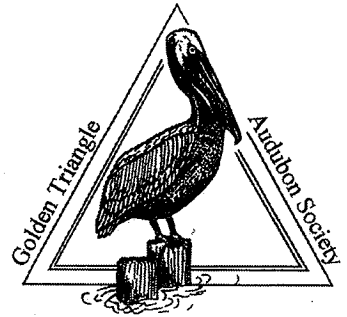


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 28 No 1

January 2022

Membership Meeting
Thursday January 20, 2022 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont
CANCELED

Reluctantly, we have decided to cancel the January Membership Meeting. We plan to run the January 22 Field Trip to Cattail Marsh as planned.

Saturday, January 22, 2022
Field Trip to Cattail Marsh, Beaumont

Meet at the parking lot for Cattail Marsh at 8:00 am. 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 and nearby roads with minimal walking. The group has usually made a leisurely three-or-so-mile hike round the various cells in the marsh, but in recent months the water levels have been changed several times, so the route may be altered to cover the cells where the birds are most numerous. Be advised that, while you can turn around and retrace your steps at any point, there are typically no meaningful "shortcuts" after you start on the levees between cells. 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. We will try to have the Education Center open for those who do not want to make the hike.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 28, No.1 January 2022
Issue number 279

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 are subject to last minute changes especially in the current Covid-19 situation. Changes will always be posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Future Programs and Field Trips. (All events are TENTATIVE!).

The latest information is always available on the web site at goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Thursday January 20, 2022. Membership Meeting. See page 1 for details.

Saturday, January 22, 2022. Field Trip to Cattail Marsh, Beaumont.

Meet at the parking lot for Cattail Marsh at 8:00 am. 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 and nearby roads with minimal walking. **The group has usually made a leisurely three-or-so-mile hike round the various cells in the marsh, but in recent months the water levels have been changed several times, so the route may be altered to cover the cells where the birds are most numerous. Be advised that, while you can turn around and retrace your steps at any point, there are typically no meaningful "shortcuts" after you start on the levees between cells.** 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. We will try to have the Education Center open for those who do not want to make the hike.

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 the Park through the arch. Continue ahead and proceed about two-thirds of the way round the main loop and into the well-marked Cattail Marsh parking area.

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 as above.

Thursday February 17, 2022. Program on Bees by Len VanMarion.

Saturday February 19 2022. Tentative. 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 toilets there, accessible at all times To reach Anahuac NWR from Winnie, take Highway 124 south to FM 1985. (It is 11.0 miles from IH-10 and half a mile less from Highway 73.) Turn right (west) on FM 1985 and proceed about **11 miles** to the **MAIN** Anahuac NWR Entrance Road on the left (to the south). As you drive along FM 1985, check any cowbird/blackbird flocks carefully for Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

The entrance to the Main Refuge is just over 3 miles down the Entrance Road. Stop along this road only where you can safely pull completely off the road. Obey the speed limits on that road and in the refuge, and stop completely at the stop signs! Watch along the entrance road especially near the south end for Crested Caracaras and White-



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

tailed Kites. A Harris's Hawk was there in late November as well as a White-tailed Hawk.

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.

There are usually geese and Bald Eagles on and near the refuge in winter. Shoveler Pond attracts large numbers of ducks. Otherwise, ducks have not been plentiful so far this winter.

Smith Point Hawk Watch

The 2021 Smith Point Hawk Watch concluded on November 30th. They

saw 78,912 hawks from August 15th until November 30th. If I have figured it correctly this was the fourth highest hawk count of the 25 years that it has been conducted. Thank you to the Gulf Coast Observatory for sponsoring this hawk watch. And a huge thank you to Bob Baez for counting and being so kind to every single person who goes there.

