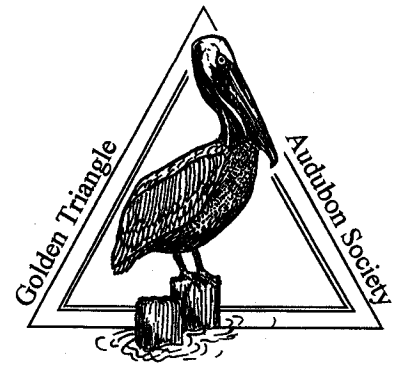


Brown Pelican

Scanned from Originals

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 7 No. 3

March 2001

Membership Meeting

Thursday, March 15, 2001

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

Birds of Big Bend

Ro Wauer

We have an exciting program for March! A talk on the Birds of Big Bend by the acknowledged expert. Ro Wauer retired from the National Parks Service after 32 years service, which included six years as chief naturalist at Big Bend National Park. He wrote the definitive books on Big Bend: *A Field Guide to the Birds of Big Bend* and *Naturalist's Big Bend*. He also served at Crater Lake, in Death Valley, at Pinnacles, Zion, Great Smoky Mountains and Virgin Islands National Parks. His career also included stints as Chief of Natural Resources Management and as Regional Chief Scientist. Ro currently lives in Victoria, Texas and recently co-authored the *Birding Texas* guide.

If you have one or more friends you want to introduce to Audubon, this is the meeting to bring them to! As usual, the doors will be open no later than 6:30 p.m., but the talk will start at 7:15 p.m. approximately.

February Membership Meeting

Golden Triangle Audubon Society's February meeting was held Thursday the 15th. Our scheduled speaker, Ms. Thibodeaux was not able to speak that night. I was really looking forward to learning about the Sabine Pass lighthouse. Maybe she will be able to describe the current status of the lighthouse and the efforts being made to preserve and restore it at another membership meeting. I'm sure we all look forward to her presentation.

After some consideration, we decided to watch one of the Discovery Channel Videos from the club's lending library. Quoting from the box cover, "Birds of prey are the ultimate aerial predators. Graceful, yet savage, they are specially equipped to hunt and devour their victims. Raptors, like the Eagle, rely on binocular vision. Barn Owls

(continued on page 7)

Please come help at the Sabine Woods Work Day, Saturday March 10. (Page 2 for details)

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 7, No.3 Mar. 2001

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

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3015 Nashville Ave.

Nederland, TX 77627-6749

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Audubon Society,
P. O. Box 1292, Nederland,
Texas 77627-1292

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.

Saturday March 10 – Sabine Woods Work Day. Please come and help prepare Sabine Woods for Spring migration. Depending on the conditions, we will plan to use this work day to mow the trails – those that are dry enough anyway (and how long is it since we had to say that?) – and also to continue our efforts to control the mustang grape vine. There always seems to be previously undetected trash from many years ago to deal with, and a few interior fence remains to remove. Depending on whether new tallow seedlings have leafed out or not, we may be able to deal with them on this work day. We do have additional funds for habitat improvements thanks to Chevron Phillips Chemical Company selecting the TNRCC Supplemental Environmental Project that we submitted to Texas Audubon Society for funding in lieu of paying a penalty for a violation of the air permit at their Port Arthur plant. We plan to use this both for supplies for tallow and rose control and for more bushhogging in mid to late May (ideally).

Thursday Mar. 15 – Membership Meeting. Ro Wauer will speak on the Birds of Big Bend. See front page for full details.

Saturday Mar. 17 – Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. Our annual pilgrimage to look at shorebirds. From Winnie, take TX 124 south to High Island. At the beach, turn right (west) on TX 87 and proceed through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you reach the intersection where Loop 108 turns right (north). At that intersection, turn left (the opposite way to Loop 108) along Rettillon Road. At the beach, if sand conditions permit, turn right (west) following previously successful vehicle tracks, about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. We will probably leave the vehicle barrier at about 9:00

a.m., although the group will be visually obvious on the flats should you be a few minutes later than that. It takes about 90 minutes from Beaumont to the flats (if you do not stop and bird on the way).

Thursday Apr. 19 – Membership Meeting. See next month's *Brown Pelican* for details.

Saturday Apr. 28 – Field Trip to Sea Rim and Sabine Woods.

We will meet outside the headquarters at Sea Rim State Park at 7:30 a.m. We will plan to walk to the Willows just west of Sea Rim. After we finish our walk there, we will drive to Sabine Woods to continue birding there.

