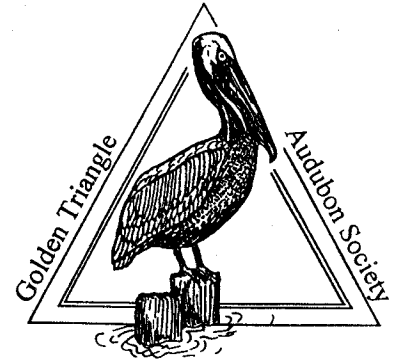


# *Brown Pelican*

**Scanned from Originals**

# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 6 No. 4

April 2000

## Membership Meeting

Thursday, April 20, 2000

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

Purple Martins

Jace Stansbury

Purple Martin Conservation Association

Jace Stansbury has been interested in nature since childhood. He says he has been bird watching for about eight years and watching Purple Martins for six years. He maintains 32 gourds and two conventional martin houses. He has erected gourds for the last three years. In 1999, he had 22 nesting pairs which laid 194 eggs and fledged 70 young.

As usual, the doors will be open no later than 6:30 p.m., and the proceedings will start at 7:15 p.m. approximately.

## March Meeting Report

David Bradford was our speaker at the March 16, 2000 membership meeting. David teaches biology at Westbury High School. He has served as chairman of the Ornithology Group of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston and as vice-president of programs for the Houston Audubon Society. He is presently serving as executive vice president of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston and until recently was the Upper Texas Coast Subregional Editor for *North American Birds*, the successor to *Field Notes*. He is an active member of the American Birding Association and the Texas Ornithological Society. I met David several years ago on a *Penfeathers Tours* that he was co-leader for. He has been leading tours to West Texas and out-of-state for *Penfeathers Tours* since 1989.

David has birded Southeastern Arizona several times on his own and by leading birding tours. According to David, Southeastern Arizona is a unique place because it is located near the Mexican border; therefore, you have the possibilities of the Mexican strays. There is a diverse habitat: lush riparian habitat near the rivers, Sonora Desert, and within the Sonora Desert there are large continuous mountain ranges sometimes referred to as "sky islands". All of these habitats are available within a short period of time and distance.

David introduced us to the birds of Southeastern Arizona through a slide program he had prepared based on the last tour he led in July and August of 1999. The tour began in Tucson for one night, then to Portal for three nights in the Chiricahua Mountains, then to Sierra Vista for two nights in the Huachuca Mountains and finally to Santa Rita Lodge for the last three nights in the Santa Rita Mountains. They were going from "sky island" to "sky island" hitting the desert in between.

The first time David went to Southeastern Arizona, he added a hundred lifers to his list. I could have added the following birds to my life list if I had been on that tour: Gilded Flicker, Lucy's Warbler, Lucifer Hummingbird, Elegant Trogon, Gambel's Quail, Crissal

*Continued on Page 3*

## *The Brown Pelican*

Vol. 6, No. 4 April 2000

Golden Triangle  
Audubon Society

RARE BIRD ALERT AND  
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[www.ih2000.net/gtas](http://www.ih2000.net/gtas)

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## Calendar of Events

If you can present a program of interest to a Membership Meeting, or know of some person who can, please contact Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193.

For more information on field trips, please contact Steve Mayes, (409) 722-5807 or the trip leader.

April 2, 8, and 23 at 7:00 a.m., and  
April 1 and 22 at 4:00 p.m.

#### Yellow Rail Walks at Anahuac NWR.

Following a brief introduction on Yellow Rail ecology and management, guides will lead participants on foot through salty prairie habitat in search of Yellow Rails. All participants should bring waterproof boots, binoculars, drinking water and mosquito repellent. Reservations are not required, although space is limited. Meet at the time indicated in the heading at the Visitor Contact Station at Anahuac NWR, reached by travelling south along the well marked access road off FM1985 about 12 miles west of State Highway 124 in Chambers County. Led by David Sarkozi, President, Friends of Anahuac Refuge. Call Michelle Hannon, (409) 267-3337 for more information.

#### April 14-16 -- Twenty-first Annual Texas Wilderness Pow Wow.

This will be held at the Townsend Park Recreation Area in the Angelina National Forest near Broadus. Featured will be walks into the Turkey Hill Wilderness. For more information, contact the Texas Committee on Natural Resources, 1301 South IH-35, Suite 301, Austin, Texas 78741. Tel: (512) 441-1122; email [tconr@mindspring.com](mailto:tconr@mindspring.com).

