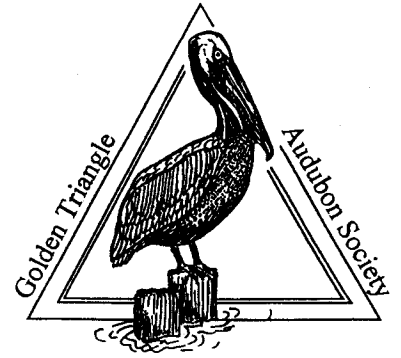


# *Brown Pelican*

**Scanned from Originals**

# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 7 No. 10

October 2001

**Membership Meeting**  
**Thursday, October 18, 2001**  
**6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**Migration over the Gulf**

**John C. Arvin**  
**Texas Ornithological Society**

One of the premier naturalists in the world today, John Arvin, who is chair of the Texas Ornithological Society's Bird Records Committee, will talk to us about his participation in the Louisiana State University "Migration over the Gulf Project" in which observers were stationed on offshore oil rigs in the Gulf and came up with startling observations during migration. This will be a talk you will not want to miss!

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.

## September Meeting Report

The Golden Triangle Audubon Society membership meeting was held on September 20, 2001. John Haynes was the program speaker for the night. John is an excellent birder and an expert in identifying ducks. He not only can identify them by sight but he can identify them in flight and by call.

John gave credit to his father for any perceived ability he has for identifying ducks. He hunted ducks with his father from about 1973 to about 1985. John's father had a great deal of practical knowledge of ducks, which he received by spending thousands of hours in the field. He made it a very high priority to be able to identify any duck before you took any duck. During those days there were ducks that were in short supply. John's father gave him a field guide to help him learn to identify the ducks they were hunting. It was this field guide that got John interested in identifying all the other birds that he was seeing which led into the wonderful hobby that we all know now.

According to John, we are very lucky to live in this area because we live at the junction of two major waterfowl migratory routes: the Mississippi and the Central flyways. Then once they arrive here they have a tremendous amount of habitat for them to winter on. This habitat includes the coast, salt and fresh water marshes, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, flooded timberland, and rice fields. It is because of these habitats that we have a tremendous variety of ducks. As we all know, Cattail Marsh can be a very good place to see ducks. John has identified 23 different species of ducks in Cattail Marsh out of about 26 species that he has seen all together. So almost every species of duck can be seen here at one time or another.

*(continued on page 7)*

## *The Brown Pelican*

Vol. 7, No.10 Oct. 2001

Golden Triangle  
Audubon Society

**RARE BIRD ALERT AND  
SOCIETY INFORMATION  
TELEPHONE NUMBER  
(409) 768-1340  
[http://goldtriaudubon.  
tripod.com](http://goldtriaudubon.tripod.com)**

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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 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. Turn right into the McFaddin refuge, follow the limestone road two or three miles to the headquarters building.

**Thursday October 18 – Membership Meeting.** See front page for details.

**Saturday October 20 – Field Trip.** We will look for late migrants at Sabine Woods and other coastal locations. Meet at Sabine Woods, 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on Highway 87 (just past Petroleum Helicopters) at 7:30 a.m. or find the group a little later. We may also visit the Willows at Sea Rim and/or the Salt Cedars near the Pilot Station at Texas Point later in the morning.

**Saturday October 20 – Project Prairie Birds Workshop and Season Kick-Off.** A one-day Sparrow Identification Workshop and Field Techniques Course for the general public. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory HQ. Bring a sack lunch. We will also be recruiting volunteers for the 01/02 winter field season. \$5.00 donation. Directions to GCBO are at [www.gcbo.org](http://www.gcbo.org), or call

Cecilia Riley at (979) 480-0999 or email her at [CRILEY@GCBO.ORG](mailto:CRILEY@GCBO.ORG)

**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 Sherrie Roden and Jana Whittle for bringing refreshments in September. We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! We need volunteers for next year's meetings. 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.

# Fall North American Migration Count -- 15 September 2001

This year's count, with observer numbers and party-hours in the same range in recent years, a new record for number of species reported was set at 167, as good showings of ducks, shorebirds and warblers occurred on the same day. This is necessarily a very brief account. A fuller listing for the six years that the count has been conducted is available from the editor upon request as a hard copy or as an Excel spreadsheet.

White Pelican numbers were low, perhaps reflecting the early date of the count this year. Six Least Bitterns were recorded (in Murphree WMA and Sea Rim), after not being seen in the preceding three years.

Virtually all Heron and Egret numbers were at all time highs, especially Green Herons at 66 versus a previous high of 23. Good numbers of Wood Storks were found in west Jefferson County. The shorebirds (waders) were normal except for Black-necked Stilt which were down. After spending all summer on Pleasure Island, American Avocets were nowhere to be seen. Wilson's Phalaropes were similarly not detected.

Gull-billed Terns, and to a lesser extent Caspian Terns were up, as were Forster's Terns, while Black Skimmers were significantly down.