Saturday May 12 – International Migratory Bird Day. As usual we will be conducting a county-wide migration count in Jefferson county. Contact John Whittle (409-722-4193) for more details or to indicate your participation.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Lou and Grady Skillern and Winette and Brad Hogue for the splendid refreshments in February. For March, Pat and Don Jeane have volunteered and we are now seeking volunteers for the April and May 2001 meetings.

Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on this issue. If the date on your label NOT prefixed by AU has passed, please remit your contribution of \$15 to Golden Triangle Audubon Society at P.O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292. Although this contribution towards the cost of the *Brown Pelican* is voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the official chapter territory, we will appreciate your support. Our official chapter territory is defined by zip codes, but is basically Jefferson, Hardin and Orange Counties and one or two localities close to those Counties.

Field Trip to West Harris County – 17 February 2001

The Albertson's parking lot on the far west side of Houston was the meeting place for a dozen Golden Triangle Audubon birders and guests for a day of birding the remnant wet prairies of western Harris County. It was a cold morning (as seems to be the norm for field trips this winter) but hot coffee and the promise of good birds spurred the group on to the day's activity.

First stop was Gummert Road. This is a dead end road surrounded by fields with some scattered trees and shrubs. The big attraction here is sparrows. This site has been used for several years by David Bradford for the birding trips he organizes and leads. David regularly puts out bird seed in several areas near the road to attract sparrows. Harris's Sparrows are often seen here during the winter. Unfortunately, we could not scare up a Harris's on this day but Savannah, Song, Swamp, White-throated, and Field Sparrows were much more cooperative. Vesper Sparrows were seen in various spots on the day. Blackbirds, mostly Red-wings and cowbirds, were also attracted by the free meal. Northern Harriers were much in evidence over the fields and a few birders got brief looks at a White-tailed Kite. After waiting patiently for the Harris's Sparrow with no luck, the group struck out into one of the wet fields along the road to look for LeConte's Sparrows. The group, walking through the field, was able to stir up numerous individuals of this shy species but the birds did not perch up for long. After numerous attempts to flush the birds to conspicuous perches most of the birders present got brief, but good, looks at a LeConte's Sparrow and a few also saw Sedge Wren. After giving the Harris's Sparrow one last chance to show, the group moved on to the next stop.

After a brief bathroom break, the group headed to Pitts Road and stopped at a pond ringed with trees. This area is well known by local birders as a roost for Black-crowned Night-Herons and we were not disappointed. Approximately 60 Night-Herons inhabited trees on the far side of the pond with both adults and immatures present. Other birds seen by the group at this spot included Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, both species that have been harder to find than usual on the upper Texas coast this winter. A couple of birders got a special treat as a beautiful Fox Sparrow popped up for a brief look around and then disappeared into the thick brush.

The birders moved on from there, eventually stopping on Longenbaugh Road. This road has large, wet field on both sides of it that are greatly favored by waterfowl (and birders). Northern Pintail and Shovelers were the most abundant ducks present with hundreds of birds around but Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal also presented themselves. Snow and White-fronted Geese were present both in the fields and flying over. The best bird of this stop and many felt the best bird of the trip, was an adult Bald Eagle sitting on the ground in the middle of one of the fields. The eagle was enjoying a duck dinner and was flanked by two much smaller Northern Harriers waiting for the leftovers. Bald Eagles frequent this area, following the large flocks of waterfowl and making a meal out of the sick and weak birds. Getting great scope views of this magnificent bird made the whole long, cold trip worthwhile!

Another good bird at this site was a distant Crested Caracara flying over the fields and it would not be the last one seen on this trip. The group enjoyed good looks at eight or more caracaras on the day. In one field on Jack Road there were four of these odd raptors (adult and immature) sitting on the ground looking for carrion or some other easy meal.

The birders then stopped on Warren Ranch Road near Warren Lake. This had been the site in recent weeks of a cooperative Ferruginous Hawk. This large raptor did not show itself to the group but we learned from another group of birders later in the day that this bird was spending much of its time perched on the ground, hidden in the tall grass. This is pretty typical behavior for this species and very likely we just could not see the bird from the road. Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels were much easier to find on the day with every telephone pole and wire seeing to host one of these birds.

After a lunch stop, the group returned to birding stopping at creek crossings and hedgerows. These areas did not reveal too many surprises but some nice birds were turned up. Highlights of these spots included Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Carolina Chickadee and Red-bellied Woodpecker.

A pause at a corral area on Mathis Road surrounded by fields proved a valuable stop. The area contained at least three Grasshopper Sparrows when scouted a couple of weeks earlier so this elusive bird was a primary target. Walking the fence line, the group flushed a likely looking suspect and with a little coaxing, a Grasshopper Sparrow perched up on the barbed wire fence for the whole group to enjoy. The corral area also hosted ten or more Inca Doves feeding along another fence.