#### April 20 -- Membership Meeting.

See front page.

#### April 22 -- Field Trip.

Bird Walk at Sea Rim State Park and Sabine Woods in conjunction with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The plan is to search for warblers and other neotropical migrants at the Willow Pond area of Sea Rim and eventually to proceed to Sabine Woods to continue the search. Meet at the headquarters area of Sea Rim State Park at 7:30 a.m. This trip will involve only easy walking.

#### April 29 -- Warbler Walk at Anahuac NWR.

After a presentation about the migration routes and the importance of coastal woodlots during the northbound migration, search for warblers along East Bay Bayou. For beginner and intermediate level birders. Meet at the Observation Platform in the north parking lot of the East Bay Bayou Tract of Anahuac NWR. This is just south of

FM1985 about three or four miles west of State Highway 124 in Chambers County. Call Michelle Hannon, (409) 267-3337 for more information.

#### May 6 -- Birdblitz 2000 at Anahuac NWR.

Anahuac NWR is celebrating International Migratory Bird Day a week early (and may well find many more warblers and other neotropical migrants than if they waited). They plan to survey the entire Refuge for resident and migratory birds. The Refuge has established a goal of identifying 2000 species in the year 2000. That is 2000 species of all forms of life not just birds. Meet at the Visitor Contact center -- see directions under the Yellow Rail Walks above -- at 7:00 a.m. Call Michelle Hannon, (409) 267-3337 for more information.

#### May 13 -- North American Migration Count - Jefferson County.

Contact John Whittle 409-722-4193 for details.

#### May 18 -- Membership Meeting.

Sue Bailey will talk about Sydnese Island, also known as Sydney Island, which formerly housed a large colony of nesting shorebirds, and about shorebirds in general.

## Gentling Brothers Art Exhibition

Thanks to a generous donation by Entergy, we are sponsoring an exhibition of 22 large life-size watercolors of birds by the Gentling Brothers in the style of John James Audubon at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas during April.

There will be a reception on Friday evening, March 31, before the official opening on April 1. The exhibition will run through the month of April. The Art Museum is at 500 Main Street in Beaumont and is open Monday through Friday 9 to 5, Saturday 10 to 5 and Sunday 12 to 5. Admission is free, although donations are appreciated.

The Migration Celebration -- held on, March 11 in Orange -- sponsored a Coloring Contest at all the schools in the area covered by the Big Thicket Loop. The winners from each school will also be on display at the Art Museum during the exhibition.

## Request from Beaumont Council of Garden Clubs

New Hours and A Helping Hand: Now that we have the new Horticultural Center on the front of the Conservatory, we simply had to expand the hours of operation. The new hours for both buildings are Wednesday-Thursday-Friday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. These are all single shifts except for Saturday when the shifts are 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. **We need each club to take on the duties of working the front desk.** Volunteers have very comfortable surroundings to work in, hot and cold water, refrigerator for food and drinks, telephone, microwave, restrooms, TV and stereo system. It's an easy job. Bring a good book to read, knit, write letters, etc. Working the front desk needs to be shared by all clubs. We should all be **very proud** of how these gardens have grown in recent years. **everyone** needs to become a part of it.

To offer to help with the Horticultural Center and Conservatory call either Bob Whitman, (409) 835-0644 or Myra Clay, (409) 892-1137.

*(We have a duty to help as a member of the Beaumont Council of Garden Clubs. This is an opportunity for those who may not be able to help on our more strenuous activities.)*

## Volunteers Needed

Through Texas Audubon Society and the TNRCC's Supplemental Environmental Program, we have significant funds available to spend on habitat improvement at Sabine Woods. A plan has been drawn up and approved by Texas Ornithological Society. The work to be carried out will be entirely habitat improvement -- removal of old fences, control of non-natives and excess mustang grape and wild rose -- and is planned to take place mostly between May 15 and June 15.

Although the request for proposals that we will distribute to potential contractors will specify the work in considerable detail, it is desirable that we have as much on-site oversight as possible. We need volunteers who may be available during the week to be at the Woods while the contractor is working. Volunteers will receive training in the duties and a full explanation of the goals of the work and the methods to be used to accomplish them, as well as the adverse effects we want to avoid.

