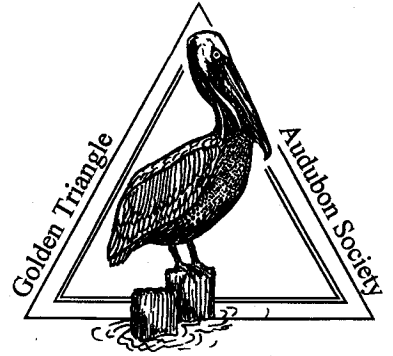


Brown Pelican

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The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 7 No. 9

September 2001

Membership Meeting
Thursday, September 20, 2001
6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

The Ducks of North America

John Haynes
Haynes Financial Services

Most of you will already know or have heard of John Haynes expertise in identifying ducks. John promises to reveal some of his secrets at this meeting. This presentation will be very timely, coming as it does just before the ducks begin to arrive to spend the winter in our area. John will illustrate his talk with slides and possibly also recordings of duck calls.

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.

August Meeting Report

The August 16, 2001, Golden Triangle Membership meeting was very well attended. I was happy to see so many familiar and new bird member faces and was thrilled to see several members of the Beaumont Camera Club. Jimmy Braud, our meetings speaker, is the president of Braud Camera Company that is located in Nederland. I hope everyone learned something new from the great tips Jimmy presented in his program.

He provided basic information and tips about cameras. He instructed everyone on how to clean his or her camera and lenses. This should be done on a regular basis. If we can see black spots through the viewfinder on our SLRs, don't worry because those black spots will not show up on our pictures. Using a UV filter is a great way to protect our lenses from damage when dropped. A circular polarizer is a real important filter. This filter will make the sky real blue, clouds real white, and it will add color to our photographs that are taken in the bright sunlight. Jimmy explained what all the different numbers on the camera means. Our eyes see about the same as a 50 mm lens. Therefore, as an example, a 100 mm lens will see about twice as far as our eyes. When using long lenses it is very important to stabilize the camera and keep it from shaking. Just like we use a tripod to stabilize our scopes, a tripod or monopod may be used to stabilize a camera. A 2X converter may be used to double our lens; however, we need to use them in bright light

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Sabine Woods Work Day – Saturday September 22 – please come – see p.2

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 7, No.9 Sep. 2001

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

**RARE BIRD ALERT AND
SOCIETY INFORMATION
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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.

Saturday September 15 – Fall Migration Count. 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. It is not necessary to count for the whole day. In fact, the more people we have counting in the critical early morning hours, the better. So please call, even if your help will be limited to a few hours.

Thursday September 20 – Membership Meeting. See front page.

Saturday September 22 – Sabine Woods Work Day. Please come help us maintain the trails and do other things necessary to keep Sabine Woods. Join us at the woods, 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on Highway 87, just past the Petroleum Helicopters base, at 7:30 a.m. or as soon thereafter as you can. We will probably work only until around noon. Tools that will be useful include clippers, machete, riding mower. We probably need one chain saw and one brush and shovel to clean the boardwalk.. If someone would like to volunteer to bring refreshments, we will reimburse you, but please let us know (722-4193) so we don't duplicate!. Gloves and insect repellent recommended.

Saturday September 29 – Field trip to Smith Point Hawk Watch. To reach the Smith Point Hawk Watch site from Winnie, take Highway 124 south towards High Island. After about 12 miles, turn right on FM1985 and follow it past the access road for Anahuac NWR until it meets FM562. Follow FM562 to Smith Point. At the end of FM562, there are usually signs to the Hawk Watch. The normal route is to proceed straight until almost reaching the bay, and turn left on a shell/limestone oilfield road, bearing left again to the parking area. It takes at

least 90 minutes from Beaumont or Nederland to reach the site. Your leaders will be there by 8:30 a.m., but join us when you can.

Broad-winged Hawk migration typically peaks around the 25th-26th-27th of September in southeast Texas, but the exact timing is dependent on weather conditions along the routes the hawks take. Generally, Broad-winged Hawks do not lift off in the mornings until 9 or even 10 a.m. (They wait for thermals to develop.) Sharp-shinned Hawks, on the other hand are early risers, not relying so much on thermals, and may start passing the Hawk Watch site as early as 7 a.m.

