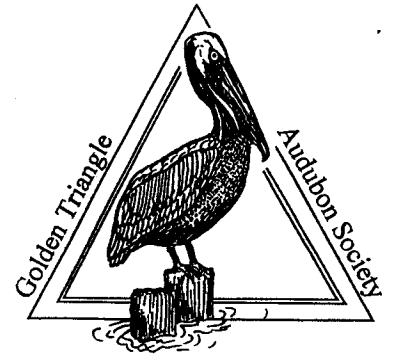


# *Brown Pelican*

**Scanned from Originals**

# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 8 No. 10

October 2002

## **Membership Meeting**

**Thursday, October 17, 2002  
6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

## **Birding Australia**

**Steve Mayes**

Our President, Steve Mayes recently went to Australia on a birding trip. We have been fortunate in persuading him to agree to present a program on his experiences.

When we asked him whether it would be illustrated by slides, he was non-committal, but we feel certain he will have some!

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 Membership Meeting Report**

Thirty-eight members and guests were present on September 19, despite some very uncooperative weather. Our speaker was Nancy Newfield of Metairie, Louisiana. She described the history of her almost 30-year involvement in studying Louisiana's wintering hummingbirds. Among other topics, Nancy explained how hummingbirds are trapped, and the intricacies of preparing and placing the bands on the birds.

She also discussed and showed slides of the various species of hummingbirds that have been documented in Louisiana. She explained the controversy which still surrounds the location of the various western hummingbirds that winter in Louisiana during the period between their leaving their breeding grounds and the first arrivals in Louisiana.

**Sabine Woods Work Day, Sat. November 16. Please Come and Help. See p.2.**

## *The Brown Pelican*

Vol. 8, No.10 October 2002

Golden Triangle  
Audubon Society

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

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President

Steve Mayes (722-5807)

#### Vice-President

John Haynes (724-6842)

#### Treasurer

Don Jeane (385-4044)

#### Recording Secretary

John Whittle (722-4193)

#### Corresponding Secretary

Jana Whittle (722-4193)

#### Directors-at-Large

Bob Collier (892-6654)

Joe Halbrook (892-3090)

Jeannie Lanclos (724-1307)

Sherrie Roden (962-7911)

Mary Stafford (962-8070)

Ken Sztraky (768-1203)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

#### Program

Jana Whittle (722-4193)

#### Field Trips

Steve Mayes (722-5807)

#### Conservation, Publicity

Joe Halbrook (892-3090)

#### Membership

Volunteer needed

#### Education

Jeannie Lanclos (724-1307)

#### Newsletter Distribution

Mary Stafford (962-8070)

#### Newsletter Editor

John Whittle (722-4193)

3015 Nashville Ave.

Nederland, TX 77627-6749

#### *The Brown Pelican* is

published monthly except July  
by the Golden Triangle  
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.

**Thursday October 17 – Membership Meeting.** Our President, Steve Mayes will describe some of his experiences on his recent birding trip to Australia. See page 1 for more details.

#### **Saturday October 12. Sea Rim State Park Beginning Birder Field Trip.**

This trip, sponsored by Sea Rim State Park, is intended for the beginning birder. Leader: John Whittle. This field trip will use the birds on the beach to help the beginning birder learn what to look for in the overall shapes and appearances of birds, and the kinds of field marks that are used in identification. The focus will be on the common gulls, terns and shorebirds along the beach – *i.e.* those species where individual birds can be studied for relatively long periods of time. This trip is open to the public. Bring binoculars (and a telescope if you have one). Meet in the parking lot in front of the headquarters building at Sea Rim State Park, which is ten miles west of Sabine Pass on Highway 87, at 9:00 a.m. A Parks and Wildlife Conservation Passport or \$2 per person day entry permit will be required. See the entry for October 26 for a second beginning birder event.

**Saturday October 19. Field Trip to Sabine Woods.** A trip to look for migrating fall warblers and other neotropical migrants. Leader Steve Mayes. Meet at Sabine Woods, which is 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on the north side of Highway 87 at 7:30 a.m.. or join the trip in progress in the woods later. There is plenty of water in the ponds this fall. Because the first two work-days scheduled this fall were lost, the grass is quite high, and rubber boots would be a good idea, especially if it is at all wet from previous rain or just heavy early morning dew.