Please contact John Whittle at (409) 880-8276 (work) or (409) 722-4193 (home) or by email at whittleja@hal.lamar.edu

## March Meeting

*Continued from Page 1*

Thrasher, Le Conte's Thrasher, Bendire's Thrasher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Strickland's Woodpecker, Black-chinned Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Juniper Titmouse, Magnificent Hummingbird, Yellow-eyed Junco, Steller's Jay, Hairy Woodpecker, Pygmy Nuthatch, Mexican Chickadee, Grace's Warbler, Olive Warbler, Red-faced Warbler, Evening Grosbeak, Hutton's Vireo, Painted Redstart, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Abert's Towhee, Virginia's Warbler, Tropical Kingbird, Gila Woodpecker, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird, White-eared Hummingbird, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Berylline Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Plain-capped Starthroat, White-throated Swift, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Greater Pewee, Red Crossbill, Spotted Owl, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Rock Wren, Rose-throated Becard, Thick-billed Kingbird, Bridled Titmouse, Whiskered Screech-Owl, Mexican Jay, Common Poorwill, Buff-collared Nightjar, Cassin's Sparrow, Botteri's Sparrow, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Five-striped Sparrow, and Mountain Chickadee. As you can see, if you have never birded Southeastern Arizona, you could increase your life birds tremendously.

This was my second time to see this program and it was just as interesting this time as it was the first time. If you were not at the meeting you really missed an excellent program. David keeps your interest with his stories and educates you by pointing out specific field marks and habitat. His next tour to Southeastern Arizona will be July 21 - 30, 2000. For more information contact him P. O. Box 38157, Houston, Texas 77238, tel. (281) 445-1187; email pfcompany@aol.com. Our next membership meeting will be Thursday, April 20, 2000. Hope to see you there!

*Nancy Fisher*

## Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Mary Alyce Wright for providing the refreshments in January; Pat Jeane and Lu Skillern for February; and Bob Collier, Jean Hollingsworth, Ann Nobles, Lynn Otto, and Needa Reed for March. Looking forward, John Haynes and Steve Mayes have volunteered for April; Andrea Billingsley and Marcelean Howell for May. Looking further forward to the meetings after our summer break in June and July, when we do not hold membership meetings, Sue Flanagan and Anne Lewing have volunteered for August; and Jack Baugh and Joe Tibbs for September. If we have accidentally overlooked anyone, please accept our sincere apologies and thanks. Additional volunteers will be welcome especially for October and beyond.

## Bird Sightings - February 2000

**Coverage:** Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Tyler, Jasper, Newton, Angelina, San Augustine and Sabine counties. **Send Reports to:** John Whittle, 3015 Nashville Avenue, Nederland, Texas 77627-6749 by the 10th of the month after or e-mail to whittleja@hal.lamar.edu or call (409) 880-8276 or fax to (409) 880-8270. For "very rare" birds, please submit a brief account of your sighting, including a description of the bird (unless unmistakable), brief details of what it was doing, and where it was seen (if on publicly accessible property).

**Format:** "Common" to "abundant" birds are shown in the fashion "JEF 4 reps(25)" which means four reports in Jefferson County totaling 25 birds. Less than "common", as "JEF-SW 7/5(2) ABC", which means seen in Jefferson County (JEF) at Sabine Woods (SW) on the 5th of July, two (2) birds, reported by observer "ABC".

**Commentary:** The 136 species reported in February is typical of the month. The number of species present in the area, particularly in the first half of the month is probably not significantly different from December and January, but observer activity is typically much reduced. However, there were several interesting sightings in the Lakes area, including Pacific Loon, nesting Bald Eagles, Red Crossbill and an early Northern Parula. Please keep those reports coming from that underreported area! The listing below includes the birds seen on the field trip to the Sandyland Sanctuary. Rufous Hummingbirds were still present in the area throughout the month, although the computer program which compiles the list below is not geared to using information on species that are seen on and off during the whole month.