Saturday October 13 – McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge Open House. The McFaddin NWR is hosting an open house at the headquarters building from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Biologist Patrick Walther will be on hand to update you on what is happening on the Refuge. The managers of both McFaddin (Brett Wehrle) and Texas Point (Dean Bossert) will conduct tours of recently completed projects. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.

To reach McFaddin, proceed west from Sabine Pass on Highway 87 for 12 miles (to the point where it is officially "closed"). Turn right into the McFaddin refuge, follow the limestone road two or three miles round the edge of Clam Lake and then across the bridge over Salt Bayou and on to the headquarters building.

Thursday October 18 – Membership Meeting. We have another exciting program lined up. John Arvin, one of the premier naturalists in the country, will talk on "The Birds of Peru". Although he now lives in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, John was born and brought up in the local area. Among his many other distinctions, he currently serves as chair of the Texas Bird Records Committee of the Texas Ornithological Society. Mark your calendars as this will be a program you will not want to miss.

Saturday October 20 – Field Trip. Tentatively, we will look for late migrants at Sabine Woods and other coastal locations. Check in next month's

Brown Pelican for confirmation and further details.

Thursday November 15 – Annual Meeting and Covered Dish Dinner. At this meeting, in addition to holding our annual elections, we invite everyone to bring a “covered dish” and a few of their favorite slides, pictures or videotapes.

Sunday December 30 – Sea Rim Christmas Bird Count. This is the count we sponsor! Full details in later issues of the *Brown Pelican*. If you wish to participate, please let John Whittle (409-722-4193) know.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Robert Hurt, Nancy Fisher, Margaret Johnson and Carol Lynn Loker for bringing refreshments in August. **We need volunteers for the September meeting.** We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! If you can just bring drinks and cookies or something similar, please call Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193 or Nancy Fisher at (409) 751-0119 as soon as possible. Please help if you can!

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.

Smith Pt. Hawk Watch and Nature Workshop October 5-7, 2001

A great way to spend lots of time on the Smith Point Hawk Watch Tower and explore the unique ecosystem of Galveston Bay is to join us for our weekend-long *Hawk Watch and Nature Workshop*. Included in the workshop are programs on the tower with experts who will help you learn to identify hawks in flight, and demonstrate how raptor data are collected, recorded, and used to track population trends. Additional topics will be covered with a variety of slide and video presentations on dragonflies, butterflies, and wildflowers found in the Galveston Bay area. Following each presentation, our local experts will lead us into the field for a closer look at the native flora and fauna. Nocturnal prowls for spiders and owls, and a session covering the European settlement of Smith Point and the upper Texas coast will round out the workshop's programs.

The *Hawk Watch and Nature Workshop* will be based at the Spoonbill R.V. Park and Lodge in Smith Point, Texas. The Workshop fee includes a donation to support SPHW, lectures and field trips, time on the tower with experts, all meals including an all-you-can eat fish and oyster fry and a shrimp boil, and lodging. For information, pricing or reservations please contact: Cecilia Riley at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, 979-480-0999, criley@gcbo.org

August Membership Meeting

continued from page 1

conditions because the 2X converter cuts the light in half. Trying different photo labs could make a real difference in our pictures. Jimmy passed around some pictures that compared different lab processing. We could really see the difference in pictures processed by different labs. If we're going to travel a long way to take a picture, take a lot of pictures. Don't forget to bracket our pictures. This means to take the same picture at a normal exposure, one slightly over exposed, and one slightly

under exposed. This way increases our chances of an appropriate exposure and we're bound to like one of these pictures.

Following his presentation of these camera tips, we watched a 40-minute Nikon video entitled *Masters of Wildlife*. The video was on wildlife photography and featured the work of international renowned Dutch borne photographer Frans Lanting. Traveling with Frans is Christine, a freelance writer and editor specializing in natural history. Wildlife of Kenya is used in this video. It is full of expert tips concentrating on how to take those hard wildlife pictures. The video is available for rental at Jimmy's store. So if you missed the meeting and are interested in seeing the video, please visit Braud Camera in Nederland.

Thank you, Jimmy, for all the helpful camera tips, wildlife video and door prizes. Our next membership meeting will be Thursday, September 20. The club's member, John Haynes, will teach us how to identify ducks. Hope to see you there!