We recorded White-winged Doves for the first time on the fall count, although we know they have been around for a while. Common Ground-Dove was also added to the species list, while numbers of Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to mount. The absence of Barred Owl and Common Nighthawk was surprising. Very high numbers of Hummingbirds, including a Rufous were recorded. Blue Grosbeaks were numerous, as were Indigo Buntings and especially immature Painted Buntings, which were everywhere.

Added to the species list were Prairie Warbler, Savannah Sparrow and Eastern Bluebird, the last mentioned long overdue. A Warbling Vireo was written on the list at Sabine Woods, but we do not know who saw it and under what circumstances, so we have not listed it.

At risk of offending some of our much appreciated observers, we will list some of the highlights in a few of the areas! Margo Holst and grandson found large number of Wood Storks in west Jefferson County, along with a field full of wading shorebirds. Joe Halbrook and Don Jeane found one of the recently arrived American Kestrels in the Bevil Oaks vicinity, and Wood Storks, many Roseate Spoonbills and many White Ibis in the New Bethel area.

Rose Ann Jordan's Beaumont "army" (somewhat smaller this year, including Brad and Winette Hogue and Althea Bythewood in addition to Rose Ann and Harrison) found Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue-winged Warbler, Summer Tanager, Lark Sparrow and 15 Pine Warblers. John Haynes in Cattail Marsh and nearby found a good selection of species, and, unexpectedly, a very early example of Yellow-rumped Warbler and Savannah Sparrow. Joe Tibbs and Sherrie Roden did the mid and South county urban areas. White-tailed Kite, Swainson's Hawk and Northern Harrier were the most notable finds.

In southwest Jefferson County, Ken and Eric Sztraky and Ray Jordan found an early Common Snipe. In the Murphree WMA area north of Keith Lake, Robert Hurt had good numbers of many species, including most of the rails found on the count. Steve Mayes in Sabine Woods found an eclectic collection of warblers, including Prairie, Pine, Magnolia and Nashville. On the beach at Sea Rim, no species really stood out, but a pair of Western Kingbirds along 87 added to one in Sabine Pass Cemetery.

Below are abbreviated listings for the count, and a listing of species reported by Art McKinnon seen on private land in the Neches River flood plain in Orange County on count day.

John A. Whittle

GREBE, Pied-billed 32; PELICANS, Amer. White 17, Brown 28; CORMORANTS, Neotropic 65, Double-crested 154; ANHINGA 65; BITTERN, Least 6; HERONS, Gt. Blue 60, Little Blue 44, Tricolored 64, Green 66; NIGHT-HERONS, Black-crowned 11, Yellow-crowned 17; EGRETS, Gt. 355, Snowy 418, Reddish 2, Cattle 2548; IBIS, White 443, White-faced 187, *Plegadis* 79; SPOONBILL, Roseate 179; STORK, Wood 92; VULTURES, Black 32, Turkey 41, species 1; WHISTLING-DUCKS, Black-bellied 8, Fulvous 125, DUCKS, Wood 7, Mottled 26, Ruddy 2; TEAL, Blue-winged 398, Green-winged 3; SHOVELER, Northern 1; DUCK species 5; OSPREY 3; KITE, White-tailed 7; HARRIER, Northern 4; HAWKS, Cooper's 2, Red-shouldered 7, Broad-winged 6, Swainson's 3, Red-tailed 1; KESTREL, Amer. 9; RAILS, Clapper 39, King 2; SORA 1; MOORHEN, Common 58; COOT, Amer. 227; PLOVERS, Black-bellied 49, Snowy 19, Wilson's 10, Semipalmated 13, Piping 8; KILLDEER 169; STILT, Black-necked 58; YELLOWLEGS, Gtr. 9, Lsr. 45; WILLET 24; CURLEW, Long-billed 3; TURNSTONE, Ruddy 29; SANDERLING 95; SANDPIPERS, Spotted 10, Western 165, Least 157, Baird's 3, Pectoral 8, Peep species 50, Stilt 1; DOWITCHERS, Short-billed 21, Long-billed 125; SNIPE, Common 1; GULLS, Laughing 1265, Ring-billed 76, Herring 7; TERNS, Gull-billed 48, Caspian 107, Royal 206, Sandwich 2, Common 25, Forster's 296, Least 32, Black 38; SKIMMER, Black 1; COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian 18; DOVES, Rock 95, White-winged 25, Mourning 647, Inca 17; GROUND-DOVE, Common 4; CUCKOO, Yellow-billed 6; SCREECH-OWL, Eastern 2; OWLS, Barn 3, Great Horned 1; WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck- 2; SWIFT, Chimney 22; HUMMINGBIRDS, Ruby-throated 212, Rufous 1, species 10; KINGFISHER, Belted 20; WOODPECKERS, Red-headed 1, Red-bellied 35, Downy 13, Pileated 5; FLICKER, Northern 4; WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern 5; FLYCATCHERS, Yellow-bellied 3, Traill's 1, Least 2, *Empidonax* 6, Great Crested 8, Scissor-tailed 41; KINGBIRDS, Western 3, Eastern 48; SHRIKE, Loggerhead 114; VIREOS, White-eyed 17, Yellow-throated 1, Red-eyed 1; JAY, Blue 127; CROWS, American 57, Fish 30, species 3; MARTIN, Purple 2; SWALLOWS, Tree 17, N. Rough-winged 43, Bank 10, Barn 261; CHICKADEE, Carolina 29; TITMOUSE, Tufted 10; WREN, Carolina 21; GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray 99; BLUEBIRD, Eastern 4; ROBIN, Amer. 5; CATBIRD, Gray 4; MOCKINGBIRD, Northern 285; THRASHER, Brown 9; STARLING, European 595; WARBLERS, Blue-winged 2, Tennessee 1, Nashville 7, N. Parula 1, Yellow 3, Magnolia 2, Yellow-rumped 1, Pine 15, Prairie 3, Black-and-white 11, Hooded 2, Wilson's 3, Canada 2, Mourning 2; OVENBIRD 1; WATERTHRUSH, Northern 5; YELLOWTHROAT, Common 29; CHAT, Yellow-breasted 6; TANAGER, Summer 5; SPARROWS, Lark 4, Savannah 1, Seaside 7, species 38; CARDINAL, Northern 151; GROSBEAKS, Rose-breasted 1, Blue 49; BUNTINGS, Indigo 75, Painted 51, species 1; BLACKBIRD, Red-winged 2606; MEADOWLARK, Eastern 34; GRACKLES, Common 360, Boat-tailed 470, Gt.-tailed 587; COWBIRD, Brown-headed 476; BLACKBIRD species 150; ORIOLES, Orchard 25, Baltimore 9; FINCH, House 13; SPARROW, House 194. TOTAL 17499 of 166 species. Observers 18 in 11 Parties. Althea Bythewood; Joe Halbrook; John Haynes; Brad and Winette Hogue; Margo Holst and grandson; Robert Hurt; Don Jeane; Ray Jordan; Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; Steve Mayes; Sherrie Roden; Ken and Eric Sztraky; Joe Tibbs; John Whittle.