Winding along the roads of western Harris and eastern Waller Counties, a number of other birds were spotted. Eastern Bluebirds were seen well, perched on phone wires and in small trees. American Crow and Downy Woodpecker were seen and a stop at a pond with an observation platform yielded (probable) White-faced Ibis along with White Ibis. Other common birds in the area were Northern Cardinal, Loggerhead Shrike, American Robin, and Eastern Phoebe. The best bird of this area, and one of our last new birds of the day was a White-tailed Hawk perched in a small tree just off the road. The bird stayed long enough to give great, close looks and then took to the air to give even more good views. The hawk was not quite, but almost a full adult, but a thicker, smudgy tail band and some markings on the breast suggested the bird still had a few juvenile feathers left to molt.

The day ended where it had started back at Albertson's. Everyone agreed that it had been a great trip even without the pesky Harris's Sparrow and Ferruginous Hawk. The group also missed an Ash-throated Flycatcher and an apparent (rare) Blue-morph Ross's Goose seen in the area that day, but this news merely gives more reason to come back to western Harris County next year to look for more of these birds that are hard to find in the Golden Triangle. We look forward to more great sparrows and raptors if we return next year!

Special thanks from the Golden Triangle Audubon Society goes out to David Bradford who was kind enough to give the trip leader a tour of the area a couple of weeks earlier and

came out on the morning of the trip to spread seed on Gummert Road and to help with the first section of the trip. Thanks again David!

The following species were recorded on the field trip: Pied-billed Grebe (5), Double-crested Cormorant (2), Great Blue Heron (7), Great Egret (15), Snowy Egret (5), Black-crowned Night-Heron (60), White Ibis (9), White-faced Ibis (35), Black Vulture (6), Turkey Vulture (12), Greater White-fronted Goose (25), Snow Goose (500+), Ross's Goose (2), Gadwall (1 - heard), Mallard (2), Mottled Duck (2), Blue-winged Teal (18), Northern Shoveler (200+), Northern Pintail (500+), Green-winged Teal (60), Lesser Scaup (25), White-tailed Kite (1), Bald Eagle (1), Northern Harrier (16), White-tailed Hawk (1), Red-tailed Hawk (14), Crested Caracara (8+), American Kestrel (15), Killdeer (10), Greater Yellowlegs (4), Long-billed Dowitcher (75), Rock Dove (10), Mourning Dove

(15), Inca Dove (10), Belted Kingfisher (1), Red-bellied Woodpecker (3), Northern Flicker (1 - heard), Eastern Phoebe (5), Loggerhead Shrike (16), Blue Jay (5), American Crow (7), Carolina Chickadee (3), Sedge Wren (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (3), Eastern Bluebird (10), American Robin (25), Hermit Thrush (1), Northern Mockingbird (8), Brown Thrasher (3), European Starling (15), Cedar Waxwing (15), Orange-crowned Warbler (3), Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler (15), Field Sparrow (7), Vesper Sparrow (6), Savannah Sparrow (20), Grasshopper Sparrow (1), LeConte's Sparrow (6), Fox Sparrow (1), Song Sparrow (6), Swamp Sparrow (4), White-throated Sparrow (8), Northern Cardinal (8), Red-winged Blackbird (150+), Eastern Meadowlark (25), Common Grackle (5), Great-tailed Grackle (50+), Brown-headed Cowbird (200+), American Goldfinch (1)

Steve Mayes

Which Republican Environmental Policy?

Environmentalists often regard Teddy Roosevelt as our greatest conservation president. To him, being conservative meant conserving our limited natural resources – our capital assets – for future generations.

Roosevelt's tradition of environmental leadership in the Republican Party lasted most of the 20th century, highlighted by President Nixon signing National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and establishing the Environmental Protection Agency.

In 1980, the seeds of a much different Republican tradition sprouted with James Watt as Secretary of the Interior, arguably the most anti-environment secretary ever. Rather than acting as a conservative steward of our natural resources, Watt opened the doors to the public estate for a fire sale to developers craving quick profits. In 1994, then-Speaker Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America" attempted to revive the Watt environmental philosophy; a move that voters overwhelmingly rejected.

George W. Bush now carries the mantle of a Republican Party with deeply conflicting traditions on the environment. In the coming months, he will choose his course for his Administration. Will he reclaim the conservative conservation philosophy of Teddy Roosevelt, or will he further cement his party to James Watt's anti-environment crusade?

Bush's recent appointment of Gale Norton, a Watt protégé and former employee, is potentially an ominous sign. But this new administration and Gale Norton still have the opportunity to define themselves on environmental issues and instead to create their own positive agenda for conservation.