Here is the breakdown:

224 Black Vultures
10,064 Turkey Vultures
45 Ospreys
79 Bald Eagles
647 Northern Harriers
2,541 Sharp-shinned Hawks

1,303 Cooper's Hawks
21 Red-shouldered Hawks
55,611 Broad-winged Hawks
376 Red-tailed Hawks
424 Swainson's Hawks
1 Ferruginous Hawk
10 White-tailed Hawks
2 Harris's Hawks
564 American Kestrels
110 Merlins
100 Peregrine Falcons
3 Crested Caracaras
6,612 Mississippi Kites
155 Swallow-tailed Kites
13 White-tailed Kites
1 unknown accipiter
1 Common Black Hawk

Jana Whittle

Bird Sightings – December 2021

(continued from page 7)

Blue-winged Warbler	Dec 7-8	HAS-Sam Houston Pk (1) Adam Johnson
	Dec 11	HAS-Tex Ave Pk Webster (1) Andrew Hamlett, M Hood
	Dec 27	GAL-S of FM2004 (1) Richard Liebler, Sibley & Kyle O'Haver
Tennessee Warbler	Dec 2	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Timothy Freiday
Nashville Warbler	Dec 1	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Matt Conn
	Dec 8, 17	HAS-Sam Houston Pk (1) Adam Johnson
	Dec 13	CAM-Willow Island (1) Jack Rogers
	Dec 25	HAS-W of Longwood Golf Club (1) Troy and Marla Hibbits
Tropical Parula	Dec 13-14	HAS-nr Geo Bush Pk (1) Letha Slaigle, Jim Hinson, Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
	Dec 28-30	HAS-SW Pasadena (1) Andrew Hamlett
	Dec 30-31	HAS-Hermann Park (1) Don Verser, mult obs
Yellow Warbler	Dec 8	HAS-Bear Creek Pk (1) Tracy Becker
Yellow-throated Warbler	Dec 13	CAM-Willow Island (1) Jack Rogers
Prairie Warbler	Dec 3	HAS Goforth Pk--Horsepen Creek (1) Linda Martin-Rust, Margaret Farese
	Dec 13-31	HAS-Hermann Pk (1 male) Robert Rogillio, Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
	Dec 16	CHA-ANWR Skillern (1) SM
	Dec 16	HAS-Sheldon Lake (1) Wendy Wright
	Dec 19	CAL-Corbina Rd SE of Lake Charles (1) Erik Johnson
Black-thr Gray Warbler	Dec 29	HAS-Old Greenhouse Rd (1) Letha Slaigle
Black-thr Green Warbler	Dec 13	HAS-Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff, A Lohman, R McGinty
	Dec 20	HAS-Cullinan Pk (1) Kathy Swezey
Summer Tanager	Dec 14	CAL-French Settlement (female) Beth Cramer
Western Tanager	Dec 9-12	HAS-Friendswood (1) Chris Bick, Letha Slagle
	Dec 22	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Kendra Kocab, Fred Collins, Mary Goldsby

	Dec 23	CAM-Illinois Plant Rd (2) Jeremy Nance, Lynn Hollerman
Black-headed Grosbeak	Dec 7	HAS-San Jacinto Btlgnd (1) Ross Silcock
Painted Bunting	Dec 19	CAL-Corbina Rd SE of Lake Charles (1) Erik Johnson

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; CAL – Calcasieu Parish; CAM – Cameron Parish; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HAS – Harris County; HI – High Island; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle; LIB – Liberty County; MC – Michael Cooper; NEW – Newton County; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Is, Port Arthur;; SAA – San Augustine Co.; SAB – Sabine County; SH – Sheila Hebert; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TYL – Tyler County; WJC – West Jefferson County.

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues are \$20 per year. We are now accepting 2022 dues. You may pay at any membership meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page.

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 not 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.

We would very much encourage you receive the Brown Pelican electronically. To start that, simply send an email to gtaudubon@aol.com from the address you want us to use.

Editorial Note

We will have reports on the Sea Rim State Park and Orange County Christmas Bird Counts in the February issue.

Preliminary Report on Johnson Bayou CBC -- 14 December 2021

The Johnson Bayou Christmas Count started our CBC season in warm, partly cloudy weather with a mild SE breeze off the Gulf; a very nice day to spend outdoors. With fourteen counters, three of whom are very strong Louisiana birders, we put up a good effort. Despite that, the total of species reported and total individuals were low and very low in the total individuals.