**Orange County list from Art Mackinnon--Neches River Flood Plain:** ANHINGA 1; HERONS, Gt. Blue 6, Little Blue 8, Green 4; NIGHT-HERONS, Black-crowned 6, Yellow-crowned 14; EGRETS, Gt. 5, Snowy 9, Cattle 34; IBIS, White 16; SPOONBILL, Roseate 1; VULTURE, Turkey 4, Black 2; DUCK, Wood 49; KITE, Mississippi 1; HAWK, Sharp-shinned 1, Red-shouldered 5, Broad-winged 64; COOT, American 7; KILLDEER 4; GULL, Laughing 6; DOVE, Mourning 13; CUCKOO, Yellow-billed 1; OWL, Barred 4; NIGHTHAWK, Common 1; SWIFT, Chimney 4; HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated 2; KINGFISHER, Belted 3; WOODPECKERS, Red-headed 3, Red-bellied 8, Hairy 2, Pileated 5; FLYCATCHER, Acadian 1; *Empidonax* Species 4; SHRIKE, Loggerhead 1; VIREO, White-eyed 12, Yellow-throated 2, Red-eyed 1, Warbling 1; JAY, Blue 18; CROWS, Fish 6, American 4; TITMOUSE, Tufted 18; CHICKADEE, Carolina 4; WREN, Carolina 3; THRUSH, Wood 1; ROBIN, American 4; CATBIRD, Gray 4; MOCKINGBIRD, Northern 3; STARLING, European 19; WARBLER, Prothonotary 2, Blue-winged 1, Tennessee 1, N. Parula 1, Black-and-white 1, Pine 14, Mourning 1, Canada 1; American Redstart 1; CARDINAL, Northern 17; GROSBEAK, Blue 2; BUNTING, Indigo 5, Painted 2; BLACKBIRD, Red-winged 64; GRACKLE, Common 40, Great-tailed 12; COWBIRD, Brown-headed 6; SPARROW, House 9. Total species 68.

## The Future Direction of Audubon

A national organization under the Audubon name was formed in 1905 as an umbrella organizations for a number of locally based Audubon Societies, which had been formed to campaign against the slaughter of wading birds for the millinery trade. A prominent early activity involved coordinating the now famous Christmas Bird Counts. The present National Audubon Society was formed in a reorganization in 1940, but continued the largely local emphasis on protection of birds and habitat.

A crisis in Audubon developed in the late eighties and early nineties when the organization, at least in its national presence, lost focus and tried to be all things to all conservationists. An oft quoted consultant's report described Audubon's programs as "a mile wide and an inch deep." The editors of the magazine seemed more concerned with producing a coffee table magazine than in reflecting the Audubon conservation focus. Changes were made, culminating in changes in upper management and the June 1995 adoption of a well thought out Strategic Plan, returning the organization to a focus on birds and habitat. The revised mission statement is succinct: "To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."