Nancy Fisher

Highway 87 Status

A meeting was held in Port Arthur on August 30 to provide information on the current status and to accept public input on the project to rebuild Highway 87 between Sabine Pass and High Island. Four routes were identified as being under active consideration. Three routes would restore the link between Sabine Pass and High Island: a route 300 feet inland from the “existing” road, a route 150 feet inland, and a route north at Clam Lake to the south levee of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and thence along the levee to Highway 124 just north of High Island. The other would provide an alternative route out of Sabine Pass by means of a bridge over the Sabine-Neches Waterway to Pleasure Island at the Keith Lake cut.

Written comments are being accepted until September 13, and should be sent to Carlos Swonke, Turner, Collie & Braden Inc., 400 West 15th Street, Suite 500, Austin, Texas 78701; Tel.: 512-457-7754; Fax 512-472-7519; email swonkec@tcbaus.com

Bird Sightings - July 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: Early July brought more reports of nesting species, most notably in Hardin County, where such species as Swainson's and Hooded Warblers, Gray Catbirds, and Yellow-breasted Chat were seen. Towards the end of July, birders normally begin to think of shorebird migration, and this year perhaps more birds than usual arrived before the end of the month.

CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 5 reps(53)	GULL, Laughing	JEF 3 reps(54)
BITTERN, Least	JEF 7/8(1) JAW	TERN, Gull-billed	JEF 2 reps(2)
HERON, Great Blue	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(13)	TERN, Caspian	JEF 2 reps(17)
EGRET, Great	JEF 9 reps(73); ORA 1 rep(1)	TERN, Royal	JEF 2 reps(6)
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 6 reps(148); ORA 1 rep(1)	TERN, Sandwich	JEF 1 rep(1)
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 6 reps(13); ORA 1 rep(1)	TERN, Common	JEF-PI 7/28(1) JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(1)
HERON, Tricolored	JEF 4 reps(15)	MW	
EGRET, Reddish	JEF 3 reps(5)	TERN, Forster's	JEF 3 reps(322)
EGRET, Cattle	JAS 1 rep(11); JEF 11 reps(665); ORA	TERN, Least	JEF 3 reps(213)
2 reps(19)		TERN, Black	JEF 3 reps(250)
HERON, Green	JEF 3 reps(5); ORA 1 rep(1)	SKIMMER, Black	JEF 4 reps(35)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.	JEF 3 reps(10)	DOVE, Rock	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 7 reps(56); ORA 1
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.	JEF 12 reps(18); ORA 1 rep(3)	rep(13)	
IBIS, White	JEF 4 reps(214); ORA 1 rep(1)	COLLARED-DOVE, Euras.	JEF-NEDR 7/12(2) JAW; JEF-TX87
IBIS, White-faced	JEF 1 rep(1)	7/15(21) JAW; JEF 7/18(2) JAW; JEF 7/21(7) JAW; JEF	
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF 3 reps(5)	7/29(10) MW; ORA-BC 7/8(2) JAW	
SPONBILL, Roseate	JEF 7/15(50) JAW; JEF-PI 7/15(15)	DOVE, White-winged	JEF-NEDR 7/13(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR
JAW; JEF-TXPT 7/15(1) JAW; JEF-PI 7/18(1) JB; JEF		7/14(1) JAW; JEF 7/15(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 7/19(2) JAW	
7/28(20) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(13) JAW; JEF 7/29(20) MW;		DOVE, Mourning	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 22 reps(261); ORA 2
JEF-PI 7/29(25) MW		reps(12)	
VULTURE, Black	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 2	DOVE, Inca	JEF 13 reps(33)
reps(4)		CUCKOO, Yellow-billed	JEF 1 rep(9)
VULTURE, Turkey	HAI 1 rep(8); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 3	NIGHTHAWK, Common	JEF 5 reps(23)
reps(7); ORA 1 rep(2)		SWIFT, Chimney	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 13 reps(49); ORA 1
