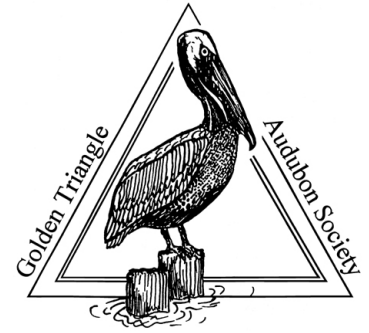


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 28 No 2

February 2022

**Membership Meeting
Thursday February 17, 2022 7:00 p.m.
Canceled; Program Postponed to March**

Reluctantly, we have decided that it would still not be prudent to hold an in-person membership meeting in February. We recognize that we will eventually have to come to terms with Covid and allow everyone to make their own assessments. However, as this is written, it is not clear that cases of the Omicron variant have yet peaked locally. In addition to that, we do not want to ask our speaker to present to possibly a very small audience. Mr. VanMarion will present his program on bees on March 17 at the March Membership Meeting.

We recognize that many of you miss our Membership Meetings. We will continue to hold our Field Trips. These are outdoor events that present a much reduced risk, and we have had good attendance at those we have conducted over the past eighteen months or so. We recognize many of them involve more walking than many of you can easily do, but we have been trying to make "non-walking" options available even though that is not always possible.

**Field Trip to Anahuac NWR
Saturday February 19, 2022**

See the details on page 2. Since this is an outdoor event, we expect to proceed with this field trip unless the Covid situation gets very much worse. It has, however, a large car birding component and we would like to keep the number of vehicles to a minimum.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 28, No.2 February 2022
Issue number 280

Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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The Brown Pelican is published monthly except July by the Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292
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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 February 17, 2022. Membership Meeting. See page 1 for details.

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. Watch along the entrance road especially near the south end for Crested Caracaras and 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.

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.

Saturday March 5, 2022. Tentative. Sabine Woods Work Day. For more details, see the Web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. Any changes will be posted there.

Saturday March 19, 2022. Tentative. Field trip to Bolivar Flats. 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. This trip offers an opportunity to compare many of the "true" shorebirds with lots of help in identifying them. If you want help in identifying, gulls, terns, plover or sandpipers, this is the trip for you.

Meet at the vehicle barrier at 9:00 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 Rettillon Road. At the beach, if conditions permit, turn right (west) about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. Follow recent tire tracks, and be careful to avoid any cuts that may have developed. 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 late.

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.

Important Note: Galveston County operates a parking permit program on the Bolivar Peninsula. If you park on most parts of the beach, including the



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

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.

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 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 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 hope to have some comments on what we can learn from the Christmas Bird Counts in the next issue or two.

From Golden Triangle Audubon Society – Facebook Page

by Jana Whittle

There are several places to bird in the winter within a two hour drive from our area. I thought I would list some of the places starting with the ones that are closest to us and then farther out. Also, I am listing the number of bird species that have been recorded by ebird.org in those areas for many years.

1. Cattail Marsh in Beaumont (total number of bird species 284)
2. West Jefferson County (total number of bird species 246)
3. Pleasure Island in Port Arthur (total number of bird species 239)
4. Sea Rim State Park (total number of bird species 306)
5. McFaddin NWR (total number of bird species 273)
6. Anahuac NWR (total number of bird species 336)
7. Galveston Island State Park (total number of bird species 322)
8. Cameron Prairie (LA), Pintail Loop (total number of bird species 254).
9. Brazoria NWR (total number of bird species 326)
10. Brazos Bend State Park (total number of bird species 303)
11. Katy Prairie (total number of bird species 272)
12. Texas City Dike (total number of bird species 251)
13. Bolivar Flats (307)
14. Sheldon Lake State Park (total number of bird species 292)

And in the spring, most of you know that there are also great places to see the most migrating warblers and other spring migrants in our area. They are:

1. Sabine Woods (total number of bird species 324)
2. Peveto Woods in Louisiana (total number of bird species 316)
3. Smith Oaks in High island (total number of bird species 332)
4. Lafitte's Cove in Galveston (total number of bird species 322)
5. Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary (total number of bird species 335)