Effects of Hurricanes Delta and Laura are still evident on buildings and infrastructure around Johnson Bayou but the landscape seems largely recovered.

The marshes north east of Johnson Bayou Landing and Deep Bayou Landing (both in the northwest corner of the count circle) were normal as far as we could see, but the only ducks there apart from a pair of Mottled Ducks, were Blue-winged Teal. Most Blue-winged Teal winter south of the Upper Texas Coast, although there are always some that remain in the area through the winter. But usually most of the teal we see there in December are Green-winged Teal along with Gadwalls..

The hydrology of the entire area north of Highway 82, including the open marshes referred to below is very complex. Johnson Bayou connects to Sabine Lake after about five miles. Prolonged changes in the salinity of Sabine Lake, and the Lake does undergo changes dependent on the flow of fresh water from the Neches and Sabine Rivers, has the potential to increase and decrease the salinity of the entire system. Below the confluence with Deep Bayou, there are connections, albeit not very wide with the Smith Ridge and Middle Ridge areas. Just to complicate matters there are a number of canals running from the northern part of Deep Bayou across to the Cameron Meadows oil field area and what is shown on maps as Magnolia Vacuum Canal. It is difficult to distinguish that canal, and the areas on both sides of the Cameron Meadows road are essentially all water. This year, some considerable work is being conducted apparently to build up marshes from the currently open water. These areas of Cameron Meadows were completely devoid of water birds and ducks this year.

LAJB always has some nice surprises. This year one of our Louisiana birders, Eric Johnson of Louisiana Audubon, was permitted to do a rail drag, and with two helpers they flushed four Yellow Rails and a good number of other rails in a three hours after dark operation. Eric's party also reported Least Bitterns. Another party found American Golden or Black-bellied Plovers and Hermit or Swainson's Thrush, all still under "further review". Still another party found a Whimbrel, a Swainson's Hawk, five Yellow-crowned Night-Herons and a Baltimore Oriole.

Looking at the low numbers of species and individual birds, in the open marshes north of Johnson Bayou town site, ducks, geese and coots were nearly absent. Coots were down over 1500 estimated birds from last year. (It is possible that the work on the Cameron Meadows area is also affecting this area, although it is a considerable distance away. But there are so many interconnections that salinity measurements will be the only way to determine what is happening.) We saw several hundred fewer gulls and terns. Other large deltas relative to last year are Tree Swallows 400 fewer, Red-winged Blackbirds 600 fewer, Boat-tailed Grackles 600 fewer, Sanderlings and Sandpiper

species 220 fewer. A plus was about 600 more White Ibis than last year.

Look for some analysis of the count results in a later issue of the Brown Pelican.