#### **Saturday October 26. Sea Rim State Park Beginning Birder Field Trip.**

Sponsored by Sea Rim State Park, this second trip is also intended for the beginning birder. Leader: John Whittle. See the entry for October 12 for details of the first trip. This trip will attempt to introduce the beginning birder to the less easily studied migrant and other songbirds. First, the trip will explore the boardwalk at the Willows at Sea Rim. depending on presence or absence of birds, the field trip may move on to Sabine Woods for more birding. This trip is open to the public. Bring binoculars. Meet in the parking lot in front of the headquarters building at Sea Rim State Park, which is ten miles west of Sabine Pass on Highway 87, at 7:30 a.m. A Parks and Wildlife Conservation Passport or \$2 per person day entry permit will be required.

**Saturday November 16. Sabine Woods Work Day.** We will start about 7:30 a.m., and usually these work days do not run much beyond noon. Sabine Woods is located on Highway 87 about 4.1 miles west of the stop sign in Sabine Pass, on the north side of the highway just beyond the Petroleum Helicopters Base, and is across Highway 87 from Texas Point Refuge near its western boundary. We will try to provide at least liquid refreshment, but bring water and insect repellent. Also bring gloves, heavy duty pruning tools, machetes. We can use riding mowers, probably one chain saw and one or two push mowers for areas heavier equipment cannot reach. **Our two previously scheduled work days this fall have been essentially washed out, the first by heavy rain and the second by the aftermath of the evacuation of the area because of the threat posed by hurricane Lily.** There is a lot of work to do!

**Thursday November 21. Annual Meeting.** 7:00 p.m. in the Garden Center at Tyrrell Park, Beaumont. In addition to elections, we will show members favorite slides.

**Saturday November 23. Field Trip to Look for Sparrows.** Further details will be decided later when it can be

determined where there will be good sparrow habitat this year.

**Saturday December 14. Turkey Creek Christmas Bird Count.** Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the new Big Thicket National Preserve Visitor Center located on Highway 69 at FM 420 approximately seven miles north of Kountze, Texas. For more information call Park Ranger Merle King at (409) 839-2689 ext. 233.

**Sunday, December 22. Bolivar Peninsula Christmas Bird Count.** Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the old Birder's Haven in High Island. For more details, contact Bill Graber, (409) 866-5452.

**Sunday, December 29. Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count.** This is the count that we sponsor. The meeting place this year – **note new location** – will be at the Sabine Pass Battleground State Historical Park at 7:15 a.m. To reach the park, go south on FM3322 from the main intersection in Sabine Pass (where Highway 87 turns west) for about 3/4 of a mile, and turn left into the park. Meet near the restrooms. (There is no entry charge at this park.)

**Saturday, January 4, 2003. Beech Creek Christmas Bird Count.** Meet at 6:30 a.m. at the Corps of Engineers Town Bluff Dam Picnic area located on FM 92 just north of FM 1746. For more information call Park Ranger Merle King at (409) 839-2689 ext. 233.

## Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. Thank Rose Ann Jordan for bringing refreshments for the September meeting. Volunteers are now solicited for the October meeting and all 2003. 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 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.

## Report on the First Audubon Texas Annual Meeting Rockport, Texas 13 September 2002

First of all, I would like to thank our Golden Triangle Audubon board and members for allowing John, Sherrie Rodent and myself to represent you at this very informative meeting. We learned many, many ways to improve our chapter. I am writing this in Rockport so that I can remember as much of this valuable information as possible. Here are a few of the ideas they shared.

One of our first speakers was Rob Fergus, who is the Executive Director of Travis Audubon Society. He had several truly viable ideas. He began by talking about being informed about your home area. He noted that there were 1.2 million people in the Austin area. Therefore, he suggested, we need to start by encouraging habitats which attract birds in backyards and every other possible urban places. He advocated removing exotic plants and replacing them with native plants. He noted that even McDonalds has created habitat for grackles because we feed them french fries, often unintentionally, when we visit. We don't need to create habitat for

grackles, Rock Doves, House Sparrow and Starlings. They use the "habitat" we create for our use.

He suggested, however, that we should strive to change such habitats to draw in more suburban bird species such as buntings, warblers, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. This is possible by having places for them to hide and by creating some water feature -- bird bath, mister, sprinkler or trip. Many of you have been very successful in creating wonderful habitat. Bessie Cornelius, Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan, Mary and Herb Stafford, Carol Lynn and Andy Loker, Margo Holst, Billie Smith, Lynn Otto, Lana Gau and Francis Perry are just some of the yards that I've seen that are designed solely to help our local birds.

After we encourage each other, we should look around our area, where we work, shop, jog, attend church or go to school. We need to think about what we can do to encourage the creation and maintenance of bird-friendly habitat in all these places. There is a new book called *Greening School Grounds* to help teachers encourage school gardening. I personally hope to purchase this book, because our school garden has weeds four feet high.