Bird Sightings January 2022

Continued from page 7

Bewick's Wren	Jan 1	HAS-Warren Ranch (1) Todd McGrath, James Rieman
	Jan 14-27	HAS- Sharp Rd (1) Jim Hinson, Andrew Hamlett, mult obs
Clay-colored Sparrow	Jan 3	GAL-FM2004/FM546 Area (1) Robt Becker, Richard Liebler
Henslow's Sparrow	Jan 2	LIB-CR125 (1) J&C Miles
	Jan 2	HAS-Geo Bush Pk (1) Ted Schaefer, Bob Sanger
	Jan 16-30	HAS-Barker Reservoir (1) Jim Hinson, Drew Dickert, mult obs
Spotted Towhee	Jan 1-23	HAS-Longenbaugh Rd (1) Megan Ahlgren, Jim Hinson, Howard Smith, mult obs
	Jan 1-13	HAS-Challenger 7 Memorial Pk (1) Chris Bick
Yellow-head. Blackbird	Jan 1-3	CHA-FM1985 (5) Steve Glover Greg Cook, Wyatt Egelhoff

Western Meadowlark	Jan 1-3	HAS-Atkinson Is (1) mult obs
	Jan 7	CAM-Broussard Beach (1) Nick Ramsey
	Jan 17, 23	HAS-Morgan's Pt (1) Dale Wolck
	Jan 18, 27	HAS- J P Landing Pm (1) Ross Silcock, mult obs
Bullock's Oriole	Jan 26	GAL-Hitchcock (1) Judy Alessi
Baltimore Oriole	Jan 17	HAS-Humble Atascosita area (1 male) Bernie Jacoby
Louisiana Waterthrush	Jan 16	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Dave Herdegen
Northern Waterthrush	Jan 26	HAS-El Franco Lee Park (1) Steve Rogow
Northern Parula	Jan 7	HAS-Seabrook (2) Hilary Gibbs
Tropical Parula	Jan 1-31	HAS-Hermann Park (1) Howard Laidlaw, mult obs
Yellow-throated Warbler	Jan 3	CAM-Willow Island (1) Melvin Weber
Prairie Warbler	Jan 4-14	HAS-Hermann Pk (1) Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
Black-thr. Green Warbler	Jan 2	HAS-Memorial area (1) Sue Orwig
Summer Tanager	Jan 2-8	GAL-Dickinson (1) Dennis Cooke
	Jan 31	HAS-Seabrook (1) Seabrook Hilary Gibbs
Scarlet Tanager	Jan 11-17	GAL-High Is Smith Oaks (1) Richard Liebler, mult obs
Western Tanager	Jan 2-9,23	HAS-Memorial Area (1) Sue Orwig
	Jan 6	HAS-Addicks Res S Levee (1) Mike Bradham
	Jan 13	GAL-Dickinson (1) Dennis Cooke
	Jan 29	HAS-Friendswood (1) Chris Bick
Black-headed Grosbeak	Jan 17	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
	Jan 25	HAS-S of Atascosita (1) Corey Koehn
	Jan 27	HAS- San Jacinto Battleground (1) Dale Wolck
Blue Grosbeak	Jan 7	CAL-Iowa (2) Jonathon Lueck
Painted Bunting	Jan 6, 23	HAS-Baytown Nat Ctr (1) Ray Porter
	Jan 18	HAS-FM190/Kuykemdahl (1) Carrie Koch

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.

Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count -- 30 December 2021

After having to cancel the Sea Rim count twice in the previous three years, we were able to run the count in 2021, and were blessed with exceptionally pleasant weather, except for a thick sea fog on the beaches for much of the day. The cancellations in the two previous years were caused primarily by access issues and secondarily by accurately forecast weather that rendered birding all but impossible.

Access issues have not been completely resolved, but the McFaddin and Texas Point National Wildlife Refuges were able to resume their cooperation, which greatly facilitated the count. The LNG Plant construction has taken way habitat between the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and Sabine Pass, although we thank the J D Murphree WMA for land access west of the rerouted Highway 87. The effects of hurricanes and tropical storms continue to make access to the beach areas more difficult. The Sea Rim Estates owners allowed access to the beach there, but there is still a deep soft bottomed cut from the Texas Point Refuge into the Gulf one mile east of the access road that may be a feature there for some years to come. The beach east of Sea Rim headquarters has not been accessible by vehicle for some months now, but the sand is filling in, and access should be restored fairly soon. Nevertheless, the more participants able to walk distances on the beaches we have, the better coverage we will have of them! We did not have access to the road to the lighthouse on the Louisiana side of the ship channel. The water level in the South Impoundment on Pleasure Island was very low.