Species seen: Snow Goose (2); Blue-winged Teal (346); Northern Shoveler (168); Gadwall (250); American Wigeon (2); Mottled Duck (6); Green-winged Teal (3); Scaup, Lesser (1); Merganser, Red-breasted (4); Duck species (1); Pied-billed Grebe (30); Rock Pigeon (15); White-winged Dove (42); Mourning Dove (17); Clapper Rail (11); King Rail (9); Clapper/King Rail sp. (12); Virginia Rail (6); Sora (14); Common Gallinule (149); American Coot (109); Black-necked Stilt (13); Black-bellied Plover (2); Killdeer (58); Ruddy Turnstone (37); Sanderling (26); Least Sandpiper (2); Wilson's Snipe (11); Willet (3); Greater Yellowlegs (10); Laughing Gull (30); Ring-billed Gull (17); Herring Gull (2); Caspian Tern (4); Forster's Tern (2); Royal Tern (1); Anhinga (6); Neotropic Cormorant (30); Double-crested Cormorant (68); American White Pelican (231); Brown Pelican (5); Least Bittern (5); Great Blue Heron (45); Great Egret (187); Snowy Egret (54); Little Blue Heron (17); Tricolored Heron (18); Cattle Egret (14); Green Heron (4); Black-crowned Night-Heron (1); Yellow-crowned Night Heron (5); White Ibis (738); White-faced Ibis (9); Glossy/White-faced Ibis (42); Dark Ibis sp. (154); Roseate Spoonbill (22); Turkey Vulture (12); Osprey (4); Northern Harrier (33); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Cooper's Hawk (2); Swainson's Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (51); Red-tailed – Harlan's (1); Barn Owl (2); Great Horned Owl (7); Belted Kingfisher (14); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (7); Downy Woodpecker (10); Northern Flicker (yellow shafted) (2); Crested Caracara (4); American Kestrel (18); Merlin (2); Peregrine Falcon (1); Least Flycatcher (1); Eastern Phoebe (24); Vermilion Flycatcher (2); Loggerhead Shrike (32); White-eyed Vireo (2); Blue-headed Vireo (4); Blue Jay (6); Tree Swallow (61); House Wren (52); Sedge Wren (95); Marsh Wren (21); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (21); Golden-crowned Kinglet (15); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (56); Hermit Thrush (1); Gray Catbird (6); Brown Thrasher (5); Northern Mockingbird (22); European Starling (172); American Goldfinch (8); Chipping Sparrow (1); White-crowned Sparrow (1); White-throated Sparrow (18); Vesper Sparrow (3); LeConte's Sparrow (12); Savannah Sparrow (96); Song Sparrow (12); Lincoln's Sparrow (5); Swamp Sparrow (230); Sparrow sp. (1); Eastern Meadowlark (48); Baltimore Oriole (1); Red-winged Blackbird (547); Brown-headed Cowbird (22); Common Grackle (96); Boat-tailed Grackle (451); Great-tailed Grackle (84); Quiscalus sp. (86); Orange-crowned Warbler (10); Common Yellowthroat (19); Pine Warbler (13); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (144); Wilson's Warbler (1); Northern Cardinal (24); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1); APPROXIMATE TOTAL 115 species and 5773 individuals.

Participants: Katie Barnes, Charlotte Chehotsky, Sherry Gibson, Claudia Gilson, Greg Jackson, Erik Johnson, Denise and Gary Kelley, Fritz Meyer, Sherrie Roden, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Jana and John Whittle.

Gary Kelley

Turkey Creek Christmas Bird Count 18 December 2021

One of the unfortunate occurrences that sometimes beset Christmas Counts is a really bad weather event. There are some events that make birding totally impossible and the count has to be abandoned, such as prolonged snow and ice storms, but fortunately, these are extremely rare in southeast Texas. But, we do sometimes encounter travel difficulties. There is probably a higher density of Christmas Counts along and just inland of the Gulf Coast of Texas. Abandoning a count at a very low count and rescheduling is usually virtually possible because many local birders commit to participating in multiple counts during the approximately three-week count period. This year's Turkey Creek Count and one other local count (Armand Bayou in Houston on the same day) were this year's victims. An intense line of thunderstorms passed through shortly before mid-day. The line of heaviest storms passed through quickly as forecast, but the trailing rain bands were more persistent than promised.

However, knowing that the rain was coming enabled the participants to cover the areas that promised to be the most productive in the first half of the morning. In all probability, and we will be able to better evaluate after full reports from more local counts come in, the number of birds wintering in the area is seriously low. This applies to warblers, sparrows and all the other local passerine species that winter here as well as waterfowl. So far there is only one bright spot. There are more raptors, especially Red-tailed Hawks than we recall in the past two or three decades. It is possible, but looks increasingly unlikely, that the normal wintering birds are just late in moving to the southernmost parts of their wintering areas and area still north of us. Our local migration count data is also sounding alarms over diminished populations. We did have a prolonged widespread severe freeze in February of 2021, and bird mortality may have been much higher than we realized at the time.

The number of species found on the Count was a very low 58. Looking back, 2007 suffered an almost identical weather event and found 57 species. Before that, some years in the 1990s were lower but the cause then was many fewer participants. Much more concerning was the exceptionally low number of individual birds. The large flocks of American Robins, American Goldfinches, Cedar Waxwings and to a lesser degree, Chipping Sparrows were not there either before the rain came or after the passage of the main line. In most rain events, we are able to count those larger flocks, since they are easy to identify. Not this year. They just weren't there.