The Watt wing of the party is urging Bush to define his conservation philosophy immediately with two issues. First, they urge opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil drilling. Second, they want to reverse President Clinton's Executive Order protecting over 58 million acres of roadless areas in our national forests.

For President-elect Bush to take this advice and pursue either policy would be misguided. Either of these issues would

ignite a protracted, bitter and polarizing national fight. In the end, President-elect Bush would lose on both issues in the Congress and in the court of public opinion. The only residue from such a fight would be to define his Administration, and the Republican Party, as anti-environment in the tradition of James Watt.

President-elect Bush said during the campaign that he supported drilling in the Arctic, and opposed President Clinton's plan to protect roadless areas in national forests. Since then the voters have spoken, and sent a clear message. They want Washington, D.C. to govern from the middle, not from the extremes.

The public understands that a clean and healthy environment must go hand in hand with a strong economy. They reject the false choice between the economy and the environment. They overwhelmingly want our public lands protected for future generations, and they reject the extremist approach of the Watt-Republicans who are too cozy with special interests, and too eager to destroy wildlife habitat and give away our parks, refuges and protected places to developers.

The public does not support development of the Arctic Refuge or roadless areas of our national forests, and the Congress won't either. We would all be better served if the new Administration avoided these unnecessary battles, and instead proposed a positive conservation agenda in the Republican tradition of Teddy Roosevelt and Richard Nixon.

*John Flicker, President
National Audubon Society*

High Island Patches for Sale

For your convenience, we plan to have Houston Audubon High Island patches for sale at both the March and April Meetings. These patches are good for entry into the High Island sanctuaries.

Bird Sightings - January 2001

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: Pretty much a "normal" January, with the exception of a better than normal variety of hummingbirds, and a co-operative Couch's Kingbird at Cattail Marsh.

GREBE, Least JEF 1/13(2) JAW
 GREBE, Pied-billed JEF 8 reps(40)
 PELICAN, Amer. White JEF 3 reps(164); ORA 1 rep(12)
 PELICAN, Brown JEF-TX87 1/13(9) JAW; JEF-TX87 1/22(6) JAW
 CORMORANT, Neotropic JEF 1/13(4) JAW; JEF-TX87 1/13(1) JAW; JEF 1/14(1) JAW; JEF 1/20(1) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(1) FTTP; JEF 1/22(20) JAW; JEF-TX87 1/22(2) JAW; JEF 1/27(1) JAW; JEF 1/28(1) JAW; ORA-BC 1/6(101) PW
 CORMORANT, Double-crest. JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 8 reps(72)
 ANHINGA JEF-TP 1/6(1) SM; JEF 1/13(1) JAW; JEF 1/15(1) JAW
 BITTERN, American JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(1) FTTP; JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW
 HERON, Great Blue JEF 10 reps(21); ORA 1 rep(8)
 EGRET, Great HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 12 reps(193); ORA 1 rep(2)
 EGRET, Snowy JEF 10 reps(201)
 HERON, Little Blue JEF 2 reps(2)
 HERON, Tricolored JEF 5 reps(10)
 EGRET, Cattle JEF 1 rep(2)
 HERON, Green JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW
 NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr. JEF 6 reps(25)
 IBIS, White JEF-SW 1/7(12) SM; JEF 1/14(30) JAW; JEF 1/15(128) JAW; JEF 1/20(23) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(23) FTTP; JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW; JEF 1/28(16) JAW
 IBIS, White-faced JEF-TP 1/7(35) JAW; JEF 1/13(2) JAW; JEF 1/14(20) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(80) FTTP
 IBIS, Plegadis JEF-TP 1/6(12) SM; JEF-SW 1/7(8) SM; JEF-TP 1/7(5) JAW; JEF 1/13(319) JAW; JEF-SW 1/13(6) JAW; JEF 1/15(25) JAW; JEF 1/20(54) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(20) FTTP; JEF 1/27(20) JAW; JEF-TP 1/27(72) JAW
 SPOONBILL, Roseate JEF-TX87 1/13(1) JAW; JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW; ORA 1/21(1) KS
 VULTURE, Black JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 8 reps(94)
 VULTURE, Turkey HAI 2 reps(9); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 12 reps(47)
 VULTURE species JEF 1 rep(20)
 WHISTLING-DUCK, Bik.-bell. JEF 1/7(9) SM
 GOOSE, White-fronted JEF 5 reps(639)
 GOOSE, Snow JEF 10 reps(6105)
 GOOSE, Ross's JEF-TP 1/7(3) JAW; JEF-SW 1/14(2) SM; JEF-TP 1/20(14) FTTP
 GOOSE, Canada JEF 1 rep(11)
 GADWALL JEF 5 reps(207)
 MALLARD JEF 8 reps(140)
 DUCK, Mottled JEF-SW 1/7(6) SM; JEF-TP 1/7(2) JAW; JEF 1/13(2) JAW; JEF-SW 1/13(4) JAW; JEF-SW 1/14(14) SM
 TEAL, Blue-winged JEF 5 reps(315)
 SHOVELER, Northern JEF 6 reps(1240)
 PINTAIL, Northern JEF 6 reps(247)
 TEAL, Green-winged JEF 6 reps(2605)
 CANVASBACK JEF-TP 1/6(8) SM; JEF-TP 1/7(2) JAW; JEF 1/13(4) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(10) FTTP; JEF-TP 1/27(5) JAW
 DUCK, Ring-necked JEF 4 reps(83)
 SCAUP, Greater JEF-TP 1/20(1) FTTP
 SCAUP, Lesser JEF 5 reps(262)
 DUCK, Ruddy JEF 5 reps(314)