Enough Christmas Counts had been conducted by the date of this count that it was no surprise that duck numbers and duck species diversity were low. The total number of species at 130 was exactly the same as in 2019, while the number of individual birds was higher, but not in the range of numbers we found a decade ago. As recently as five years ago, this count found around 150 species, so there is still a way to go to return to that normal. While ducks and other waterfowl are a significant part of the story, the lack of wintering migrant passerine species is the other major factor, also being found elsewhere in the region. While it may be that the migrants are just very late in pushing south to their normal wintering grounds, this has not happened to this extent in any year we can remember. We will know in a very few weeks.

Rarities this year were quite varied. A pair of Wood Ducks in the "far" pond at Sabine Woods is not an everyday occurrence, but has happened in the past. A Yellow Rail partly swam and partly flew across a boat channel in McFaddin Refuge. The East Beach at Sea Rim SP produced a well photographed California Gull, a species being reported with increasing frequency in the region, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull, now a well-established species along the Gulf beaches. It was 2006 since we last found Red Knots on this count, so it was nice to find three on the beach east of Sea Rim Estates. A Western Kingbird along Highway 87 near the Old Cemetery had apparently been there for some time, as had two Black-throated Green Warblers in Sabine Woods. A Tropical/Couch's Kingbird on Backridge Road could not be identified as to species.

We had been forewarned that we would not find the usual flocks of ducks, especially teal, Northern Shoveler and

Gadwall in McFaddin, but finding good numbers and good diversity in the lakes and ponds in J D Murphree was a little surprising. Goose numbers were low, but we know there are concentrations of geese in Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana, just not in the count circle this year.

Gull and tern numbers were low, probably because of the limited coverage of the beaches and the persistent sea fog. Snowy Plover was a surprising miss. Herons, egrets and ibis were all in normal numbers. Most other passerine species were unremarkable, but sparrows were in short supply as has been the case further inland.

Species recorded: WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (2); GOOSE, Snow (284); DUCK, Wood (2); TEAL, Blue-winged (20); SHOVELER, Northern (408); GADWALL (32); DUCK, Mottled (19); PINTAIL, Northern (3); TEAL, Green-winged (106); CANVASBACK (3); REDHEAD (1); SCAUP, Lesser (12); MERGANSER, Hooded (5); DUCK, Ruddy (20); DUCK, species (1520); GREBE, Pied-billed (32); PIGEON, Rock (62); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (23); DOVE, White-winged (7); DOVE, Mourning (79); RAIL, King (5); RAIL, Clapper (9); RAIL, King/Clapper (11); RAIL, Virginia (7); SORA (5); GALLINULE, Common (62); COOT, American (893); RAIL, Yellow (1); STILT, Black-necked (55); AVOCET, American (157); PLOVER, Black-bellied (17); KILLDEER (61); PLOVER, Semipalmated (18); PLOVER, Piping (3); CURLEW, Long-billed (1); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (15); KNOT, Red (3); SANDERLING (119); DUNLIN (98); SANDPIPER, Least (13); SANDPIPER, Western (14); SANDPIPER species (136); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (26); DOWITCHER, Long-billed (750); DOWITCHER, species (100); SNIPE, Wilson's (4); SANDPIPER, Spotted (1); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (24); WILLET (17); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (61); YELLOWLEGS, species (1); GULL, Laughing (783); GULL, Ring-billed (170); GULL, California (1); GULL, Herring (40); GULL, Lesser Black-backed (1); GULL, species (218); TERN, Caspian (9); TERN, Common (1); TERN, Forster's (66); TERN, Royal (77); TERN, species (50); ANHINGA (19); CORMORANT, Neotropic (124); CORMORANT, Double-crested (72); CORMORANT species (40); PELICAN, American White (1268); PELICAN, Brown (74); BITTERN, American (2); HERON, Great Blue (62); EGRET, Great (144); EGRET, Snowy (82); HERON, Little Blue (17); HERON, Tricolored (28); HERON, Green (1); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (2); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (1); IBIS, White (370); IBIS, White-faced (415); IBIS, *Plegadis* species (362); SPOONBILL, Roseate (72); VULTURE, Black (60); VULTURE, Turkey (64); OSPREY (14); KITE, White-tailed (2); HARRIER, Northern (11); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (1); HAWK, Cooper's (2); HAWK, Red-tailed (46); OWL, Great Horned (5); KINGFISHER, Belted (18); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (6); WOODPECKER, Downy (8); KESTREL, American (3); MERLIN (2); FALCON, Peregrine (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (14); KINGBIRD, Tropical/Couch's (1); KINGBIRD, Western (1); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (26); VIREO, Blue-headed (5); JAY, Blue (19); SWALLOW, Tree (125); CHICKADEE, Carolina (1); NUTHATCH, Red-breasted (3); WREN, House (4); WREN, Sedge (11); WREN, Marsh (15); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (16); KINGLET, Golden-crowned (11); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (23); CATBIRD, Gray (4); THRASHER, Brown (3); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (16); STARLING, European (318); PIPIT, American (10); SPARROW, White-throated (3); SPARROW, Seaside (5); SPARROW, Nelson's (5); SPARROW, Savannah (22); SPARROW, Song (8); SPARROW, Lincoln's (3); SPARROW, Swamp (32); TOWHEE, Eastern (1); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (571); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (18); GRACKLE, Common (53); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (256); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (89); WARBLER, Black-and-white (2); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (7); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (19); WARBLER, Pine (5); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (9); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped(Myrtle) (6); WARBLER, Black-throated Green (2); CARDINAL, Northern (14); SPARROW, House (6).