The Ring-necked Ducks, Wood Ducks and the pair of Pied-billed Grebes were, as usual, in Lake Hyatt, the only significant body of water in the Count Circle. A Long-billed Dowitcher in a sandbar on the lake was essentially the only shorebird – Killdeers are only honorary shorebirds – and moreover was a new species for the count. Yes, we can still get a new species for the count after 43 years!

Eight Black Vultures and nine Turkey Vultures were very low totals, but vultures are not known for starting looking for food early in the day, and also not known for being active while it is raining. It is not every year that this count finds an Osprey so the one this year was good. To find nine American Kestrels was a good number considering the conditions.

Woodpeckers, most of which are non-migratory were all low, probably reflecting the weather. Red-headed Woodpeckers were back in the highest numbers in several years after being missed last year.

From anecdotal reports from around the region, Red-breasted Nuthatches are more numerous than in the past few years, and finding nine was remarkable. The only Wren species that was significantly down was House Wren. Northern Mockingbirds at four was very low for a species that we usually see 10 to 20 of.

Diversity of sparrow species was not particularly high, but 10 White-crowned Sparrows was remarkable, and White-throated Sparrows were way down. Yellow-rumped Warblers has been conspicuously almost absent this winter and 50 is about a quarter of recent norms. Orange-crowned Warblers were scarce. Pine Warblers on the other hand were found in identical numbers to last year, suggesting that if the weather had been better, they would have been up.

Birds Reported:

Wood Duck (15), Ring-necked Duck (10), Pied-billed Grebe (2), Inca Dove (1), Mourning Dove (2), Killdeer (22), Long-billed Dowitcher (1), Great Blue Heron (2), Great Egret (3), Black Vulture (8), Turkey Vulture (9), Osprey (1), Red-shouldered Hawk (8), Great Horned Owl (1), Belted Kingfisher (5), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (4), Red-headed Woodpecker (8), Red-bellied Woodpecker (39), Downy Woodpecker (12), Hairy Woodpecker (1), Pileated Woodpecker (19), Northern Flicker (10), American Kestrel (9), Merlin (1), Eastern Phoebe (9), White-eyed Vireo (5), Blue-headed Vireo (5), Blue Jay (23), American Crow (156), crow sp. (5), Carolina Chickadee (74), Tufted Titmouse (51), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (50), Golden-crowned Kinglet (25), Red-breasted Nuthatch (9), Brown-headed Nuthatch (10), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (4), House Wren (10), Winter Wren (3), Sedge Wren (3), Carolina Wren (47), Brown Thrasher (3), Northern Mockingbird (3), Eastern Bluebird (32), Hermit Thrush (8), American Robin (167), Cedar Waxwing (79), House Sparrow (7), American Goldfinch (96), Chipping Sparrow (37), White-crowned Sparrow (10), White-throated Sparrow (14), Song Sparrow (10), Swamp Sparrow (9), Orange-crowned Warbler (5), Pine Warbler (71), Yellow-rumped Warbler (49), Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (3), Northern Cardinal (84); **Total Species (58), Total Individuals (1369)**

Number of observers (12), Number of parties (7), Party-hours on foot (20.45), Party-miles on foot (11.85), Party-hours by car (23.1), Party-miles by car (128.4), Party-hours stationary (0.7), Party-hours owling (0.5), Total party-hours (45.5), Total party-miles (140.25),

Participants: Nancy Angell, Sherry Gibson, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Steve Mayes, Sherrie Roden, Christine Sliva, Wanda and Charles Smith, Harlan Stewart, Jana and John Whittle.

Thanks are due to Sheila Hebert for all her work in organizing and compiling this count.

John A. Whittle

Beech Creek Christmas Bird Count 21 December 2021

This count is one of the longest running counts in East and Southeast Texas, this being the 44th consecutive year. Christmas Counts are always at the mercy of the weather, as our December weather does not involve prolonged periods of adverse condition, so when the weather one day does turn sour, then the birds just shelter and hide until the next day. Fortunately, the weather for the count this year was more or less favorable. After a chilly overcast start to the day, the temperature climbed to near 60 degrees, and the wind was light. With twelve participants, coverage of the count circle was good.