Over the next few years, the national leadership became increasingly concerned over the stagnation of Audubon's membership rolls at what is usually quoted as 550,000, but which may actually realistically be 450,000. True, many are family memberships, so the claim made in advocacy efforts that there are a million people represented by these membership may not be as much of an exaggeration as it seems on first blush. However, zeroing in on the number of memberships disguises the real problem which is that an overwhelmingly large fraction of these members are basically only magazine subscribers. They have no other contact with Audubon at a national, state or local level. As a result, Audubon member recruitment efforts as a result resemble those of any other magazine. Lots of direct mail with results about the norm for the industry, which means an abysmally low success rate. Perhaps worse is the very low retention rate, meaning that many members do not stay long enough to have paid enough over and above the cost of the magazine and associated circulation services to cover the recruitment cost, which by some estimates might be as high as \$30 per member. Even worse is the effect that all the direct mail and the still somewhat unfocused magazine have on those who join Audubon as a member organization and want to support and perhaps participate in its advocacy efforts.

Enter President John Flicker's answer to the problem - his "2020 Vision," which in effect "bets the farm" on environmental education. One thousand Audubon Centers by 2020. Funding from wealthy individuals, foundations, corporations. The objective: to be reaching one in four school-age children by 2020. Certainly a worthy objective. But the focus is to be on contributors, not members, and on state offices, not local chapters.

So far, the implementation process appears to represent a case of tunnel vision. Very little is being heard about the excellent citizen science activities managed by Frank Gill. Chapters don't seem to feature in the plans unless they are willing and able to operate an Audubon Center. Audubon under John Flicker is long on vision and short on detail. But here is what has happened so far. "Dues share" -- a rebate to the chapters of a small portion of the dues for all members in a chapter's official territory -- is being severely cut. Pejorative comments allegedly made describing dues share as welfare for chapters severely strained relations, so a three-year phase in has been devised. National Audubon's demands on chapters are being rewritten. financially most significantly to remove a requirement to send chapter newsletters to all members in the chapter's territory. But there is also a threat to enforce a policy that chapters cannot have "chapter-only" members -- who are not members of National Audubon. No more "Friends of" groups! But is that relevant? Essentially all Audubon activities are open to the public. It would seem unwise and impractical to prohibit chapters from sending newsletters to donors or requesting reimbursement from newsletter recipients living outside the official chapter territory.

Chapters may not feature in the follow on from the 2020 Vision. It almost seems that "members" will be those who help or participate or contribute to a Center. Increasingly, National Audubon seems to view state offices as a basis for development of Centers and an interim means of interacting with chapters.

How will chapters respond? The jury is still out. The reduction in dues share forcibly reduces the dependence on National. The Audubon name is in the public domain and use of it in and of itself cannot be controlled by National. Audubon chapters are each independent entities with their own boards. It is unlikely that many disagree with the goals and environmental education thrust, and, indeed, some already run what are essentially Audubon Centers. However, many chapters may feel, at a local level, they want to be more committed to policy matters and practical conservation activities, especially habitat preservation and restoration, often local and in the most direct form of ownership and operation of sanctuaries. Sanctuaries and Audubon Centers are not mutually exclusive; quite the contrary, it is highly desirable that a Center be situated in an adequate area of good bird habitat. But it is not clear that all chapters will accept what they may perceive to be micromanagement from New York.

To be fair, National Audubon does not appear to be any more bureaucratic than it has to be. Some question the necessity in the 21st Century to be headquartered in downtown New York. Washington or better still, a still "green" area in suburban Maryland or Virginia, might make more sense. As it is, Audubon management is spread out all over the country including Cornell University, Sacramento, Tucson and even Missoula, Montana. Indeed, so scattered are senior managers that one wonder whether they are able to contribute adequately into the month to month strategic

## The Future Direction of Audubon

(continued)

decisions made in New York. Some eyebrows have been raised at John Flicker's \$278,000 annual salary (as reported on Audubon IRS filings for 2000). Audubon defends this as appropriate for a \$55 million per year operation, and certainly environmental management jobs need to pay enough to attract top people at entry level and above.

The education emphasis may disenchant the most active of members. They may wish to be more involved in advocacy, even though National Audubon's advocacy efforts, especially on the Arctic Refuge issue have continued to be very visible, and there are limits on the political activities of Audubon entities if they are to remain qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as public charities. They may well resent continuation of what they perceive to be a "top down" management style, with little meaningful chapter level input. They have concerns over the influence of donors on policy, and particularly the population of the National board based more on ability to contribute or obtain contributions than on their ability to represent members or provide conservation experience. They may well be even more concerned if attempts are made to extend this to operations at the state office level.

Fundamentally, John Flicker, with roots in The Nature Conservancy in Florida, is converting the National organization from a pseudo-membership organization into a foundation focused on environmental education. Although nominally, Audubon members elect the National board members, in practice, Audubon's governance resembles corporate democracy -- an oxymoron if ever there was one -- with a concession to the local Audubon presence in that since the major changes ten years ago, nine board members have been nominated on a regional basis by chapters. However, all board members are elected based on proxies sent in on the basis of a fine print notice in Audubon magazine. A good case can be made for transferring the environmental education activities into an "Audubon Environmental Education Foundation", where an essentially self-perpetuating board selected on the basis of the criteria which appear to be used to select most of the current National board members would probably be generally acceptable. This would free up the current National Audubon Society to become a true membership organization, working on advocacy and citizen science among other items. The current Strategic Plan would need very little change!