SPECIES, total (130); INDIVIDUALS, total (11906).
Observers (14); Parties (6). Party-hours total (40.88); Party-miles total (74.25); Party-hours on foot (20.63); Party-miles on foot (8.60); Party-hours by car (20.25); Party-miles by car (65.65); Party-hours by airboat (2.00); Party-miles by airboat (22.30); Party-hours stationary (0.75).

Participants: Nancy Angell, Howard Davis, Ashley Fuselier, Sherry Gibson, Stephanie Goering, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Denise and Gary Kelley, Sherrie Roden.,Christine Sliva, Monique Slaughter, Harlan Stewart, John Whittle

Orange County Christmas Bird Count, January 1, 2022

Sponsored by Golden Triangle Audubon Society

As did other things in the past year, the TXOC 122 Christmas Bird Count had its ups and downs. Eighteen people participated, which is high, and the weather this year was pleasant, not freezing. It's always a pleasure to have guests join the GTAS regulars. A record of over 12,000 individual birds contained a low species count of 102. Three Herring Gulls and four Cattle Egrets were nice surprises and new to the TXOC list. Not sure if that's trending. Among the missing this year were Lesser Scaup, Hermit Thrush, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Roseate Spoonbill and Caspian Tern and a few others that show up occasionally.

Other than Blue-winged Teal, ducks were down, especially Pintails, Gadwalls, N. Shovelers and Mergansers. This scarcity of ducks was not unique to this count – they were in very low numbers in all regional counts for which we have seen results. There was a near absence of waterfowl of any kind at Cameron Meadows for the Johnson Bayou (LA) Christmas Count. Not even the usually ubiquitous American Coots! (This may be largely the result of the very recent spreading of large amounts of dredge material over these ponds.) So it was encouraging to find lots of Blue-winged Teal on the Orange County count as noted below. But the larger species were still down very substantially. One interesting observation is that the ducks that were present in the Sea Rim, Johnson Bayou and Orange County count circles tended to be concentrated in relatively small areas that are not intensively hunted! Largely as a result of this, coupled with our access to these favored areas, more individual birds were tallied in the Orange County Count than in at least the past 10 years at 12,132. The next highest was 8,997 in 2015. The largest single contribution was an estimated 2,900 Blue-winged Teal at the Hawk Club, but other concentrations included 2,300 Red-winged Blackbirds, 1,600 Brown-headed Cowbirds, followed by 678 European Starlings. There were well-above-average numbers of Common, Great-tailed and Boat-tailed Grackles plus 400 generic Grackles. House Sparrows and Eastern Bluebirds also put up historically large numbers for TXOC. But American Robins were nearly a miss this year.