LOON, Pacific	ANG-SRR 2/27(1) RBA	HARRIER, Northern	JEF 5 reps(33)
LOON, Common	NEW 1 rep(3)	HAWK, Sharp-shinned	JEF-SW 2/6(1) KS; JEF-BMT 2/10(1) RAJ; JEF-TX87 2/13(2) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(1) JAW
GREBE, Pied-billed	JEF 4 reps(86); NEW 1 rep(2)	HAWK, Cooper's	JEF-TP 2/19(1) JAW
PELICAN, Amer. White	JEF 1 rep(8); ORA 1 rep(23)	HAWK, Red-shouldered	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(2); NEW 1 rep(1)
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 2/13(6) JAW; JEF-TX87 2/13(5) JAW; JEF 2/19(2) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(1) JAW; JEF 2/20(1) JAW	HAWK, Red-tailed	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 7 reps(57)
CORMORANT, Double-crest.	NEW 1 rep(2)	KESTREL, American	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 7 reps(97); NEW 1 rep(2)
HERON, Great Blue	JEF 5 reps(35)	MERLIN	JEF 2/6(1) KS
EGRET, Great	JEF 8 reps(238)	MOORHEN, Common	JEF 2 reps(11)
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 5 reps(35)	COOT, American	JEF 3 reps(903); NEW 1 rep(500); ORA 1 rep(200)
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 1 rep(2)	PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 1 rep(3)
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 1 rep(20)	PLOVER, Snowy	JEF-SRSP 2/13(30) JAW
IBIS, White	JEF 2/13(5) JAW; JEF 2/20(301) JAW; JEF 2/27(6) KS	PLOVER, Piping	JEF-SRSP 2/13(1) JAW
IBIS, Glossy	JEF 2/20(1) JAW	KILLDEER	JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(13)
IBIS, White-faced	JEF 2/19(9) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(10) JAW; JEF 2/20(40) JAW	STILT, Black-necked	JEF 1 rep(12)
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF 2/11(500) JAW; JEF 2/12(21) LRWW; JEF 2/19(10) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(10) JAW; JEF 2/20(140) JAW; JEF 2/27(3) KS	AVOCET, American	JEF 1 rep(20)
SPOONBILL, Roseate	ORA 2/13(1) KS	YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF 1 rep(4)
VULTURE, Black	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(32); NEW 1 rep(6)	WILLET	JEF 1 rep(1)
VULTURE, Turkey	HAI 2 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(6); JEF 5 reps(44); NEW 1 rep(27)	CURLEW, Long-billed	JEF 2 reps(3)
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous	JEF 2/20(4) JAW	SANDERLING	JEF 1 rep(25)
GOOSE, White-fronted	JEF 3 reps(428)	DOWITCHER, Long-billed	ANG 2/13(1) LDS
GOOSE, Snow	JEF 2 reps(4012)	SNIBE, Common	ANG 1 rep(6); JEF 3 reps(122)
DUCK, Wood	HAI-SNDY 2/19(2) FTSL; ORA 2/13(1) KS	WOODCOCK, American	JEF-SW 2/6(1) KS
GADWALL	JEF 3 reps(227); ORA 2 reps(135)	GULL, Laughing	JEF 3 reps(2188)
WIGEON, American	ORA 2 reps(8)	GULL, Bonaparte's	JEF 1 rep(170)
MALLARD	JEF 2 reps(16)	GULL, Ring-billed	JEF 3 reps(135)
DUCK, Mottled	JEF 2/19(2) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(4) JAW; JEF 2/20(2); JAW; JEF 2/27(2) KS	GULL, Herring	JEF 1 rep(29)
TEAL, Blue-winged	JEF 4 reps(374)	TERN, Caspian	JEF 2 reps(5)
SHOVELER, Northern	JEF 2 reps(380); ORA 1 rep(12)	TERN, Royal	JEF 1 rep(4)
PINTAIL, Northern	JEF 3 reps(10); ORA 1 rep(6)	TERN, Forster's	JEF 1 rep(3)
TEAL, Green-winged	JEF 3 reps(75)	DOVE, Rock	HAI 1 rep(20); JAS 1 rep(55); JEF 1 rep(6)
DUCK, Ring-necked	JEF 1 rep(250)	COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian	JEF 2/27(1) KS
SCAUP, Lesser	JEF 1 rep(1); NEW 1 rep(18)	DOVE, White-winged	JEF 2/13(25) JAW
OSPREY	JEF 2/13(1) JAW; JEF 2/19(2) JAW; ORA 2/28(1) MC	DOVE, Mourning	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(80)
KITE, White-tailed	JEF 3 reps(8)	DOVE, Inca	JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(6); ORA 1 rep(6)
EAGLE, Bald	ANG 2/13(2) LDS	OWL, Great Horned	JEF 2/6(1) KS; JEF 2/13(4) KS; JEF 2/27(3) KS
		KINGFISHER, Belted	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(10)
		WOODPECKER, Red-headed	HAI-SNDY 2/19(1) FTSL

WOODPECKER, Red-bellied HAI 1 rep(10); JEF 5 reps(15); NEW 1 rep(2)

SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied HAI 1 rep(5); JEF 3 reps(5); NEW 1 rep(2)

WOODPECKER, Downy HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 3 reps(10)

FLICKER, Northern HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(2)