John A. Whittle

*This editorial contains commentary which reflects the perceptions and opinions of the writer, and does not necessarily reflect the positions or official viewpoints of either Golden Triangle Audubon Society or Texas Audubon Society. For an impartial outsider's view, see the article "Audubon's Membership at Crossroads" by Tom Knudsen that appeared in the Sacramento Bee on July 29, 2001. It can be accessed from the archives of the NAS-Chapter list at <http://list.audubon.org/archives/nas-chapter.html>. It will be necessary to register and select a password, then look up the archives for July 2001.*

## Thanks for the Help at Sabine Woods

Thanks are due to the following for assisting at the Sabine Woods Work Day on September 22: Andrea Billingsley, Bob Collier, Joe Halbrook, John Haynes, Robert Hurt, Steve Mayes, and Joe Tibbs. We also thank Harrison Jordan for helping earlier by providing an on-site presence to coordinate the work of the bushhogging contractor, and Nancy and Don Fisher for agreeing to mow the main trails in a few weeks. Texas Ornithological Society President Dr. Brent Ortego has also asked me to pass along TOS's thanks for your efforts.

The work day was productive. The heavy bushhogging done during the week preceding enabled the grass on the main trails to be mowed much shorter. The boardwalks were cleared of debris and swept. Some of the secondary trails were reopened. A good chunk of that not very pleasant task of cutting mustang grape vines was accomplished. And removal of undesirable invasive plants (tallows, wild rose, privet) continued.

The recent wet weather has caused luxuriant growth, and we will consider fairly extensive clearing next Spring. However, there currently is plenty of food for seed-eating birds and plenty of flowers for the hummingbirds. We cleared round the oaks in the western section of the sanctuary for perhaps the third time in the 12 or so years since they were planted.

Scheduling work days is difficult, and governed as much by my availability as anything else. We know that many of you would like to assist, but have other commitments on the days we select. You can work on other days! We don't want to do any work that will significantly disturb the birds during either spring or fall migration. In general, however, only very heavy work (e.g. bushhogging) and work inside the woods themselves needs to be restricted, although perhaps we should avoid working in April altogether. If you would like to work other than on a work day, please contact me, and I will explain to you what needs to be done.

We have an opportunity to work on providing water in the woods, and have grant funds to enable this to be accomplished. We need to investigate the feasibility and likely initial and ongoing costs of alternatives (a well, or city water?). If a well, we need to explore pumping alternatives (windmill or solar pump?). We need to plan where in the sanctuary to make the water readily available. We need to identify potential contractors and obtain estimates. We need to present our (written) recommendations to the board of TOS. And, finally, and we need to be on hand to supervise the work. In short, we need a project planner and manager. Little or no physical work will be required, although time will be consumed in these processes. Any out-of-pocket costs will be reimbursed. Please call me to volunteer.

We received a generous donation in support of our Sabine Woods activities earlier in the year. The donor challenged us to involve the community of Sabine Pass in activities at the Woods. The donor cited the church in High Island selling lunches to birders in Spring migration as a fund-raising activity among other involvements. Any volunteer to talk to churches and businesses in Sabine Pass?

John A. Whittle

# Bird Sightings - August 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:** We are pleased to have reports from Angelina County for August, recording some very early waterfowl in particular. Some of the shorebirds on Pleasure Island are also "very early". As is normal, flycatchers were very visible in the coastal woodlots. There was also a sprinkling of "early" warblers. Perhaps this is not usual as historically, Texas birders have not been particularly active in August. Wood Storks were also reported from west Jefferson County, and it is becoming clearer that Wood Storks, from the Mexican breeding populations are routinely using the Trinity River bottoms in considerable numbers in post-breeding dispersal.