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous	JEF 1 rep(1)	rep(10)	
DUCK, Mottled	JEF-PI 7/15(11) JAW; JEF 7/21(1)	HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr.	JEF-BMT 7/2(2) RAJ
JAW; JEF 7/29(2) MW; JEF-PI 7/29(2) MW		HUMMINGBIRD species	HAI 7/1(1) PW
KITE, Swallow-tailed	JAS 7/1(4) PW; JAS 7/25(1) JC	WOODPECKER, Red-bell.	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 1
KITE, White-tailed	JEF 2 reps(3)	rep(1); ORA 1 rep(1)	
HAWK, Cooper's	JEF 7/10(1) JAW	WOODPECKER, Downy	HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 2 reps(4); ORA 1
HAWK, Red-shouldered	JAS 1 rep(1)	rep(1)	
HAWK, Broad-winged	HAI 7/1(1) PW; JEF 7/5(1) JAW; JEF	FLICKER, Northern	JEF-NEDR 7/16(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR
7/8(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 7/15(1) JB; JEF 7/19(1) JAW		7/29(1) MW	
HAWK, Swainson's	JEF 7/1(1) JB; JEF 7/5(1) JAW; JEF	WOODPECKER, Pileated	HAI 1 rep(8)
7/15(1) HD; JEF 7/28(2) JAW; JEF 7/29(1) MW		WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern	HAI 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Red-tail (Krider's)	JEF 7/1(1) JB	FLYCATCHER, Acadian	HAI 1 rep(1)
BOBWHITE, Northern	HAI 1 rep(1)	FLYCATCHER, Least	JEF-SRSP 7/15(2) DV; JEF-SW 7/15(1)
RAIL, Clapper	JEF 1 rep(2)	DV	
GALLINULE, Purple	JEF 7/8(2) JAW; JEF 7/15(1) JAW; JEF	FLYCATCHER, Gt. Crested	HAI 7/1(3) PW
7/29(2) MW		KINGBIRD, Western	JEF-TX87 7/15(1) JAW
MOORHEN, Common	JEF 2 reps(10)	KINGBIRD, Eastern	HAI 1 rep(6); JEF 6 reps(68); ORA 1
PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 2 reps(4)	rep(1)	
PLOVER, Semipalmated	JEF-PI 7/15(1) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(2)	FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tail.	JEF 5 reps(15)
JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(3) MW		SHRIKE, Loggerhead	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(63); ORA 1
KILLDEER	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 8 reps(23)	rep(3)	
STILT, Black-necked	JEF 4 reps(50)	VIREO, White-eyed	HAI 1 rep(21); ORA 1 rep(1)
AVOCET, American	JEF-PI 7/15(13) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(25)	VIREO, Red-eyed	HAI 1 rep(2)
JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(35) MW		JAY, Blue	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 15 reps(46); ORA 1
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF-PI 7/15(1) JAW; JEF 7/29(1) MW	rep(3)	
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	JEF-PI 7/15(50) JAW; JEF 7/28(1) JAW	CROW, American	HAI 1 rep(4); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 1 rep(1)
WILLET	JEF 3 reps(311)	CROW, Fish	JEF-NEDR 7/15(1) JAW; ORA-BC
SANDPIPER, Spotted	JEF-PI 7/15(1) JAW	7/1(1) PW	
SANDPIPER, Western	JEF-PI 7/15(63) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(51)	CROW, species	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 14 reps(53); ORA 2
JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(21) MW		reps(11)	
SANDPIPER, Peep	JEF-PI 7/15(20) JAW	MARTIN, Purple	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 11 reps(240); ORA 2
SANDPIPER, Least	JEF-PI 7/15(2) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(250)	reps(11)	
JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(500) MW		SWALLOW, Cliff	JEF 7/15(2) JAW; ORA-BC 7/1(1) PW;
SANDPIPER, Stilt	JEF-PI 7/15(6) JAW	ORA-BC 7/8(1) JAW	
DOWITCHER, Short-billed	JEF-PI 7/15(15) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(5)	SWALLOW, Barn	HAI 1 rep(4); JAS 2 reps(11); JEF 9
JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(1) MW		reps(159); ORA 1 rep(10)	
DOWITCHER species	JEF 7/28(10) JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(12) MW	SWALLOW species	JEF 1 rep(10)