There hasn't been more than one Snow Goose for several years, so 109 Snow Geese with a Ross's for lagniappe was nice. Rock (feral) Pigeons and Mourning Doves also increased. A Summer Tanager showed after two years absence. Another interesting observation is that the numbers of the smaller wintering migratory Passerine species are within the normal ranges, unlike many other local counts. We see no obvious reason for that.

As for the past seven years, we had access to private property and would like to thank the owners and managers of two large parcels, Hawk Club and Odum Interests, on the southeast edge of the circle. We appreciate Gerald Langham for access to his property north of Bessie Heights and also J.B. Arrington for access to the lake on his property east of Claiborne West Park.

Visit www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count for more info on Audubon Christmas Counts, from the history of CBCs to the rules for counts, to data archives and science articles drawing on the CBC database.

Here's the list of all sightings in this year's Orange County Christmas Bird Count (TXOC 122).

WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (105); GOOSE, Snow (109); GOOSE, Ross's (1); DUCK, Wood (12); TEAL, Blue-winged (2913); SHOVELER, Northern (3); GADWALL (3); MALLARD (9); DUCK, Mottled (14); TEAL, Green-winged (275); DUCK, Ring-necked (2); DUCK sp. (15); GREBE, Pied-billed (5); PIGEON, Rock (129); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (11); DOVE, White-winged (28); DOVE, Mourning (107); ; RAIL King (1); RAIL, Clapper (3); GALLINULE, Common (5); COOT, American (5); WOODCOCK, American (1); SNIPE, Wilson's (7); KILLDEER (69); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (11); GULL, Laughing (161); GULL, Ring-billed (100); GULL, Herring (3); GULL, Lesser Black-backed (1); Gull sp. (60); TERN, Forster's (6); TERN, Royal (1); ANHINGA (24); CORMORANT, Neotropic (103); CORMORANT, Double-crested (24); Cormorant sp. (7); PELICAN, American White (15); PELICAN, Brown (11); HERON, Great Blue (21); EGRET, Great (167); EGRET, Snowy (48); HERON, Little Blue (26); EGRET, Cattle (4); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (26); IBIS, White (129); IBIS, White-faced (3); Ibis, Glossy / White-faced (16); VULTURE, Black (81); VULTURE, Turkey (72); OSPREY (23); HARRIER, Northern (4); HAWK, Sharp-shinned (1); EAGLE, Bald (6); HAWK, Red-shouldered (7); HAWK, Red-tailed (21); OWL, Barred (2); KINGFISHER, Belted (18); WOODPECKER, Red-Bellied (19); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (2); WOODPECKER, Downy (4); CARACARA, Crested (6); KESTREL, American (20); MERLIN (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (22); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (26); VIREO, Blue-headed (2); JAY, Blue (57); CROW, American (35); CHICADEE, Carolina (42); TITMOUSE, Tufted (2); SWALLOW, Tree (5); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (22); WREN, House (3); WREN, Sedge (1); WREN, Marsh (4); WREN, Carolina (31); KINGLET, Golden-crowned (6); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (38); STARLING, European (678); ROBIN, American (3); CATBIRD, Gray (3); THRASHER, Brown (1); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (49); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (116); WAXWING, Cedar (8); SPARROW, House (110); PIPIT, American (1); PINE SISKIN (1); GOLDFINCH, American (65); SPARROW, Chipping (11); SPARROW, White-throated (23); SPARROW, Savannah (37); SPARROW, Song (4); SPARROW, Lincoln's (1); SPARROW, Swamp (2); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (19); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (2303); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (1600); GRACKLE, Common (161); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (227); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (391); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (10); WARBLER, Pine (130); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (301); TANAGER, Summer (1); CARDINAL, Northern (93); Hawk sp. (1); Quiscalis sp. (400).
102 species and 12,132 individuals.

Observers: Andrew Franks, Sherrie Gibson, Claudia Gilson, Marilyn and Rick Guidry, Greg and Lynn Jackson, Gary and Denise Kelley, Steve Mayes, Trish McIntosh, Cynthia Parrish, Sherrie Roden, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, John and Jana Whittle, Laura Wilson.