OSPREY JEF 1/15(1) JAW
 KITE, White-tailed JEF 9 reps(10)
 EAGLE, Bald ANG 1/12(1) BDG
 HARRIER, Northern ANG 1 rep(1); JEF 13 reps(56)
 HAWK, Sharp-shinned JEF 1/15(2) JAW; JEF 1/20(1) JAW
 HAWK, Cooper's JEF 1/20(2) JAW; JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW
 HAWK, Red-shouldered JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(26)
 HAWK, Red-tailed JEF 15 reps(145)
 HAWK, Red-tail. (Kriider's) JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW; JEF-SW 1/14(1) SM
 KESTREL, American JEF 15 reps(211)
 MERLIN JEF 1/14(1) JAW; JEF 1/14(1) KS; JEF 1/20(1) JAW
 FALCON, Peregrine JEF 1/14(1) KS
 BOBWHITE, Northern JEF 1 rep(1)
 RAIL, Virginia JEF-TP 1/6(1) SM; JEF-TP 1/20(2) FTTP
 SORA JEF-TP 1/6(1) SM; JEF-TP 1/7(2) JAW; JEF 1/13(2) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(3) FTTP
 MOORHEN, Common JEF 7 reps(21)
 COOT, American JEF 8 reps(1280)
 KILLDEER JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 13 reps(85)
 STILT, Black-necked JEF 2 reps(15); ORA 1 rep(9)
 YELLOWLEGS, Greater JEF 2 reps(3)
 YELLOWLEGS, Lesser JEF 1 rep(5)
 SANDPIPER, Spotted JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW
 DUNLIN JEF 1 rep(200)
 SNIPE, Common JEF 2 reps(3)
 WOODCOCK, American JEF-SW 1/7(1) SM; JEF-SW 1/14(2) SM; JEF 1/28(3) KS
 GULL, Laughing JEF 8 reps(226)
 GULL, Bonaparte's JEF 3 reps(23)
 GULL, Ring-billed JEF 7 reps(773)
 GULL, Herring ANG 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1)
 TERN, Caspian ANG 1 rep(3); JEF 3 reps(6)
 TERN, Forster's JEF 6 reps(142)
 DOVE, Rock HAI 1 rep(8); JEF 7 reps(61)
 COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian JEF 1/14(38) JAW
 DOVE, White-winged JEF 1/1(30) JAW; JEF-SW 1/7(11) SM; JEF-NEDR 1/13(1) JAW
 DOVE, Mourning HAI 2 reps(5); JEF 20 reps(214); ORA 1 rep(1)
 DOVE, Inca JEF 1 rep(2)
 OWL, Barn JEF-SW 1/7(1) SM; JEF-SW 1/13(1) JAW
 OWL, Great Horned JEF 1/14(1) KS; JEF 1/28(1) KS
 HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chin. JEF-NEDR 1/1 thru 1/31(1) JJW
 HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tail. JEF-NEDR 1/1 thru 1/18 (1) JJW;
 HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous JEF 1/27(1) RAJ; ORA 1/6(1) PW
 HUMMINGBIRD species JEF-NEDR 1/6(1) PW; JEF-NEDR 1/7(1) JAW; JEF 1/11(1) JAW
 KINGFISHER, Belted JEF 6 reps(12); ORA 2 reps(2)
 WOODPECKER, Red-bellied HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 12 reps(24); ORA 1 rep(2)
 SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell. HAI 2 reps(6); JEF 8 reps(10)
 WOODPECKER, Downy HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 8 reps(19); ORA 1 rep(1)
 FLICKER, Northern JEF 5 reps(6)
 WOODPECKER, Pileated HAI 2 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 2