CHICKADEE, Carolina	HAI 1 rep(8)
TITMOUSE, Tufted	HAI 1 rep(7)
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed	HAI 7/1(9) PW
WREN, Carolina	HAI 1 rep(8); JEF 2 reps(5); ORA 1 rep(1)
WREN, Marsh	JEF-PI 7/15(2) JAW; JEF-PI 7/28(1) JAW; JEF-PI 7/29(1) MW
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray	HAI 7/1(8) PW; ORA 7/8(1) JAW
BLUEBIRD, Eastern	HAI 1 rep(8); ORA 2 reps(6)
THRUSH, Wood	JEF-BMT 7/2(1) RAJ
ROBIN, American	JEF 18 reps(35)
CATBIRD, Gray	HAI 7/1(3) PW; JEF 7/15(2) HD; JEF-SRSP 7/15(1) DV; JEF-SW 7/15(1) DV
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern	HAI 1 rep(5); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 18 reps(158); ORA 1 rep(12)
THRASHER, Brown	HAI 7/1(2) PW; JEF-BMT 7/2(1) RAJ
STARLING, European	JEF 12 reps(220); ORA 1 rep(5)
WARBLER, Pine	HAI 1 rep(9)
WARBLER, Black-and-wh.	JEF-SW 7/15(6) DV
WARBLER, Swainson's	HAI 7/1(3) PW
WATERTHRUSH, Louisiana	JEF-SW 7/15(1) DV; JEF-SW 7/15(1) JAW
YELLOWTHROAT, Com.	HAI 1 rep(5); JEF 1 rep(4)
WARBLER, Hooded	HAI 1 rep(5)
CHAT, Yellow-breasted	HAI 7/1(4) PW
TANAGER, Summer	HAI 1 rep(3)
CARDINAL, Northern	HAI 1 rep(9); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(25); ORA 2 reps(8)
BUNTING, Indigo	HAI 7/1(2) PW
BUNTING, Painted	HAI 7/1(6) PW
DICKCISSEL	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(3)
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	JEF 4 reps(114); ORA 1 rep(1)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	JEF 2 reps(6)
MEADOWLARK species	JEF 3 reps(12); ORA 1 rep(1)
GRACKLE, Common	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 12 reps(88)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	JEF 1 rep(21)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed	JEF 12 reps(140); ORA 2 reps(7)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(15)
ORIOLE, Orchard	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(30)
FINCH, House	JEF-NEDR 7/14(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 7/16(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 7/17(2) JAW
SPARROW, House	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 17 reps(103); ORA 2 reps(33)

Number of Species 117
Number of Individuals 6401

County Abbreviations:
HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; ORA - Orange

Location Codes:
BC - Bridge City; BMT - Beaumont; NEDR - Nederland; PI - Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim; TXPT - Road to Pilot Station at Texas Point

Observer Abbreviations:
DV - Don Verser; HD - Howard Davis; JAW - John Whittle; JB - Jack Baugh; JC - Jace Coleman; MW - Steve Mayes and John Whittle; PW - Royce Pendergast, John Whittle; RAJ - Rose Ann Jordan

Notes on Rare Species

Swallow-tailed Kite – 01 July and 25 July 2001

It is always nice to be able to report sightings of this beautiful bird. Four (yes, four) were seen by Royce Pendergast and John Whittle lazily soaring over Evadale late in the afternoon of July 1. One clearly had shorter tail feathers than the others, and was thus almost certainly a juvenile. However, the close proximity to each other and some interactions suggested that this was probably one family. A few miles further north, on FM1004 between Buna and Kirbyville, Jace Coleman saw a single bird on July 25. Both locations are reasonably close to the Sabine River.

Early Shorebirds – 15 July 2001 and on

It is well known that shorebird migration begins late in July, but it seems that every year, birds are detected earlier than the year before. This year, the southern impoundment of Pleasure Island had mudflats that provided ideal shorebird habitat for all of July and August. By July 15, there were Western, Least, Spotted and Stilt Sandpipers, Semi-palmated Plovers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Short-billed Dowitchers all present in numbers. There were also a good number of American Avocets, but these were non-breeding individuals that never left for points north.

Northern Flicker – 16 and 29 July 2001

Northern Flickers are currently indicated as rare on the Upper Texas Coast in summer until the beginning of October. However, a Northern Flicker (of the normal Yellow-shafted race) has been visiting the Whittles' front yard since at least July 16. It has been seen several times though August 31, usually on the ground underneath an oak tree.

Gray Catbirds – 01 and 15 July 2001

The Catbirds seen in southern Hardin County on July 1 were "expected" as the species nests there regularly. Several seen by Don Verser on the coast on July 15 started a debate on *TEXBIRDS* as to whether they nested right down to the coast. Although we have no evidence of nesting in Sabine Woods, it is certainly possible. Meanwhile, Howard Davis reports that he has seen Catbirds in the woods on West 7th Street and Texaco Island Road in the south part of Port Arthur regularly during the summer.