Gary Kelley and John Whittle

Field Trip to Cattail Marsh – 21 January 2022

The January 2022 field trip will certainly be remembered as one of the coldest in recent Golden Triangle Audubon history. The day dawned with temperatures below freezing with a bit of wind that made it even colder. Would the field trip to Tyrell Park's Cattail Marsh be worth braving these conditions? Would anyone show up for the field trip under these circumstances? The answer to both questions was, of course, yes!

Checking out the boardwalk, there were some ducks gathered in the open areas and along the edges of the water hyacinth. Green-winged Teal were present in some numbers with some Blue-winged Teal as well. A bit of searching turned up the male Cinnamon Teal loafing along the vegetation line. A bit more searching produced a not quite satisfying look (it was sleeping with its head tucked) at the Cinnamon x Blue-winged Teal hybrid that has been present in the area this winter. Gadwall were easily seen but finding the few Mallards present took a little more looking. Common Gallinules certainly are common at Cattail Marsh and were easily seen. Some Pied-billed Grebes rounded out a nice group of birds present near the boardwalk.

Looking out across the marsh, the nesting Bald Eagles were located. Both adult birds were perched near their huge nest and seen well in spotting scopes. Closely checking the nest perched high in a pine tree, the head of a small eaglet was occasionally seen popping up. The nest failed last year, so it is nice to have some hope that the pair will be able to fledge at least one young eagle this year. Speaking of young eagles, an immature eagle was also seen flying over the marsh. It could just be passing through or might even be the offspring of the nesting pair from a couple of years ago as it was likely a second-year bird. Four Bald Eagles in a day always makes a field trip worthwhile!

Heading out around the marsh, the group checked a reliable sparrow spot. Sparrows have not been particularly abundant this winter. A Prairie Warbler that was recently reported from that area was a no show unfortunately but Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers were located on the day. This area is also known for producing King Rails and the group have had several close encounters with this species here. On this date, the rails were quite vocal but did not feel like coming out of the dense marsh vegetation for a look.

A few Shorebirds were present nearby but not as many as were hoped for. One area of the marsh had fairly extensive mudflats present recently but rising waters had covered most of the mud by the day of the field trip. The most common shorebird seen here were Least Sandpipers which is not unusual. A few noisy Black-necked Stilts also made their presence known to the group with loud alarm calls. Gulls were passing overhead throughout the trip. Hundreds of birds circled above as they travelled between the nearby landfills and sewage plant. Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls were the most common species present.

Raptors are always a treat on these trips and the group was not disappointed. Red-shouldered Hawk was the first sighted but it would soon be joined by several Red-tailed Hawks. One of the highlights of the trip was sighting the western rufous morph Red-tail that has been a winter fixture at Cattail Marsh for years. Northern Harriers are always present at the marsh in winter and were seen on the day. A Cooper's Hawk was found perched in

a tree along the route. Plenty of Black and Turkey Vultures circled nearby joining the gulls near the landfills.

The group circled around the marsh to the deep-water cell 1 where diving ducks are often found. The most sought-after bird was a Long-tailed Duck that had been present in recent weeks but, alas, it was not seen on the day. The birders satisfied themselves looking at Lesser Scaup and tiny Buffleheads with a few Ruddy Ducks thrown in as well. More duck species were found in other parts of the marsh. A large collection of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks roosted in one of the cells including one mostly white bird – leucistic individual. This was an interesting bird to see even if it was from a distance. Northern Shovelers are often abundant at the marsh but only a few were present on this day. A couple of Northern Pintail and a Mottled Duck were also spotted on the trip.

Song birds were found along the wooded edges of the marsh and in the scrubby vegetation along the levees. Several Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were seen and heard along with a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Golden-crowned Kinglets were also seen and heard giving their high-pitched calls. Eastern Phoebe hunted for insects from the willow trees while Tree Swallows hunted them over the open water. Carolina and House Wrens were heard along the way and an American Pipit flew overhead. American Goldfinch was heard along with a Blue Jay from the forested areas. A nice finish to the trip around the marsh was a single Wilson's Warbler seen not far from the parking lot area.