**GREBE, Pied-billed** JEF-TP 8/5(1) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(1) JAW  
**GREBE, White** JEF-PI 8/19(1) JAW  
**PELICAN, Amer. White** JEF-PI 8/19(1) JAW  
**CORMORANT, Neotropic** JEF 5 reps(123)  
**FRIGATEBIRD, Magnificent** JEF 1 rep(1)  
**BITTERN, Least** JEF-TP 8/5(1) JAW  
**HERON, Great Blue** JEF 3 reps(15)  
**EGRET, Great** JEF 6 reps(160)  
**EGRET, Snowy** JEF 8 reps(1259)  
**HERON, Little Blue** JEF 5 reps(12)  
**HERON, Tricolored** JEF 5 reps(71)  
**EGRET, Reddish** JEF 4 reps(8)  
**EGRET, Cattle** HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(490)  
**HERON, Green** JEF 4 reps(20)  
**NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.** ANG 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(3)  
**NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.** JEF 4 reps(6)  
**IBIS, White** JEF 5 reps(34)  
**IBIS, Glossy** JEF-TP 8/5(1) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(1) JAW  
**IBIS, White-faced** JEF 2 reps(99)  
**IBIS, Plegadis** JEF 3 reps(203)  
**SPOONBILL, Roseate** ANG 8/17(2) BDGW; JEF 8/4(10) FFW; JEF-PI 8/4(25) FFW; JEF-TP 8/5(13) JAW; JEF 8/11(1) JAW; JEF-PI 8/11(5) JAW; JEF-TP 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-PI 8/19(3) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(35) JAW; JEF-SW 8/29(2) KS  
**STORK, Wood** JEF 8/5(4) LJW  
**VULTURE, Black** JEF 3 reps(9)  
**VULTURE, Turkey** JEF 5 reps(14)  
**WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bell.** JEF-TP 8/5(3) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(2) JAW  
**WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous** JEF 1 rep(5)  
**GADWALL** ANG 8/17(3) BDGW  
**DUCK, Mottled** JEF 8/4(1) FFW; JEF-TP 8/5(43) JAW; JEF 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-TP 8/12(60) JAW; JEF 8/18(3) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(1) JAW  
**TEAL, Blue-winged** ANG 8/17(2) BDGW  
**TEAL species** JEF-TP 8/12(4) JAW  
**SHOVELER, Northern** JEF-TP 8/12(10) JAW; JEF-PI 8/19(50) JAW  
**DUCK, Ring-necked** JEF-TP 8/19(1) JAW  
**SCAUP, Lesser** ANG 8/17(3) BDGW  
**MERGANSER, Red-breasted** ANG 8/17(2) BDGW  
**DUCK, Ruddy** ANG 8/17(2) BDGW  
**KITE, White-tailed** JEF 1 rep(1)  
**KITE, Mississippi** JEF-BMT 8/10(1) RHJ  
**HAWK, Red-shouldered** HAI 1 rep(1)  
**HAWK, Broad-winged** JEF 8/8(1) JAW; JEF 8/21(1) JAW; JEF 8/22(1) JAW; JEF 8/23(1) JAW; JEF 8/24(1) JAW  
**HAWK, Swainson's** JEF 8/6(1) JAW; JEF 8/7(1) JAW  
**GALLINULE, Purple** JEF 8/4(2) FFW  
**MOORHEN, Common** JEF 3 reps(5)  
**PLOVER, Black-bellied** JEF 3 reps(269)  
**PLOVER, Wilson's** JEF 3 reps(28)  
**PLOVER, Semipalmated** JEF-PI 8/4(1) FFW; JEF-PI 8/11(22) JAW; JEF-TP 8/12(5) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(2) JAW  
**PLOVER, Piping** JEF-PI 8/11(1) JAW  
**KILLDEER** JEF 7 reps(58)  
**STILT, Black-necked** JEF 5 reps(715)

**AVOCET, American** JEF-PI 8/4(50) FFW; JEF-TP 8/5(24) JAW; JEF-PI 8/11(64) JAW; JEF-TP 8/12(6) JAW; JEF-PI 8/19(95) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(2) JAW  
**YELLOWLEGS, Greater** JEF 2 reps(6)  
**YELLOWLEGS, Lesser** JEF 3 reps(48)  
**WILLET** JEF 3 reps(99)  
**SANDPIPER, Spotted** JEF-PI 8/4(3) FFW; JEF-PI 8/11(1) JAW; JEF-TP 8/19(2) JAW  
**SANDPIPER, Upland** ANG 8/16(5) DW; ANG 8/17(8) BDGW; JEF 8/15(1) BW  
**GODWIT, Marbled** JEF-PI 8/4(2) FFW; JEF-PI 8/11(1) JAW; JEF-PI 8/19(1) JAW; JEF-MCFW 8/20(2) MCF; JEF-MCFW 8/21(1) MCF; JEF-MCFW 8/22(1) MCF  
**TURNSTONE, Ruddy** JEF-MCFW 8/21(1) MCF  
**SANDPIPER, Semipalmated** JEF-TP 8/5(2) JAW; JEF-PI 8/11(7) JAW  
**SANDPIPER, Western** JEF 4 reps(152)  
**SANDPIPER, Peep** JEF 3 reps(4000)  
**SANDPIPER, Least** ANG 1 rep(4); JEF 5 reps(1053)  
**SANDPIPER, Baird's** JEF 8/15(1) BW  
**SANDPIPER, Pectoral** ANG 2 reps(9); JEF 3 reps(57)  
**SANDPIPER, Stilt** JEF-PI 8/4(5) FFW; JEF-TP 8/5(250) JAW; JEF-PI 8/11(7) JAW; JEF-TP 8/12(300) JAW; JEF 8/15(1) BW; JEF-TP 8/19(25) JAW; JEF-MCFW 8/21(4) MCF  
**SANDPIPER, Buff-breasted** ANG 8/17(5) BDGW; JEF 8/15(3) BW  
**DOWITCHER, Short-billed** JEF-PI 8/4(5) FFW; JEF-TP 8/5(1) JAW; JEF-PI 8/11(4) JAW; JEF-TP 8/12(3) JAW; JEF-PI 8/19(2) JAW  
**DOWITCHER, Long-billed** JEF 6 reps(137)  
**DOWITCHER species** JEF 5 reps(389)  
**PHALAROPE, Wilson's** JEF-TP 8/19(6) JAW; JEF-MCFW 8/20(2) MCF; JEF-MCFW 8/21(2) MCF; JEF-MCFW 8/22(2) MCF  
**GULL, Laughing** JEF 5 reps(136)  
**TERN, Gull-billed** JEF 3 reps(9)  
**TERN, Caspian** JEF 4 reps(11)  
**TERN, Royal** JEF 3 reps(22)  
**TERN, Forster's** ANG 1 rep(2); JEF 5 reps(638)  
**TERN, Least** JEF 6 reps(523)  
**TERN, Black** JEF 6 reps(1213)  
**SKIMMER, Black** JEF 4 reps(166)  
**DOVE, Rock** JEF 4 reps(26)  
**COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian** JEF 8/4(8) FFW; JEF-SRSP 8/11(4) JAW; JEF-TX87 8/11(6) JAW; JEF-SW 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 8/12(5) JAW; JEF 8/14(1) JAW; JEF 8/15(1) JAW; JEF 8/18(4) JAW; JEF-TX87 8/19(1) JAW; JEF 8/30(2) JAW  
**DOVE, White-winged** JEF-SW 8/11(3) JAW; JEF 8/18(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/24(1) JAW  
**DOVE, Mourning** JEF 13 reps(290)  
**DOVE, Inca** JEF 4 reps(5)  
**CUCKOO, Yellow-billed** JEF 5 reps(6)  
**OWL, Great Horned** JEF-SW 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/29(1) KS  
**NIGHTHAWK, Common** JEF 5 reps(9)  
**WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck-** JEF-SW 8/11(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/12(1) JAW