Bird Alerts

As this is being written on the last day of August, birding has been severely restricted by a week of rain. However, the middle two weekends of August brought fairly good numbers of warbler and flycatcher species to Sabine Woods. There were at least 11 species of warbler on the weekend of August 11-12 and only slightly fewer on August 19. The latter included a pair of Mourning Warblers. Both weekends were ideal for those brave enough to identify mostly silent *Empidonax* flycatchers.

The south impoundment of Pleasure Island, Port Arthur remained a good place to find shorebirds, and also Terns and Reddish Egrets, with at least three of the latter present for most of the month. As the month progressed, the water level dropped, and many of the shorebirds moved over to the inaccessible western shore of the impoundment.

Although the cell at Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park, Beaumont that is most readily accessed is absolutely choked with water hyacinth, the two cells behind it – unfortunately close to a mile walk each way – were being drained, and there were good concentrations of shorebirds there.

The recent rains have probably caused drastic changes in the water levels both at Pleasure Island and in Cattail Marsh, but we have no reports yet.

We have been sending out brief email reports on sightings in the area to those who have expressed an interest and have provided us with an email address. If you are not receiving these messages – we rarely send more than one message a week – and would like to, please email a request to whittleja@hal.lamar.edu. Reports are sent out in such a way that your email address is not accessible to other recipients.

Field Trip to Bolivar Flats – 18 August 2001

The first field trip on the Fall birding schedule for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society saw more than a half dozen participants gather on the Texas shore for a tour of the Bolivar Flats Sanctuary. Widely known for its concentrations of shorebirds and waders, this day would prove no disappointment. The tide was in on the beach early concentrating the birds and making it much easier on the birders. When the tide is out, the birds scatter and this can mean a lot more walking for the birders. People were also concentrated as fishermen and beach goers were as numerous as any had seen on this stretch of beach in recent memory.

A number of birds were noted before the tour of the flats officially started. Most participants found one or more White-tailed Kites on the trip down Bolivar Peninsula along with the usual Great Egrets and Laughing Gulls. On the beach, Sanderlings and Willets were immediately visible along with several Reddish Egrets. This would be a sign of things to come for the day. The Horned Larks usually found in the area were located without too much difficulty. Bolivar Flats is one of the few locations close to the Golden Triangle where these birds are easily found.

As the participants headed onto the flats close study was made of a number of birds: Long-billed Curlew and Wilson's Plover on the beach, Black and Royal Terns flying by. A Least Sandpiper was seen near the breaking waves and the first of many Semipalmated Plovers for the day was spotted among the seaweed on the beach. Moving further out onto the flats produced great looks at Western Sandpipers and a couple of probable Semipalmated Sandpipers. This pair of "peeps" is always difficult to separate for certain in our area but some individuals can be picked out by plumage and bill size/shape with some reliability. Great looks were also had at Royal and Caspian Terns along with a few Sandwich Terns scattered among them. A hyperactive Snowy Plover was noted among the shorebirds.

A number of species were especially numerous. Brown Pelicans were many and continue to show a great recovery from their past problems. Reddish Egrets were more numerous than most had ever seen with at least twenty on this stretch of beach. As many as six could be seen in one binocular view. There were a few white morph birds among the more typical dark birds, a somewhat unusual sight outside of south Texas. Numerous Black and Least Terns were perched on the beach, with some of the Blacks still in summer plumage. Endangered Piping Plovers were easily found as were Marbled Godwits.

Just as some species were more abundant than usual some common birds proved harder to find. Forster's Terns could not be located, though Common Terns were found. Dowitchers were absent from the flats and the group searched in vain for any early Dunlins. A couple of American Oystercatchers were located, though they were not cooperative. After some searching a large number of Black-bellied Plovers was discovered.