A quick trip along the bridle trail outside of the marsh produced nice birds such as Blue-headed Vireo, Northern Cardinal and Red-bellied Woodpecker. All in all, it was a better day than expected at Cattail Marsh given the cold start with more birders present than all would have guessed. But maybe next year's trip could be a little warmer?

The following species were recorded by the trip leaders:

Black-bellied Whistling Duck (500); Blue-winged Teal (150); Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal (1); Cinnamon Teal (1); Gad-wall (50); Northern Shoveler (6); Mallard (3); Mottled Duck (1); Northern Pintail (2); Green-winged Teal (150); Lesser Scaup (50); Bufflehead (10); Ruddy Duck (2); Pied-billed Grebe (10); Mourning Dove (2); King Rail (3); Virginia Rail (5); Sora (7); Common Gallinule (50); American Coot (50); Sandhill Crane (31); Black-necked Stilt (2); Killdeer (7); Least Sandpiper (12); Wilson's Snipe (1); Laughing Gull (100); Ring-billed Gull (100); Gull sp. (350); Forster's Tern (2); Neotropic Cormorant (12); Double-crested Cormorant (3); Great Blue Heron (3); Great Egret (6); Snowy Egret (15); Little Blue Heron (2); Tricolored Heron (2); Cattle Egret (2); Black-crowned Night-Heron (2); White Ibis (25); White-faced Ibis (125); Black Vulture (25); Turkey Vulture (79); Northern Harrier (3); Cooper's Hawk (1); Bald Eagle (4); Red-shouldered Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (3); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); Eastern Phoebe (5); Blue-headed Vireo (2); Blue Jay (3); Tree Swallow (5); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (7); Golden-crowned Kinglet (3); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (9); House Wren (2); Carolina Wren (3); European Starling (10); American Pipit (2); American Goldfinch (2); White-crowned Sparrow (1); Savannah Sparrow (2); Song Sparrow (2); Swamp Sparrow (2); Red-winged Blackbird (50); Boat-tailed Grackle (5); Orange-crowned Warbler (3); Common Yellowthroat (1); Yellow-rumped Warbler (8); Wilson's Warbler (1); Northern Cardinal (4)

Steve Mayes

Bird Sightings – January 2022

For 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: A fairly large list of birds that are unusual because of the time of year, plus a few that are unusual at any time of the year.

Core Counties (listed above)

Long-tailed Duck	Jan 7-17	TP-Cell 1 (2) Bonnie Berard, mult obs
Mandarin Duck	Jan 13-14	JEF- Beaumont Event Ctr (1) Greg Jackson, Charles Fischer
Black-chinned Humm.	Jan 2-31	JEF-Nederland (1) HS
	Jan 20	ORA-Levingston Park (1) Marilyn Guidry
Purple Gallinule	Jan 7	TP-Cell 2 (1) JAW
Solitary Sandpiper	Jan 14	JEF- Beaumont Event Ctr (1) Charles Fischer
Pomarine Jaeger	Jan 2	JEF-Beach W of Sea Rim(1) Wyatt Egelhoff
California Gull	Dec 30	JEF-SRSP-East Beach (1) SH
Least Bittern	Jan 28	JEF-TP (1) Bob Foehring
Western Meadowlark	Jan 30	JEF-S China Rd (1+) Thomas Hellweg, mult obs
Northern Waterthrush	Jan 8	JEF-TP Cell 1 (1) SM, SH
Black-and-white Warbler	Jan 15	JEF-Martin Dies SP (1) Phillip Hight
Yellow-throated Warbler	Jan 19	JEF-Big Thicket NP Edgewater Picnic Area (1) Matt O'Sullivan
Prairie Warbler	Jan 12	JEF-TP (1) A. Tindell
Black-thr. Green Warbler	Jan 9-30	JEF-SW (2) SH, mult obs
Summer Tanager	Jan 3-5	ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
	Jan 1819	HAI-Silsbee (1) Sherry Gibson
Western Tanager	Jan 1,25	ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter, mult obs

