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Casey Wright
Hooded Warbler	Nov 16	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Dave Patton
American Redstart	Nov 4-5	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Casey Wright et al
Yell-rump (Audubon's)	Nov 19	LIB, 5 mi N of Kenefick (1) Collette Micallef
Summer Tanager	Nov 20	CHA-FM565 (1) Paul Fagala
Western Tanager	Nov 20	CHA-FM565 (1) Paul Fagala (female)
Painted Bunting	Nov 6	CHA-Anahuac NWR (1) Dwayne Litteer (female – exact location not specified)
Yellow-head. Blackbird	Nov 21	CHA-FM1985 (2) JAW (males in cowbird/Red-winged Blackbird flock)
	Nov 27	CHA-FM1985 (6) JAW (4 males, 2+ females)

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; BF – Bolivar Flats; BTNP – Big Thicket National Preserve; CAL – Calcasieu Parish; CAM – Cameron Parish; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle; JM – John Mariani; LIB – Liberty County; MC – Michael Cooper; NEDR – Nederland; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Is, Port Arthur; RL – Randy Lewis; SAB – Sabine County; SH – Sheila Hebert; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TH – Thomas Hellweg; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TXPT – Texas Point NWR; TYL – Tyler County; WJC – West Jefferson County.

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RARE BIRD ALERTS

Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various Internet distribution.

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>.