**SWIFT, Chimney** HAI 1 rep(5); JEF 6 reps(44)  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throat.** HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 12 reps(42)  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous** JEF 8/20(1) SR  
**HUMMINGBIRD species** JEF-SW 8/12(3) JAW  
**KINGFISHER, Belted** JEF-TX87 8/12(1) JAW  
**WOODPECKER, Red-bellied** JEF 5 reps(6)  
**WOODPECKER, Downy** JEF 4 reps(7)  
**FLICKER, Northern** JEF-NEDR 8/7(1) JAW; JEF-TP  
8/12(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/31(1) JAW  
**WOODPECKER, Pileated** JEF 1 rep(1)  
**FLYCATCHER, Olive-sided** ANG 8/16(1) DW  
**WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern** JEF 2 reps(2)  
**FLYCATCHER, Yellow-bellied** JEF-SW 8/11(1) JAW; JEF-SW  
8/12(2) JAW; JEF-SW 8/19(3) JAW; JEF-SW 8/29(1) KS  
**FLYCATCHER, Alder** JEF-SW 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW  
8/19(1) JAW  
**FLYCATCHER, Willow** JEF-SW 8/19(1) JAW  
**FLYCATCHER, Traill's** JEF-SW 8/11(2) JAW; JEF-SW  
8/49(1) JAW  
**FLYCATCHER, Least** ANG 8/17(1) BDGW; JEF-SW  
8/11(2) JAW; JEF-SW 8/12(3) JAW; JEF-SW 8/19(8) JAW  
**EMPIDONAX species** JEF 3 reps(5)  
**FLYCATCHER, Gt. Crested** JEF 8/4(2) DV; JEF-SW 8/11(3)  
JAW; JEF-SW 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/19(4) JAW  
**KINGBIRD, Eastern** HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 8 reps(87)  
**FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tail.** JEF 4 reps(13)  
**SHRIKE, Loggerhead** JEF 9 reps(49)  
**VIREO, White-eyed** JEF 3 reps(4)  
**VIREO, Philadelphia** JEF-SW 8/11(1) JAW  
**VIREO, Red-eyed** JEF 4 reps(6)  
**JAY, Blue** JEF 10 reps(28)  
**CROW, American** HAI 1 rep(13); JEF 2 reps(6)  
**CROW, Fish** JEF-TP 8/5(25) JAW; JEF-TP  
8/19(1) JAW; JEF 8/30(1) JAW  
**CROW species** JEF 5 reps(28)  
**MARTIN, Purple** JEF 2 reps(27)  
**SWALLOW, Tree** JEF-SW 8/12(4) JAW  
**SWALLOW, Barn** HAI 1 rep(7); JEF 7 reps(22)  
**CHICKADEE, Carolina** HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 2 reps(2)  
**WREN, Carolina** JEF 4 reps(9)  
**WREN, Marsh** JEF-TP 8/5(2) JAW  
**GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray** HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 6 reps(57)  
**BLUEBIRD, Eastern** HAI 1 rep(2)  
**ROBIN, American** JEF-NEDR 8/6(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR  
8/9(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/10(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/19(1)  
JAW  
**MOCKINGBIRD, Northern** JEF 7 reps(86)  
**THRASHER, Brown** HAI 8/15(2) KS; JEF 8/4(1) DV;  
JEF-SW 8/11(1) JAW  
**STARLING, European** JEF 6 reps(45)  
**WARBLER, Blue-winged** JEF 8/4(1) DV; JEF-SW 8/11(1)  
JAW; JEF-SW 8/29(1) KS  
**WARBLER, Yellow** JEF 8/4(1) DV; JEF-SW 8/11(3)  
JAW; JEF-SW 8/19(4) JAW  
**WARBLER, Yellow-throated** JEF-SW 8/11(1) JAW; JEF-SW  
8/12(2) JAW  
**WARBLER, Black-and-white** JEF 5 reps(25)  
**REDSTART, American** JEF 8/4(1) DV; JEF-SW 8/11(2)  
JAW; JEF-SW 8/12(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/19(1) JAW  
**WARBLER, Prothonotary** JEF 3 reps(4)  
**WARBLER, Worm-eating** JEF-SW 8/19(1) JAW  
**WATERTHRUSH, Northern** ANG 8/16(1) DW; ANG 8/17(1)  
BDGW  
**WATERTHRUSH, Louisiana** JEF-SW 8/29(1) KS  
**WARBLER, Kentucky** JEF 8/4(1) DV; JEF-SW 8/11(1)  
JAW; JEF-SW 8/12(2) JAW  
**WARBLER, Mourning** JEF-SW 8/19(1) JAW  
**YELLOWTHROAT, Common** JEF 3 reps(21)  
**WARBLER, Hooded** JEF 5 reps(14)  
**WARBLER, Canada** JEF 8/4(1) DV; JEF-SW 8/19(2)  
JAW  
**CHAT, Yellow-breasted** JEF-SW 8/19(1) JAW  
**CARDINAL, Northern** JEF 4 reps(35)  
**BUNTING, Painted** JEF-SW 8/11(4) JAW; JEF-SW  
8/12(6) JAW  
**DICKCISSEL** JEF 1 rep(1)  
**BLACKBIRD, Red-winged** JEF 6 reps(15)  
**MEADOWLARK, Eastern** JEF 1 rep(2)  
**MEADOWLARK species** JEF 3 reps(9)  
**GRACKLE, Common** JEF 8 reps(31)