The group decided at this point that most of the birds on the beach had been seen and decided to move on to Rollover Pass. The tide was still high however and few birds, besides a few more Reddish Egrets were noted. After lunch, the remaining birders decided to move on to High Island. At Boy Scout Woods, the birding proved a bit more difficult than at

the flats. Harrison Jordan had managed to locate a number of different Warblers earlier in the day, but in the hot afternoon only Black and White could be refound. Other birds seen included Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Feeling the remaining time might be better spent elsewhere, the group moved on to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. A tour around the newly restored Shoveler Pond provided some nice birds along with a few Alligators. Although the water level proved to be too high for most shorebirds, other species were more numerous. Common Moorhen and Purple Gallinule were seen along with Black-necked Stilts and Roseate Spoonbills. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen along with plenty of Tricolored Herons but the Least Bitterns appear to have already left for their wintering grounds. Flying Gull-billed Terns and perched Loggerhead Shrikes also gave the birders good looks along with a nice, perched and vocal Dickcissel.

Other birds were seen individually by the birders on the way home, from Scissor-tailed Flycatchers to Swainson's Hawk but the highlight of the day was certainly the multitude of species and individuals on the Bolivar Flats Sanctuary. Thanks to all the participants for another great field trip and another day of great birding on the upper Texas coast.

The following list, which may be incomplete, lists the species and estimated numbers recorded at the four locations where stops were made. It does not include several additional species seen en route by various participants: ANWR=Anahuac NWR; BF=Bolivar Flats; HI=High Island; RP=Rollover Pass. Brown Pelican (100-BF; 5-RP); Neotropic Cormorant (10-BF; 2-ANWR); Magnificent Frigatebird (1-BF); Great Egret (5-BF; 9-ANWR); Snowy Egret (1-BF; 1-RP; 26-ANWR); Little Blue Heron (12-ANWR); Tricolored Heron (5-BF; 17-ANWR); Reddish Egret (22-BF; 5-RP); Cattle Egret (3-ANWR); Green Heron (1-ANWR); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (7-ANWR); White Ibis (7-BF; 5-ANWR); Roseate Spoonbill (15-BF); Turkey Vulture (1-ANWR); White-tailed Kite (1-RP); Purple Gallinule (2-ANWR); Common Moorhen (5-ANWR); Black-bellied Plover (30-BF); Snowy Plover (1-BF); Wilson's Plover (3-BF); Semipalmated Plover (50-BF); Piping Plover (50-BF); Killdeer (5-ANWR); American Oystercatcher (2-BF); Black-necked Stilt (13-ANWR); Greater Yellowlegs (1-BF); Lesser Yellowlegs (1-BF); Willet (15-BF); Spotted Sandpiper (6-ANWR); Long-billed Curlew (14-BF); Marbled Godwit (50-BF); Ruddy Turnstone (10-BF); Sanderling (50-BF); "Peep" Sandpiper (1-ANWR); Least Sandpiper (2-BF); Pectoral Sandpiper (3-RP); Laughing Gull (200-BF; 20-RP); Ring-billed Gull (1-BF); Gull-billed Tern (2-ANWR); Caspian Tern (10-BF); Royal Tern (2000-BF; 10-RP); Sandwich Tern (50-BF; 1-RP); Common Tern (8-BF); Least Tern (200-BF); Black Tern (25-BF); Black Skimmer (40-BF); Mourning Dove (1-RP; 1-ANWR); Common Nighthawk (1-RP); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (3-HI); Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (1-HI); Great Crested Flycatcher (1-HI); Eastern Kingbird (3-RP; 4-ANWR); Loggerhead Shrike (1-BF; 3-ANWR); Blue Jay (6-HI); Horned Lark (6-BF); Barn Swallow (6-BF; 1-ANWR); Herring Gull (1-BF); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2-HI); Northern Mockingbird (2-ANWR); European Starling (1-RP); Yellow Warbler (2-ANWR); Black-and-white Warbler (2-HI); Common Yellowthroat (1-ANWR); Northern Cardinal (6-HI); Dickcissel (1-ANWR); Red-winged Blackbird (1-ANWR); Boat-tailed Grackle (1-ANWR); Brown-headed Cowbird (1-ANWR)

Landowners to Receive Grants for Conservation Actions

As part of a continuing effort to work in partnership with landowners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is distributing 48 grants to projects in 28 states and Puerto Rico to help citizens conduct endangered species conservation activities on private property.

From bog turtles in New Jersey to prairie chickens in Texas to waterfowl in Alaska, private citizens are making a difference for threatened and endangered species, says Gale Norton, Secretary of the Interior. AI look forward to building upon these relationships with private landowners to protect imperiled species.