The Count Circle has a nicely balanced mixture of habitats, from Steinhagen Lake in the north to the beech woodlands of the Big Thicket National Preserve Beech Creek Unit, and other woodland areas dominated by pines. The Canyonlands Unit, on the west side of the Neches River below the Town Bluff dam is a recent addition to the Preserve, and some progress is being made towards making the interior of it more accessible. There are only a few areas of open country, but that is to be expected in the Big Thicket!

The Count recorded 74 species, on the low end of normal for a count which expects around 80 species. The number of individuals at 1546 was extremely low. Normal is between 3000 and 6000. Low species counts and low numbers have been a feature of all the Counts in greater South East Texas that have provided reports so far. This will be a subject of discussion for the next twelve months or so and everyone will be looking to see what next year's counts bring to the overall picture. It is easy to see the major contributors to the low counts – lack of ducks and other waterfowl, and low numbers of migratory passerine species. The first issue – lack of ducks was one of the first trends to appear this winter. The first thoughts are always that they have not made it this far south yet, as some of many ducks and goose species will winter as far north as there is open water. So a cold snap further north that freezes the ponds could drive duck and geese south. American Coots were in incredibly low numbers two years ago for no apparent reason, came back some last year but then were very low this year. Time will tell. The other issue with passerines may be more complex. It is known that many species – American Robins are probably the prime and most visible example – will move south as food supplies further north are depleted or become inaccessible. Flocks of Cedar Waxwings and other species are very nomadic and will roam the countryside looking for berries and will move south as necessary. Seed eaters such as sparrows and goldfinches will also move south in search of food. Sparrows were found on the Count, but Chipping Sparrows were not along many roadsides as they usually are. There just weren't the flocks of goldfinch flying overhead that there normally are. Yellow-rumped Warblers are not as numerous as usual. Many of the species we normally see in small numbers were not seen this year, and that contributes to both the low species count and the low overall numbers. Perhaps the most obvious possible explanation is mortality in the freeze of February 2021. Winter mortality results in fewer birds to return north and fewer breeding birds leading in turn to fewer "birds of the year" to migrate south in the fall and winter. The numbers of two

species believed to have been more severely affected in the freeze – Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Eastern Phoebes bear this out. The relatively few resident Passerine species do not seem to have been affected as much as the migratory ones. This is somewhat difficult to explain. One would expect that the migratory species are better equipped to cope with severe weather since many often experience a late cold spell after they migrate north. The one positive trend seen nearer the coast – a large increase in the number of wintering raptors -- does not seem to be reflected in the Count results

Thanks are due to Sheila Hebert for organizing and compiling the count this year.

Species seen: Wood Duck (2); Canvasback (5); duck sp. (30); Pied-billed Grebe (4); Eurasian Collared-Dove (2); Mourning Dove (6); Common Gallinule (6); American Coot (10); Killdeer (7); Spotted Sandpiper (3); Forster's Tern (28); Double-crested Cormorant (96); Neotropic Cormorant (2); American White Pelican (43); Great Blue Heron (11); Great Egret (21); Black Vulture (23); Turkey Vulture (67); Bald Eagle (4); Red-shouldered Hawk (19); Red-tailed Hawk (5); Eastern Screech-Owl (1); Great Horned Owl (1); owl sp. (1); Belted Kingfisher (10); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (8); Red-headed Woodpecker (7); Red-bellied Woodpecker (25); Downy Woodpecker (13); Hairy Woodpecker (2); Pileated Woodpecker (24); Northern Flicker (7); Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted) (1); American Kestrel (1); Merlin (1); Eastern Phoebe (7); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue-headed Vireo (5); Blue Jay (29); American Crow (108); Carolina Chickadee (53); Tufted Titmouse (27); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (52); Golden-crowned Kinglet (13); Red-breasted Nuthatch (4); Brown-headed Nuthatch (10); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (3); House Wren (6); Winter Wren (1); Carolina Wren (43); Gray Catbird (2); Brown Thrasher (1); Northern Mockingbird (5); Eastern Bluebird (16); Hermit Thrush (3); American Robin (13); Cedar Waxwing (25); American Goldfinch (147); Chipping Sparrow (70); Dark-eyed Junco (21); White-throated Sparrow (36); Savannah Sparrow (15); Song Sparrow (5); Swamp Sparrow (14); Eastern Towhee (2); Eastern Meadowlark (16); Red-winged Blackbird (58); Brown-headed Cowbird (7); Common Grackle (39); Orange-crowned Warbler (10); Pine Warbler (72); Yellow-rumped Warbler (22); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (12); Northern Cardinal (77).