WOODPECKER, Pileated HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 1 rep(2)

PHOEBE, Eastern JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 6 reps(44); NEW 1 rep(1)

SHRIKE, Loggerhead JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 7 reps(214); NEW 1 rep(1)

VIREO, White-eyed JEF 2/13(1) KS

VIREO, Blue-headed HAI 1 rep(2)

JAY, Blue JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(43)

CROW, American HAI 3 reps(33); JAS 1 rep(23); JEF 1 rep(1); NEW 1 rep(20)

CROW, species JEF 2 reps(10)

MARTIN, Purple JEF-SW 2/6(1) KS; JEF 2/13(1) KS; JEF 2/20(1) JAW

SWALLOW, Tree JEF-SW 2/6(6) KS; JEF 2/13(20) JAW; JEF-SW 2/13(1) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(6) JAW; JEF 2/27(12) KS

CHICKADEE, Carolina HAI 1 rep(6); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 6 reps(20)

TITMOUSE, Tufted HAI 1 rep(10); JEF 1 rep(1)

NUTHATCH, Brown-headed HAI-SNDY 2/19(3) FTSL; NEW-TBR 2/12(3) LRWW

CREEPER, Brown HAI-SNDY 2/19(2) FTSL

WREN, Carolina HAI 1 rep(3); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(3); NEW 1 rep(1)

WREN, House JEF-SW 2/6(1) KS; JEF 2/13(1) KS; JEF 2/27(1) KS

WREN, Winter HAI-SNDY 2/19(1) FTSL

WREN, Sedge JEF-SW 2/6(2) KS; JEF 2/27(1) KS

WREN, Marsh JEF 2/13(1) JAW; JEF-TP 2/19(1) JAW

KINGLET, Golden-crowned JEF 2/6(1) KS; JEF-SW 2/6(2) KS

KINGLET, Ruby-crowned HAI 1 rep(5); JEF 5 reps(26)

GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray JEF 5 reps(19)

BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 2 reps(9); JAS 1 rep(9); NEW 1 rep(3); ORA 2 reps(7)

THRUSH, Hermit HAI-SNDY 2/19(1) FTSL

ROBIN, American HAI 1 rep(6); JAS 1 rep(189); JEF 8 reps(294); NEW 1 rep(1)

CATBIRD, Gray JEF 2/27(2) KS

MOCKINGBIRD, Northern HAI 2 reps(2); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 6 reps(79); NEW 1 rep(4)

THRASHER, Brown HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 4 reps(20)

STARLING, European HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(567)

PIPIT, American JEF 1 rep(56)

WAXWING, Cedar HAI 1 rep(20); JEF 3 reps(75)

WARBLER, Orange-crown. HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(21)

PARULA, Northern SAA 2/27(1) RBA

WARBLER, Yellow-rumped HAI 1 rep(20); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 5 reps(111); NEW 1 rep(20)

WARBLER, Pine HAI 1 rep(10); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(3); NEW 1 rep(11)

WARBLER, Palm JEF 2/27(3) KS

YELLOWTHROAT, Common JEF 2 reps(6)

TOWHEE, Spotted JEF-SW 2/6(1) KS

TOWHEE, Eastern JEF-SW 2/6(1) KS

SPARROW, Chipping HAI 1 rep(100); JEF 1 rep(22); NEW 1 rep(15); ORA 2 reps(18)

SPARROW, Field JEF 2/6(4) KS; JEF-SW 2/6(3) KS; JEF 2/13(3) KS; JEF 2/27(2) KS

SPARROW, Lark JEF 2/6(2) KS

SPARROW, Savannah JEF 6 reps(356)

SPARROW, Grasshopper JEF 2/6(1) KS

SPARROW, Song JEF 5 reps(36)

SPARROW, Lincoln's JEF 2/6(2) KS; JEF 2/13(4) KS; JEF 2/27(3) KS

SPARROW, Swamp HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(17)

SPARROW, White-throated HAI 1 rep(25); JEF 7 reps(85)

SPARROW, White-crowned JEF 2/6(3) KS; JEF 2/13(3) KS; JEF-TP 2/19(5) JAW; JEF 2/20(5) JAW; JEF 2/27(8) KS

JUNCO, Dark-eyed HAI-SNDY 2/19(4) FTSL; NEW-TBR 2/12(1) LRWW

CARDINAL, Northern HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 6 reps(52)

BLACKBIRD, Red-winged JEF 7 reps(1197)

MEADOWLARK, Eastern JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 4 reps(57)