Another thing Rob's group is working on is to find funding for Chimney Swift towers to be built in local walking parks and natural areas. At the base of each of the towers, they are building a four-side bulletin board that provides information on the birds and the towers. The towers are also the meeting point for weekly 30-minute bird tours. To have a tower built professionally costs about \$1,500. I imagine our craft-enables members could probably build one for one quarter of that.

To sum up Rob's message: our main mission should be to create urban bird habitat to influence the conservation attitudes of the more than 85 percent of Texas that live in urban areas.

Jana Whittle

*(Summaries of some of the other interesting talks will be featured in future issues.)*

## Bird Sightings – August 2002

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:** Once again there is little to comment on this month. Early and mid-August did produce a good array of warblers and flycatchers, as migration seemed perhaps to get off to an early start.

PELICAN, Brown	JEF-SRSP 8/31(100) JAW
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 6 reps(111)
ANHINGA	JEF 1 rep(1)
FRIGATEBIRD, Magnificent	JEF 1 rep(1)
HERON, Great Blue	JEF 2 reps(2)
EGRET, Great	JEF 6 reps(32)
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 3 reps(138)
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 2 reps(42)
HERON, Tricolored	JEF 1 rep(3)
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 5 reps(703)
HERON, Green	JEF 2 reps(3)
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.	JEF 2 reps(5)
IBIS, White	JEF 2 reps(321)
IBIS, <i>Plegadis</i>	JEF 3 reps(9)
SPOONBILL, Roseate	JEF-TX87 8/10(1) MHW; JEF
	8/24(5) JAW
VULTURE, Turkey	JEF 4 reps(16)
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous	JEF 1 rep(1)
DUCK, Mottled	JEF 8/24(100) JAW
OSPREY	JEF 8/23(0) JAW; JEF-TX87 8/31(1)
	JAW
KITE, White-tailed	JEF 1 rep(2)
HAWK, Red-shouldered	JEF 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Broad-winged	JEF 8/6(1) JAW; JEF 8/24(1) JAW;
	JEF 8/27(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/30(1) JHH; JEF-TX87 8/31(1)
	JAW
HAWK, Red-tailed	JEF-NEDR 8/22(2) JAW
CARACARA, Crested	JEF 8/24(1) JAW
BOBWHITE, Northern	JEF 1 rep(3)
GALLINULE, Purple	JEF 8/11(3) JAW
MOORHEN, Common	JEF 2 reps(13)
PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 1 rep(6)
PLOVER, Snowy	JEF-SRSP 8/31(1) JAW
KILLDEER	JEF 4 reps(21)
STILT, Black-necked	JEF 2 reps(105)
AVOCET, American	JEF-TP 8/25(3) JAW
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF 1 rep(1)
WILLET	JEF 1 rep(7)
SANDPIPER, Spotted	JEF-TP 8/17(6) HM; JEF-MCFW
	8/31(1) JAW
TURNSTONE, Ruddy	JEF-SRSP 8/31(1) JAW
SANDERLING	JEF 1 rep(32)
SANDPIPER, Western	JEF 1 rep(3)
SANDPIPER, Least	JEF 1 rep(8)
SANDPIPER, Baird's	JEF 8/31(1) JAW
GULL, Laughing	JEF 4 reps(281)
GULL, Franklin's	JEF-SRSP 8/31(1) JAW
TERN, Gull-billed	JEF 1 rep(31)
TERN, Caspian	JEF 2 reps(10)
TERN, Royal	JEF 1 rep(225)
TERN, Sandwich	JEF 1 rep(4)
TERN, Common	JEF-SRSP 8/31(2) JAW
TERN, Forster's	JEF 4 reps(178)
TERN, Least	JEF 1 rep(40)
TERN, Black	JEF 3 reps(192)
SKIMMER, Black	JEF 2 reps(79)
DOVE, Rock	JEF 7 reps(21)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian	JEF-TX87 8/3(1) JAW; JEF 8/7(2)