Nearby Counties

Surf Scoter	Jan 2	CHA-NRG Cooling Ponds (1) Chuck Davis, David Sarkozi, David Hansen
Least Grebe	Jan 7	CHA-Shoveler Pond –East side (1) Steven Berenzweig
	Jan 19	GAL-Artist's Boat Preserv (1) Clayton Leopold
Western Grebe	Jan 3-5	HAS-Atkinson Is (1) John Berner, Stephen Gast
Groove-billed Ani	Jan 1	CHA-Warren Ranch South (1) Justin Bower, Dimitris Dimopoulos
Common Ground Dove	Jan 2	HAS-Geo Bush Pk (1) Ted Schaefer
Black-chinned Humm	Jan 1	CAL-Moss Bluff (1) Jeanie Pousson
	Jan 11	HAS-Copperfield (1) Jim Hinson
	Jan 19-23	HAS-Pasadena (1) Andrew Hamlett
	Jan 23-25	HAS-Memorial area(1) Sue Orwig
Anna's Hummingbird	Jan 27	HAS-West Memorial (1) Lucy Vick
Buff-bellied Humm'bird	Jan 1-26	GAL-Santa Fe (1) Ross Foreman
	Jan 31	CAL-Lake Chrales (1) David Booth
Purple Gallinule	Jan 1	CAM-Lacassine NWR Wildlife Loop (1) Elizabeth Walker
Limpkin	Jan 1-31	HAS-Sheldon Lk SP (5) mult obs

	Jan 5-11,30	CAM-Lacassine Wildlife Loop (3) Cyndi and Mellissa Simon, Kurt Ongman, mult obs
	Jan 10	GAL-High Is Beach (4) Wyatt Egelhoff
Semi-palm. Sandpiper	Jan 15	CHA-Beach E of High Island (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Pomarine Jaeger	Jan 10, 19	CHA Beach (1) Wyatt Egelhoff, Sonny Bratz
	Jan 19	GAL-High Is Beach (1) Sonny Bratz
Parasitic Jaeger	Jan 10	GAL-High Is Beach (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Franklin's Gull	Jan 1-3	CAL-Lake Charles at Millennium Pk (2) James Smithers, mult obs
	Jan 3	GAL-Texas City Dike (1) Geordie Eschenbach
Iceland (Thayer's) Gull	Jan 3	HAS-Ash Lake (1) Stephen Gast, John Berner, David Sarkozi, Davis Hansen
	Jan 16	GAL-Texas City Dike (1) Todd McGrath, Mike Austin
Black-legged Kittiwake	Jan 25	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Wyatt Egelgoff
Mississippi Kite	Jan 11	HAS-Exploration Green (1) Marie Asscherick (1) mult obs
White-tailed Hawk	Jan 8, 17	CAL-Fruge Rd, Bell City (1 imm) Nick Ramsey, Esme Rosen
Swainson's Hawk	Jan 24	CHA-Anahuac (1) Deborah Kainauskas
Least Bittern	Jan 3	CAM-N of Creole (1) Erik Johnson
Red-naped Sapsucker	Jan 1-30	HAS-Glenwood Cemetery (1) mult obs
Least Flycatcher	Jan 8, 17	CAM-Lacassine NWR (1) Nick Ramsey, Esme Rosen
Greater Pewee	Jan 1-30	HAS-Bear Creek Pk (1) mult obs
Say's Phoebe	Jan 31	GAL-Moody Gdns (1) Steve Rogow
Dusky-cap..Flycatcher	Jan 17-30	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff, mult obs
Great Kiskadee	Jan 30	HAS-House and Haul Rd (1) Todd McGrath
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Jan 18	HAS-Ellington Field area (1) Andrew Hamlett
Eastern Kingbird	Jan 27	CAL-Sulphur Bonnie Slaton
Yellow-throated Vireo	Jan 2	LIB-Dayton (1) Jonathan and David Henderson,
Purple Martin	Jan 17	HAS-Houston Arboretum (1) Ross Silcock
Barn Swallow	Jan 1	CHA-ANWR exact location not specified (1) Alex Sutton, Steve Glover, Greg Cook
	Jan 28	HAS-Warren Ranch Lake (1) Timothy White, James Tarsney
Cave Swallow	Jan 3	CAM-N of Creole (2) Erik Johnson
	Jan 22	CAM-Rutherford Beach Rd (1) Charles Lyon
	Jan 31	GAL-Texas City (12) Steve Rogow

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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 TEXBIRDS 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.