**GRACKLE, Boat-tailed** JEF 2 reps(4)  
**GRACKLE, Great-tailed** JEF 7 reps(114)  
**COWBIRD, Brown-headed** JEF 2 reps(6)  
**ORIOLE, Orchard** JEF 6 reps(60)  
**FINCH, House** HAI 8/26(2) KS  
**SPARROW, House** JEF 8 reps(34)

**Number of Species** 145  
**Number of Individuals** 15105

#### County Abbreviations:

ANG - Angelina; HAI - Hardin; JEF - Jefferson

#### Location Codes:

BMT - Beaumont; MCFW - McFaddin NWR; NEDR - Nederland; PI - Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TP - Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP

#### Observer Abbreviations:

BDGW - Nancy Bird, L. Debetaz, G. Guernsey, Jack Windsor  
BW - Nancy Bird and Jack Windsor; DV - Don Verser; DW - Louis Debetaz and Jack Windsor; FFW - Nancy and Don Fisher, John Whittle; GD - Gerald Duhon; JAW - John Whittle; KS - Ken Sztraky; LJW - Larry and Jane Wilson; MCF - McFaddin and Texas Pt NWRs (Patrick Walther); RHJ - Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SR - Sherrie Roden

## Bird Alerts

Some idea of the progress of fall migration can be gauged from the report on the Migration Count elsewhere in this issue. During the wet period in September, which extended through about September 20, good numbers of a varied collection of warblers were seen. Mourning Warblers and Canada Warblers were numerous, perhaps more likely to be reported because of their scarcity (and lateness) in spring migration. Unusual was the frequency with which Yellow-throated Warblers were seen.

Stable high pressure following the passage of a cold front towards the end of the month brought a long string of cloudless days with north winds, giving migrants littler reason to pause at the coast.

Broad-winged Hawk migration peaked (spectacularly at Hazel Bazemore near Corpus Christi, with a daily total of over 450,000) on September 25, but Accipiters and falcons continue to pass through along with reduced numbers of Broad-wings.

At the time of writing, the larger passerine migrants -- thrushes, catbirds and the like -- had not started to pass through in any numbers, although Baltimore Orioles have been seen.

## September Membership Meeting

*continued from page 1*

The ducks seen in our area can be broadly divided into two major groups with some other subgroups. The major groups are the dabbling or puddle and diving ducks. The primary differences are in the way they feed and body design. We see puddle ducks the most because of our marshes. They usually feed by tipping up or dabbling with their bills in shallow water. In general they can all take to the air directly without running across the water. Their feet are set more closely to the middle of their body, which enables them to walk better on land than diving ducks. Diving ducks are weaker fliers and must run across the surface of the water to get airborne. Their bodies and wings are designed for swimming under water to reach their food sources.

I cannot express how knowledgeable John is about ducks; you just had to be at the meeting to really understand. I'm sure everyone who attended the meeting learned something new that will help him or her identify the ducks that will spend the winter in our area. Thank you John for sharing you knowledge about ducks with us! Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 18, 2001; I hope you will be able to attend.

*Nancy Fisher*



## 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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## *Brown Pelican* SUBSCRIPTION FORM

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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.

<b>Golden Triangle (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) 299-8175
Louisiana	(504) 768-9874

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