SPECIES TOTAL (74); INDIVIDUALS TOTAL (1546)
Number of observers (12); Number of parties (6); Party-hours on foot (19); Party-miles on foot (17.64); Party-hours by car (20.9); Party-miles by car (83.5); Party-hours stationary (2.25); Party-hours owling (2.25); Total party-hours (41.15); Total party-miles (96.1).

Participants: Nancy Angell, David Bell, Sherry Gibson, Sheila Hebert, Phillip Hight, Fred Lyons, Jaclynn Parker, Christine Sliva, John Smelser, Jana and John Whittle, Laura Wilson

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings – December 2021

or this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records reported to us from nearby Texas counties – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review records for Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana. In most cases, we do not include birds that are "heard only."

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-and

brief location information if available – (number) – Observer(s). If more precise location information is needed, it can often be obtained by using the bird species map feature to find the sighting in eBird, opening the checklist, and using the map function to display the location as precisely as the observer provided.

Commentary: Little space for any comments again this month! Many of the sightings were on Christmas Bird Counts. Many others are lingering migrants.

Core Counties (listed above)

Purple Gallinule	Dec 4	JEF-TP (1) HS, mult obs
	Dec 24-25	JEF-TP (1) Clint Robinson, Ethan Porter
Yellow Rail	Dec 30	JEF-McFaddin NWR (1) John Whittle
California Gull	Dec 30	JEF-SRSP-East Beach (1) Sheila Hebert
Purple Finch	Dec 30	ANG-Lufkin (1)
Baltimore Oriole	Dec 14	HAI-Sour Lake (1 fem) John Park
Hooded Warbler	Dec 30	JAS-nr Sam Rayburn Parkway/CR 51 (2) Phillip Hight
Magnolia Warbler	Dec 4	JEF-SW (1) SM
Y-R (Audubon's Warbler	Dec 4	JEF-SW (1) SM
Black-thr Green Warbler	Dec 4, 12	JEF-SW (3) SM
Summer Tanager	Dec 30	ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter, Mike Austin, Tony Frank
Western Tanager	Dec 25-30	ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter, mult obs

Nearby Counties

White-winged Scoter	Dec 10	HAS-Thompson Bait Camp Baytown (1) Cin-Ty Lee
Lesser Nighthawk	Dec 12-13	GAL-FM2004/FM646 area Private Ranch (1) Kyle O'Haver, Robt Becker, Richard Liebler
Purple Gallinule	Dec 1	HAS-Sheldon Lake Garrett Rd (1) Robert Tizard
	Dec 13	CAM-Cameron Prairie NWR Wildlife Loop (1) Jack Rogers
Limpkin	Dec 2-31	HAS-Sheldon Lk SP (5) mult obs
Whimbrel	Dec 4	GAL-Artist Boat Preserve (1) Grag Hall
	Dec 11-12	GAL-San Luis Pass area(1) Dean Silvers
	Dec 12	GAL-BF(5) Sanjay Karanth
Brown Booby	Dec 1-11	HAS-Baytown Nat Ctr (21) mult obs
Least Bittern	Dec 14	CAM-Johnson Bayou Cemetery (1) Katie Barnes, Charlotte Chechotsky, Erik Johnson
Mississippi Kite	Dec 8	HAS-Taylor Lake Village (2) Vernon Fridy
	Dec 30	HAS-Cypress (1) Savannah Damiano
Harris's Hawk	Dec 1-8	CHA-ANWR-VIS area (1) mult obs
White-tailed Hawk	Dec 22	LIB-W of Liberty Mun Golf Course (1) Mike Riley
Ferruginous Hawk	Dec 17	CAL-Hayes (1) Erik Johnson
Parasitic Jaeger	Dec 10	HAS-immed east of San Luis Pass (1) Richard Liebler
	Dec 28	HAS-Baytown W Bayshore Dr (1) Peter Engler
	Dec 29	GAL-San Luis Pass (1) Greg Cook, Steve Glover
Franklin's Gull	Dec 12-30	CAL-Lake Charles at Millennium Pk (2) James Smithers, mult obs

Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	Dec 22	HAS-Ash Lake (1 first yr) Tim Perkins, Cin-Ty Lee, Stuart Nelson, Todd McGrath mult obs
	Dec 22	GAL-Texas City Dike (1 imm) Richard Rulander
Red-naped Sapsucker	Dec 21-31	HAS-Glenwood Cemetery (1) Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
Ladder-back. W/Pecker	Dec 28	HAS-Warren Ranch (2) James Rieman, Cin-Ty Lee, Todd McGrath
Greater Pewee	Dec 1-31	HAS-Bear Creek Pk (1) mult obs
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Dec 26	HAS-Spring Valley Village (1) Nina Rach
Least Flycatcher	Dec 14	CAM-Johnson Bayou (1) Katie Barnes, Charlotte Chechotsky, Erik Johnson
Couch's Kingbird	Dec 22	LIB- W of Liberty Mun Golf Course (1) Mike Riley
Western Kingbird	Dec 1	CAM-Peveto Woods (3) mult obs
	Dec 7	HAS--Baytown Nat Ctr (1) Richard Rulander
	Dec 17	CAM-Lake Arthur (1) Andrew From
Eastern Kingbird	Dec 22	HAS-Herman Brown Pk (1) Julie Francis
Yellow-throated Vireo	Dec 29	HAS-Friendswood (1) Steven Berenzweig
N Rough-wing Swallow	Dec 18	GAL-Bayside Reg. Pk (20) Sandy Parker
	Dec 18	GAL-Eva Lobit Park (1) Jackie Farrell, Jane Murtishaw
	Dec 25	CAL-Nelson Rd S of Lake Charles (1) Brad Lirette
Bewick's Wren	Dec 1, 15	HAS-Katy Prairie Nelson Farms E (1) Letha Slagle, Jim Hinson
Purple Finch	Dec 17	LIB-Dayton (1) Jennifer Koppersmith
Clay-colored Sparrow	Dec 2	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Timothy Freiday
	Dec 19	CAL-Hwy397 (1) David Muth
Fox Sparrow (Red)	Dec 13	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoof, Averi Lohman, Ryan McGinty
Spotted Towhee	Dec 15-16	HAS-Sharp Road (1) Jim Hinson, Evan Chastain
	Dec 21	HAS-Challenger 7 Mem Pk (1) Chris Bick
Yellow-breasted Chat	Dec 13	HAS-Geo Bush Pk (1) Timothy White
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Dec 7	CHA-Pear Orchard Rd (1) Richard Liebler
Western Meadowlark	Dec 21	HAS-J P Landing Pk (2) Letha Slagle
	Dec 28	HAS-Warren Ranch (2) James Rieman, Cin-Ty Lee, Todd McGrath
	Dec 29	HAS-J P Landing Pk (1) Nicholas DeMaio
Bullock's Oriole	Dec 18	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) J&C Miles
	Dec 18	GAL-Dickinson (1) Lance Pawlik

(continued on page 3)

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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 forms of 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.

Many rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on Facebook Texbirds or on the TEXTBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds. It is not necessary to subscribe to view the archives, which include all recent postings.

Detailed information/maps on birding sites in Texas is available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirds.org/birdingLocations.php>. This leads you to the maps of the various eBird hotspots. You can also subscribe (free) on eBird for email alerts for all rare birds reported in a specific county.