MEADOWLARK species JEF 2 reps(59)

BLACKBIRD, Brewer's JEF 2/20(10) JAW

GRACKLE, Common JAS 1 rep(1005); JEF 5 reps(475); NEW 1 rep(50)

GRACKLE, Boat-tailed JEF 2 reps(105)

GRACKLE, Great-tailed JEF 5 reps(400)

COWBIRD, Brown-headed JEF 2 reps(220)

CROSSBILL, Red SAB-TBR 2/27(1) RBM

SISKIN, Pine SAB-TBR 2/27(37) RBM

GOLDFINCH, American HAI 1 rep(75); JEF 6 reps(69); NEW 1 rep(1); ORA 3 reps(46)

SPARROW, House JEF 4 reps(8)

Number of Species 136

Number of Individuals 19257

#### County Abbreviations:

ANG - Angelina; HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; NEW - Newton; ORA - Orange; SAA - San Augustine; SAB - Sabine..

#### Location Codes:

BMT - Beaumont; NEDR - Nederland; SNDY - Nature Conservancy Sandyland Sanctuary; SRR - Sam Rayburn reservoir; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TBR - Toledo Bend Reservoir; TP - Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass.

#### Observer Abbreviations:

FTSL - Field Trip to Sandyland Sanctuary; JAW - John Whittle; KS - Ken Sztraky; LDS - Lynn and Doug Smith; LRWW - Jeannie Lanclos, Sherrie Roden, Jana and John Whittle; MC - Merry Cox; RAJ - Rose Ann Jordan; RBA - Reported on the Texas Rare Bird Alert; RBM - Ricki and Bill McMillian.

## Notes on Rare Birds

### Pacific Loon -27 Feb 2000

A Pacific Loon was reported on the Texas Rare Bird Alert as having been seen in Angelina County on the Sam Rayburn Reservoir on February 27. The observer(s) are unknown.

### Bald Eagle - 13 Feb 2000 - Lynn and Doug Smith

A Bald Eagle nest, with two adults in attendance was found in Angelina County on the north end of Sam Rayburn Reservoir, about one mile from the shore, on top of a 35-foot pine tree.

### Northern Parula - 27 Feb 2000

An early Northern Parula Warbler was reported on the Texas Rare Bird Alert as having been seen on territory in Jackson Hill Park in San Augustine county.

### Red Crossbill - 27 Feb 2000 - Ricki and Bill McMillian

A young male Red Crossbill, mottled red and yellow, came to a feeder in Sabine County near Toledo Bend Reservoir.

## Field Trip to Bolivar Flats -- 18 March 2000

More than half a dozen birders arrived on the beach on an overcast morning for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society's annual pilgrimage to Bolivar Flats. Birds were not hard to find, and the group had a difficult time pulling away from the area of the vehicle barrier, there were so many birds around. Horned Larks, a species often difficult to find on the Upper Texas Coast, were abundant on the beach. A large raft of American White Pelicans drifted just off shore along with a huge mass of Lesser Scaup. But eventually we did move down the beach.

Quickly, many of the usual suspects became evident. Wilson's Plovers were enjoyed by all and Dunlins were numerous. A Red Knot among the Dunlins was a nice bonus, as this is a bird not always seen on this trip. Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling were added to the list along with a multitude of Black-bellied Plovers. A Marbled Godwit fed very nearby. One of the most obvious birds on the Flats was the Reddish Egret. The group saw numerous Reddish Egrets on the day and witnessed the erratic feeding behavior the species is known for.

Walking further out onto the Flats more birds turned up. A Snowy Plover, though hard to find, was eventually scoped and viewed by all. Probably the most abundant plover on the beach that day was the Piping Plover. Though the Piping Plover is an endangered species, we had no trouble finding dozens of these pale shorebirds, sometimes all in one binocular view! Western Sandpipers were also found but no Semipalmated were obvious. Semipalmated Plovers, on the other hand, were numerous.

At one point, the shorebirds took flight and seemed to disappear off the beach. Veteran birders know what this means: Peregrine Falcon! Sure enough, a look over the gulf found a Peregrine close to shore diving at passing birds. Soon a second Peregrine was found! This bird was obviously smaller than the first, probably a mated pair with the smaller being the male and the larger the female. The raptors singled out a Forster's Tern and made repeated dives at it. At one point, the male grabbed the Tern, but it escaped when the falcon tried to pass the struggling bird to his larger mate. We never did see the falcons make a kill. Eventually, the male flew out of sight over the jetty. But the female gave us quite a show! The large falcon, obviously tired from hunting, settled down on the beach some distance in front of us. We were all treated to scope filling views of this fantastic (and amazingly cooperative) bird. Finally, she flew off and we moved on.