reps(3); ORA 2 reps(2)
PHOEBE, Eastern HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 15
 reps(126); ORA 2 reps(2)
PHOEBE, Say's JEF 1/15(1) JAW; JEF 1/20(1) JAW,
 JEF 1/20(1) SM
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion JEF-TP 1/20(1) FTTP
KINGBIRD, Couch's JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW
SHRIKE, Loggerhead JEF 13 reps(187)
VIREO, Blue-headed JEF 2 reps(3)
JAY, Blue HAI 2 reps(7); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 18
 reps(62)
CROW, American HAI 3 reps(12); JAS 1 rep(12); JEF 2
 reps(12)
CROW, Fish JEF-TP 1/6(11) SM; JEF 1/13(10)
 JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(4) FTTP; JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW
CROW, species JEF 2 reps(4)
MARTIN, Purple JEF 1/28(1) JAW
SWALLOW, Tree JEF-TP 1/6(10) SM; JEF-SW 1/7(6)
 SM; JEF-TP 1/7(12) JAW; JEF 1/13(65) JAW; JEF-SW
 1/14(6) SM; JEF-TP 1/20(25) FTTP; JEF-TP 1/27(1) JAW;
 ORA 1/21(12) KS
CHICKADEE, Carolina HAI 2 reps(27); JEF 6 reps(10); ORA
 2 reps(4)
TITMOUSE, Tufted HAI 2 reps(16); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 1
 rep(5)
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed HAI 1/14(2) KS
CREEPER, Brown HAI 1/14(1) KS; JEF-SW 1/7(1) SM;
 JEF-SW 1/14(1) SM; JEF-SW 1/22(1) JAW; JEF 1/27(1) RAJ
WREN, Carolina HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(10); ORA 3
 reps(3)
WREN, House JEF-SW 1/7(2) SM; JEF 1/13(1)
 JAW; JEF-SW 1/13(1) JAW; JEF 1/14(2) KS; JEF-SRSP
 1/14(1) SM; JEF-SW 1/14(4) SM
WREN, Winter JEF-SW 1/6(1) CLL
WREN, Sedge JEF 1/14(1) KS; ORA 1/21(1) KS
WREN, Marsh JEF-TP 1/6(1) SM; JEF-TP 1/7(5)
 JAW; JEF 1/13(3) JAW; JEF-SRSP 1/14(1) SM; JEF-TP
 1/20(3) FTTP
KINGLET, Golden-crowned JEF-TP 1/6(5) SM; JEF-SW 1/7(4)
 SM; JEF 1/14(2) KS; JEF-SW 1/14(4) SM
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned HAI 2 reps(4); JEF 9 reps(26)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern HAI 2 reps(4); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 9
 reps(199); ORA 2 reps(8)
THRUSH, Hermit HAI 1/14(3) KS; HAI 1/28(2) KS;
 JEF-TP 1/6(2) SM; JEF-SW 1/7(4) SM; JEF 1/14(2) KS;
 JEF-SW 1/14(2) SM; JEF-TP 1/20(1) FTTP; JEF-SW 1/22(1)
 JAW; JEF 1/28(2) KS; ORA 1/21(3) KS
ROBIN, American HAI 3 reps(79); JAS 1 rep(210); JEF
 29 reps(3192); ORA 3 reps(39)
CATBIRD, Gray JEF-SW 1/14(1) SM; JEF 1/28(1) KS
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 17
 reps(201); ORA 2 reps(3)
THRASHER, Brown JEF 12 reps(31)
STARLING, European JEF 12 reps(450); ORA 2 reps(6)
PIPIT, American JEF 4 reps(17)
WAXWING, Cedar JAS 1 rep(45); JEF 2 reps(9)
WARBLER, Orange-crowned JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 11 reps(62)
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 15 reps(211); ORA
 1 rep(6)
WARBLER, Y-r (Audubon's) JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW
WARBLER, Pine HAI 1 rep(10); JEF 1 rep(20)
WARBLER, Palm JEF-TP 1/6(1) SM; JEF-SW 1/14(1)
 SM
YELLOWTHROAT, Common JEF 8 reps(19); ORA 1 rep(1)
TOWHEE, Spotted JEF-SW 1/13(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 1/14(1) SM
TOWHEE, Eastern JEF-SW 1/13(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 1/14(1) SM
SPARROW, Chipping HAI 2 reps(50); JEF 3 reps(42); ORA
 2 reps(13)
SPARROW, Field HAI 1/14(4) KS; HAI 1/28(8) KS;
 JEF-TP 1/6(3) SM; JEF-SW 1/7(6) SM; JEF-TP 1/7(7) JAW;
 JEF 1/14(1) KS; JEF 1/28(3) KS
SPARROW, Vesper JEF-TP 1/6(1) SM; JEF-TP 1/20(1)
 FTTP
SPARROW, Lark JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW
SPARROW, Savannah JEF 11 reps(413)