The grants are part of the Endangered Species Act Landowner Incentive Program, an initiative established three years ago by Congress to provide financial assistance and incentives to private property owners who are willing to conserve listed species, as well as species that are proposed for listing. To date, Congress has appropriated \$15 million, including \$5 million this year, and the Service has made more than 100 grants. To qualify for this program, landowners or other non-Federal partners must contribute at least 10 percent of the cost of the project in either cash or in-kind services such as labor or supplies.

Much of the habitat for threatened and endangered species occurs on private land, says Marshall Jones, acting director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. That is why we need the direct involvement and support of private landowners to assist in our conservation and recovery efforts. These grants will help landowners who voluntarily come to the rescue of our nation's imperiled plants and animals.

One highlight of this year's grants is the Barrow Eider Conservation Plan, Alaska: A grant of \$82,000 to help complete a conservation plan for two endangered waterfowl, the Stellar's and Spectacled Eiders. The Barrow region is the only known site of concentration for breeding Stellar's Eiders in the United States. Working with the local government and the Village Corporation, which is the predominant landowner, the Service is devising a plan to restore and protect wetlands that are breeding habitat for the birds. This plan also seeks to address the long-term cumulative effects of human population growth in the village where the population has doubled over the past 20 years.

The Landowner Incentive Grant Program is part of a broad effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide technical and financial assistance, as well as regulatory certainty, to private landowners to address the needs of threatened and endangered species, with the need for economic development. For example, the Service along is working on 40 Safe Harbor agreements with private landowners. Under these agreements, landowners who take actions to benefit listed species can be assured that these actions will not lead to any additional restrictions on the use of their land in the future if listed species are attracted to their property.

The Service is also developing 90 Candidate Conservation Agreements with private landowners and other non-Federal partners to take actions on private and public lands to conserve species before they are listed as threatened or endangered. In support of these agreements, recipients may

be eligible to receive grants for fencing, planting, habitat restoration and other conservation activities.

The complete list of projects in the **Southwest Region** is as follows:

High Plains Partnership to conserve grassland habitat, Lesser Prairie-Chickens, Black-tailed Prairie-Dogs, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover, and Arkansas River Shiner, \$500,000.

Coastal Prairie Conservation Initiative (Attwater's Prairie-Chicken, Houston Toad, and Texas Prairie Dawn-flower), \$500,000.

Environmental Defense Safe Harbor Agreement for the Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler; Tobusch Fishhook Cactus surveys, \$10,800.

Other bird related proposals funded were:

Pacific Region

Upper Keahou Boundary Fence to stop ingress of feral pigs, feral goats, and mouflon sheep (Akepa, Akiapolaau, Hawaii Creeper, Ou, I'o, Hawaii Hoary Bat, A'lala, Nene, and various plants), \$76,000.

Lunada Canyon Preserve Restoration (California Gnatcatcher, Palos Verdes Blue Xutterfly, Lyon's Pentachaeta), \$20,305.

Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region

Bliss Township Park Improvements/Protection for Piping Plover, \$3,685.

Private Landowner Outreach for the Piping Plover and other dune inhabiting species, \$2,050.

Southeast Region

Longleaf Pine/Red Cockaded Woodpecker Conservation Incentives, \$300,000.

Northeast Region

Safe Harbor Program for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Virginia, \$51,400.

Mountain Prairie Region

Habitat Creation and Enhancement for Gunnison Sage Grouse, \$100,000.

Protection of Critical Gunnison Sage Grouse Habitat (grouse, boreal toad, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher), \$50,000.

Kansas High Plains Partnership (Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Black-tailed Prairie-Dog, Burrowing Owl, Arkansas River-Shiner, Ferruginous Hawk, Arkansas Darter, Red spotted Toad, Plains Minnow), \$109,006.

Alaska Region

Barrow Eider Conservation Plan (Stellar's Eiders), \$82,000.

For a complete list of proposals funded in fiscal year 2001, go to <http://news.fws.gov/newsreleases.html> and search for "Landowner incentive" with a start date of May 1, 2001. The press release is entitled "Landowners to Receive Grants for Conservation Actions" and was issued May 1, 2001.

For more information, contact Hugh Vickery 202-208-4131

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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
Waco	(254) 299-8175
Louisiana	(504) 768-9874

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