Sometimes odd birds can be found on the beach. Last year a Barn Swallow perched right on the sand. On another GTAS outing (in Sabine Pass) birders witnessed a Northern Flicker just behind the dunes. This trip revealed a Hummingbird, probably Ruby-throated, buzzing around the beach. It disappeared before everyone could get a good look.

Many other birds were evident on the flats that day. American Avocets were numerous (as usual), Brown Pelicans were much in evidence, and most of the expected Gulls (Laughing, Ring-billed, Herring, and Bonaparte's) and Terns (Royal, Caspian, Forster's, Common, Sandwich) were found. American Oystercatchers, often absent, were easily seen.

The grassy areas behind the flats can also produce good birds. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was called up and seen well. Savannah Sparrows were plentiful and Roseate Spoonbills, White Ibis and Northern Harriers flew over the marsh in the distance. Unexpected was a Northern Waterthrush at a small pool among the clumps of marsh grasses.

It is always difficult to leave a great birding spot but other spots awaited and the group pressed on. A trip to the ferry landing turned up several Red-breasted Mergansers (and a lunch break). The group searched Fort Travis Park for a reported Green-tailed Towhee but had to settle for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Bob's Road revealed a great view of White-tailed Kite and several ducks including Mallard, Gadwall and Mottled Duck. Yacht Basin Road held Pectoral and Least Sandpipers along with Dowitchers. For the first time in recent memory, no American Golden-Plovers were found on the trip. Rollover Pass provided its usual spectacular display with dozens of Marbled Godwits, Piping and Black-bellied Plovers, Long-billed Curlew, and many gulls and terns perched and in flight. Teams of Black Skimmers cruised in feeding mode just above the water's surface.

Most of the birders had called it quits by this point but two birders traveled on to Boy Scout Woods in High Island where the trip was officially ended. A quick pass through the woods revealed little in the way of birds. With the breezy conditions worsening, darkness nearing and no birds in evidence, even the die-hards gave up and returned home. But, they left happy after another great day of Texas birding and, with the signs of Spring migration evident, the promise of even better days in the near future.

*Steve Mayes*

## Bird Alerts

As always, it may be of little value to report here any migrating birds that are being seen, as they will almost inevitably be gone by the time you read this. More so this month, as this issue had of the *Brown Pelican* had to close for press even earlier than usual. Nevertheless, neotropical migrants are being seen, and there is possibly some evidence that some selected species were ahead of their normal schedules. By April 20, there was a little water in the "main" pond at Sabine Woods, and enough water in the upper layers of the soil that the trees and vegetation were leafing out on a more or less normal schedule. Wintering White-throated Sparrows are present in large numbers, and both Spotted and Eastern Towhee are still being seen in the Woods.

A female Oldsquaw (soon to be renamed Long-tailed Duck to correspond with Old World usage) was seen from the Sabine Pass Battleground on March 12, and was seen again from the road to the Pilot Station at Texas Point, in a flock of scaup on the Sabine-Neches Ship Channel on the Texas side, almost opposite the lighthouse on March 19.

Flooded rice fields promise to be scarce this spring, so the few that there are tend to hold good numbers of shorebirds.

# The Future of Planet Earth: Scientific Challenges in the Coming Century

*The following summary of a US Geological Survey press release gives what USGS scientists see as the 10 top scientific challenges for the next century. For the full text of the release, see the USGS web site at <http://www.usgs.gov> -- click on "News Releases". This particular release was issued Feb. 14*

## **Safe, Clean Water**

Protecting drinking water sources: Safe drinking water is vital to the health of citizens in every community. More information about newly identified contaminants in water is available at <http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc.html>.

## **Natural Hazards**

The year 1999 brought killer landslides to Venezuela and Mexico, devastating earthquakes to Turkey and Taiwan, and massive floods and coastal storm erosion along the East Coast of the United States that took lives, displaced families, disrupted communities and impacted economies. The cost of natural disasters, both in human and financial terms, has risen dramatically and may continue to skyrocket in the 21st century, as the world's population grows and moves into areas that are more vulnerable to earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, landslides, floods and other natural hazards. More information is available about USGS work in natural hazards at [http://www.usgs.gov/natural\\_haz.html](http://www.usgs.gov/natural_haz.html).