SPARROW, Grasshopper JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW
SPARROW, Fox JEF-SW 1/6(1) CLL; JEF-SW 1/14(2)
 SM
SPARROW, Song JEF 11 reps(93)
SPARROW, Lincoln's JEF-TP 1/7(1) JAW; JEF 1/13(1)
 JAW; JEF-SW 1/13(2) JAW; JEF 1/14(1) KS; JEF-TP 1/27(2)
 JAW
SPARROW, Swamp JEF 10 reps(121); ORA 1 rep(3)
SPARROW, White-throated HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 9 reps(95); ORA 1
 rep(1)
SPARROW, White-crowned JEF-TP 1/6(4) SM; JEF-SW 1/7(3)
 SM; JEF-TP 1/7(6) JAW; JEF 1/13(1) JAW; JEF 1/15(1)
 JAW; JEF 1/20(2) JAW; JEF-TP 1/20(5) FTTP; JEF-TP
 1/27(4) JAW; JEF 1/28(2) KS
JUNCO, Dark-eyed HAI 2 reps(82); JEF 3 reps(5)
JUNCO, Dk-eyed (Pink-sided) JEF-TP 1/20(1) FTTP
LONGSPUR, Lapland ANG 1/9(1) GG; ANG 1/13(8) BDG
CARDINAL, Northern JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 14 reps(82); ORA
 2 reps(15)
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged HAI 1 rep(25); JEF 17 reps(3455)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern JEF 8 reps(31)
MEADOWLARK species JEF 4 reps(40)
GRACKLE, Common JEF 13 reps(1742); ORA 2 reps(3)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed JEF 1 rep(1)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed JEF 12 reps(388); ORA 1 rep(3)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed JEF 4 reps(14); ORA 1 rep(4)
FINCH, Purple ORA 1/7(4) KS; ORA 1/21(1) KS;
 ORA 1/28(5) KS
FINCH, House JEF 1/1(1) JAW; JEF 1/2(4) KH;
 JEF-NEDR 1/22(1) JAW; JEF 1/27(3) RAJ
CROSSBILL, Red ANG 1/12 (5) BDG
SISKIN, Pine JEF 1/1(4) JAW; JEF 1/2(1) KH; ORA
 1/7(1) KS
GOLDFINCH, American HAI 1 rep(6); JAS 1 rep(30); JEF 26
 reps(630); ORA 3 reps(96)
SPARROW, House JEF 9 reps(62); ORA 3 reps(14)

Number of Species 150
Number of Individuals 31343

County Abbreviations:

ANG - Angelina; HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; ORA -
 Orange

Location Codes:

BC - Bridge City; BMT - Beaumont; NEDR - Nederland; SRSP - Sea
 Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TP - Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail
 Marsh; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim

Observer Abbreviations:

BDG - Nancy Bird, Louis Debetaz, Georgette Guernsey; CLL - Carol
 Lynn Loker; FTTP - Field Trip to Tyrrell Park/Cattail Marsh; GG -
 Georgette Guernsey; JAW - John Whittle; KH - Keith Hansen; KS -
 Ken Sztraky; MH - Margo Holst; PW - Royce Pendergast, John
 Whittle; RAJ - Rose Ann Jordan; SM - Steve Mayes

Details of Very Rare Species

Least Grebe – 13 Jan. 2001 – John Whittle

Least Grebes have been seen on and off in Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell
 Park, Beaumont over the last few months. Two birds were seen in an
 area along Hillebrandt Bayou on the "back" side of the Marsh.

Black-chinned Hummingbird – all Jan. – Jana and John Whittle

An adult male Black-chinned Hummingbird was a regular visitor to a
 feeder in Nederland throughout the month, although it was not seen
 after 31 Jan. The difficult-to-see purple on the gorget was seen
 occasionally.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird – 1 to 18 Jan. 2001 – Jana and John Whittle

An apparent immature male Broad-tailed Hummingbird used a feeder
 in Nederland through January 18. This particular bird did not have

(continued on page 7, column 2)

Texas Receives \$1.3 Million to Restore Coastal Wetlands

Although this was released just before Christmas, it did not receive wide publicity. Therefore, we are reproducing it here, somewhat abridged

AUSTIN, Texas -- Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas General Land Office have been awarded two grants totaling about \$1.3 million to restore wetland habitat in the Galveston Bay system. The grants from the National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will combine with state funds and other sources to fund two projects totaling \$2.4 million.