## **Urban Growth**

With the population of the United States projected to increase nearly 60 percent in the next 50 years and an increasing percentage of the nation's population moving to urban areas, society is just beginning to experience the challenges associated with the sustainable growth and development of urban regions. More information is available about USGS urban growth studies at <http://edcwww2.cr.usgs.gov/urban/>.

## **Emerging Infectious Disease**

Vulnerability to disease -- for humans and wildlife -- increases as the human population expands and habitat for wildlife shrinks. Diseases become more easily transmissible in and between the two populations. Some diseases, such as Lyme disease, West Nile virus, plague, hantavirus and rabies are transmitted directly or indirectly to humans by wildlife. More information about wildlife research or epidemiological investigations is available at <http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/nwhhome.html>.

## **Biological Invaders**

Invasive species, such as zebra mussels, fire ants and cheatgrass, are those plants and animals that have been introduced into habitats where they are not native. Considered "biological pollutants," they are a major cause of economic havoc and biological diversity loss throughout the world. More specific information on these invaders and color photos are available at [http://www.usgs.gov/invasive\\_species/](http://www.usgs.gov/invasive_species/).

## **Global Change**

The planet is changing. Records show sea levels are rising at accelerated rates and levels of carbon dioxide have increased worldwide. The West Antarctic Ice Sheet, which contains enough water locked up as ice to raise global sea-level substantially, is vulnerable to the effects of global change. More information about global change is available at <http://geochange.er.usgs.gov/>.

## **Lifecycle of Earth's Natural Materials**

Materials extracted from the Earth are necessary for humankind's most fundamental needs -- food, clothing and shelter. Understanding the whole system of materials flow, from source to ultimate disposition, can help people better manage the use of natural resources and protect the environment. Materials flow is a systems approach to understanding what happens to the materials we use -- from geologic formation, extraction, use and reuse, to ultimate disposal. Future energy requirements, building supplies and the potential for pollution and waste are all issues that require sound scientific data and modeling. For more information about materials flow, contact USGS scientist Kate Johnson at 703-648-6110.

## **The Nation's Water Infrastructure**

The objectives for the nation's infrastructure of dams, levees, navigation systems and diversions for water were developed between 1930 and 1970, with an emphasis on water for agriculture, electric power, navigation, flood prevention, water for cities and industry and dilution of wastes. For more information about the nation's water infrastructure, contact USGS Chief Hydrologist Robert Hirsch at 703-648-5215.

## **Coastal Waters -- Pristine or Polluted?**

The earth's seemingly boundless oceans and scenic coastlines have limits. The oceans cannot provide unlimited fish to feed growing populations, nor can they absorb unlimited wastes from human activity. As population growth near and adjacent to the coasts increases water quality and ecosystems are impacted and vulnerable shorelines are eroded. More information about coastal water conditions is available at <http://marine.usgs.gov>

## **Putting Information in Its Place**

During the 21st century the nation will continue to face challenges such as overpopulation and urban growth, pollution, deforestation and natural disasters -- all of which have a critical geographic dimension. As a result, there will be an increase in the demand for geospatial data and information. This potential demand has raised the concern for how these data will be integrated, managed and made accessible to a multitude of users. For more information about the integration, management and accessibility of geospatial data, contact USGS Chief Geographer Richard Witmer at 703-648-5748.



## NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

### Membership Form

To join the National Audubon Society, please complete this form and return with Introductory Membership fee of \$20 (payable to the National Audubon Society, or indicate you wish to be billed) to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, TX 77627-1292. To use this form to give a membership as a gift, please complete the form and indicate your name in the appropriate space. Payment should accompany gift memberships.

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## RARE BIRD ALERTS

Below is a listing of Rare Bird Alert telephone numbers for nearby areas. Transcriptions of some current tapes are available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/hoturls.html>

Detailed information (maps and text) on birding sites on the Upper Texas Coast is also available on the Web at <http://texasbirding.simplenet.com>.

This includes all the Jefferson County hotspots published in early issues.

<b>Golden Triangle</b>	<b>(409) 768-1340</b>
Texas (Houston)	(713) 369-9673
Abilene	(915) 691-8981
Austin	(512) 926-8751
Ft. Worth (N. Cent)	(817) 329-1930
Lubbock	(806) 797-6690
N. E. Texas	(903) 839-4804
Rio Grande Valley	(210) 969-2731
San Antonio	(210) 308-6788
Waco	(254) 299-8170
Louisiana	(504) 768-9874

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