The North Deer Island and Delehide Cove grant proposals are partnerships among the two state agencies and other partners. The GLO's Coastal Projects Division, funded under the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act, will play a key role in managing the projects, which will benefit not only fish and wildlife but people who depend on these resources for recreation and business. A team made up of members from each of the partners will guide each project.

The \$800,000 North Deer Island project will protect the shoreline and restore estuarine intertidal marshes on 147 acres of coastal habitat, including 103 acres of wetlands. A nesting site for 19 species of colonial waterbirds, North Deer Island is considered by TPW biologists the most important rookery island in Galveston Bay. For this project, TPW and the GLO have partnered with the Shell Marine Program of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Reliant Energy, the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, the Texas Audubon Society and the USFWS Coastal Program.

The \$1,643,150 Delehide Cove project will reduce erosion of more than 1,400 acres of estuarine marsh complex in the West Bay area of Galveston Bay. Another 50 acres of estuarine intertidal emergent marsh and one acre of seagrass will also be protected and restored. At Delehide Cove, TPW and the GLO have partnered with a coalition of local property associations, Reliant Energy, Galveston Bay Foundation, Galveston Bay Estuary Program and the Texas Coastal Program of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Galveston Bay has lost about 30,000 acres of wetlands to severe winter storms, human development, subsidence, erosion and other factors. The Galveston Bay Estuary Plan aims at increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands and habitat for fish and wildlife. One objective is to create or restore 15,000 acres by 2004.

Public meetings will be held in early 2001 to present project concepts and seek local citizen input, with meeting details to be announced soon. Restoration work will begin in 2002 and probably conclude the following year.

February Meeting Report *(cont. from p.1)*

use exceptionally keen hearing. Turkey Vultures can smell the dead carcasses they devour from great distances. Learn about Hawks, Golden Eagles, Falcons and more. See their strong talons, powerful wings and sharp beaks in action. Witness ingenious experiments that study the birds' senses and

abilities. Compelling wildlife footage and innovative animation give you a spectacular, bird's eye view of the world's greatest winged hunters. One in a series of Ultimate Guides from Discovery Channel Video."

Defining features of birds known as raptors: strong talons for grasping prey, a muscular chest and powerful wings for lifting prey, and sharp beaks for tearing the prey open. Raptors have eyes that point forward unlike other birds. They have a third eye lid that protects their eyes from prey when they attack. Tests have shown that eagles eyesight is two and one-half times that of humans because of their eye's large size. Kestrel's eyesight is about the same as humans except that they see ultraviolet light. This helps them track down their favorite food, voles. The nighttime hunters have the same defining features as raptors. Although an Owl's eyesight is 100 times more sensitive than humans, experiments have proven that Owls hunt by hearing not just by sight. The leading edge of the feather of an Owl's wing has small spikes, which enable the owl to fly quieter. No other bird has this feature on its wings. In South America, Turkey Vultures cannot see its food because of the forest canopy. Therefore, Turkey Vultures can hunt just by smell. Their nostrils are so large you can see right through them. In England, the US Air Force uses the Peregrine Falcon to drive off birds using the grassy airfields as feeding grounds. Beaks of raptors are adapted to the food they eat. In Florida, the Snail Kite eats only one food source, apple snails. "All birds of prey share an evolutionary legacy, whether they are hunting or scavenging, flying or gliding, they are the ultimate aerial predators."

I have highlighted only a few of the interesting facts in this video. If you are interested in other educational bird material, just come to our next membership meeting and borrow something from the club's lending library. This time I borrowed a video by filmmakers Judy Fieth and Michael Male titled "Watching Waders". It is the second video in a series of video guides to the birds of North America.

Nancy Fisher

Details of Rare Species *(cont. from p. 4)*

much of a wash on the sides but had the large tail characteristic of this species. A faint wing trill could sometimes be heard when the bird flew up into an oak tree behind the back yard.

Say's Phoebe – 15, 20 January – Steve Mayes and John Whittle

A Say's Phoebe, characterized by the gray back, dark tail and pale rufous belly, was seen on Mason Road in west Jefferson County, just east of the intersection with Thompson Road, on 15 January and again on 20 January.

Couch's Kingbird – 27 Jan. 2001 – John Whittle

A kingbird with a yellow-belly discovered in Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park in Beaumont on 27 January turned out to be a Couch's Kingbird. The bird had a gray head, darker gray eye patch/wide eye line, a greenish gray back, darker gray wings, and bright yellow throat and belly. The gray tail was missing about three of the central tail feathers, giving it a somewhat unusual appearance. The bird reacted vigorously to about 15 sec. of taped Couch's Kingbird call, and responded with the identical, characteristic "breer" call.

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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://www.texasbirding.net>. This includes all the Jefferson County hotspots published in early issues.

Golden Triangle (409) 768-1340

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
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