	JAW; JEF 8/9(3) JAW; JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF 8/11(4)
	JAW; JEF 8/24(7) JAW; JEF-TX87 8/25(3) JAW; JEF
	8/29(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 8/31(1) JAW
DOVE, White-winged	JEF-NEDR 8/6(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR
	8/7(4) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/10(4) MHW; JEF-NEDR 8/11(1)
	JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/25(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/31(1) JAW;
	JEF-TX87 8/31(1) JAW
DOVE, Mourning	JEF 14 reps(334)
DOVE, Inca	JEF 5 reps(7)
CUCKOO, Yellow-billed	JEF 3 reps(3)
NIGHTHAWK, Common	JEF 1 rep(3)
WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck-	JEF-SW 8/25(8) JAW; JEF-SW
	8/31(1) JAW
SWIFT, Chimney	JEF 7 reps(61)
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr.	JEF 12 reps(59)
HUMMINGBIRD species	JEF-MCFW 8/31(1) JAW;
	JEF-SRSP 8/31(1) JAW
KINGFISHER, Belted	JEF-TX87 8/31(1) JAW
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied	JEF 1 rep(1)
WOODPECKER, Downy	JEF 7 reps(10)
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern	JEF 1 rep(1)
FLYCATCHER, Yellow-bellied	JEF-SW 8/17(1) HM; JEF-SW
	8/25(1) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Willow	JEF-SW 8/25(2) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Least	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW
	8/25(2) JAW; JEF-SW 8/31(3) JAW
EMPIDONAX species	JEF 3 reps(4)
FLYCATCHER, Gt. Crested	JEF-SW 8/25(4) JAW; JEF-SW
	8/30(1) JHH; JEF-SW 8/31(2) JAW
KINGBIRD, Eastern	JEF 6 reps(29)
FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed	JEF 2 reps(4)
SHRIKE, Loggerhead	JEF 9 reps(64)
VIREO, Red-eyed	JEF 1 rep(2)
JAY, Blue	JEF 7 reps(21)
CROW, Fish	JEF 8/9(5) JAW; JEF 8/24(1) JAW
CROW, species	JEF 2 reps(4)
MARTIN, Purple	JEF 3 reps(8)
SWALLOW, Barn	JEF 3 reps(38)
CHICKADEE, Carolina	JEF 1 rep(2)
WREN, Carolina	JEF 1 rep(1)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray	JEF 4 reps(55)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern	JEF 2 reps(3)
ROBIN, American	JEF-NEDR 8/1(10) JAW;
	JEF-NEDR 8/3(5) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/10(1) MHW;
	JEF-NEDR 8/11(4) JAW; JEF-BMT 8/16(1) BCO;
	JEF-NEDR 8/22(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/24(3) JAW;
	JEF-NEDR 8/25(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/29(4) JAW
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern	JEF 10 reps(183)
THRASHER, Brown	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW
	8/25(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/31(1) JAW
STARLING, European	JEF 7 reps(232)
WARBLER, Blue-winged	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW
	8/25(3) JAW; JEF-SW 8/30(2) JHH
PARULA, Northern	JEF 1 rep(1)
WARBLER, Yellow	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW
	8/25(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/30(2) JHH; JEF-SRSP 8/31(1)
	JAW; JEF-SW 8/31(1) JAW
WARBLER, Prairie	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW

	8/31(1) JAW
<b>WARBLER, Black-and-white</b>	JEF 5 reps(21)
<b>REDSTART, American</b>	JEF-SW 8/17(1) HM; JEF-SW 8/30(1) JHH
<b>WARBLER, Prothonotary</b>	JEF 3 reps(12)
<b>OVENBIRD</b>	JEF-SW 8/17(1) HM; JEF-SW 8/25(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/30(1) JHH
<b>WATERTHRUSH, Louisiana</b>	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW 8/17(1) HM; JEF-SW 8/30(1) JHH; JEF-SW 8/31(1) JAW
<b>WARBLER, Kentucky</b>	JEF-SW 8/10(1) MHW; JEF-SW 8/17(2) HM; JEF-SW 8/25(1) JAW; JEF-SW 8/30(2) JHH
<b>WARBLER, Mourning</b>	JEF 8/30(1) JAW
<b>YELLOWTHROAT, Common</b>	JEF 4 reps(6)
<b>WARBLER, Hooded</b>	JEF 5 reps(7)
<b>WARBLER, Canada</b>	JEF-SW 8/30(7) JHH; JEF-SW 8/31(1) JAW
<b>TANAGER, Summer</b>	JEF 2 reps(2)
<b>CARDINAL, Northern</b>	JEF 6 reps(37)
<b>BUNTING, Indigo</b>	JEF-TP 8/17(2) HM; JEF-SW 8/31(1) JAW
<b>BUNTING, Painted</b>	JEF-SW 8/10(10) MHW; JEF-SW 8/17(2) HM; JEF-SW 8/25(2) JAW; JEF-SW 8/30(15) JHH; JEF-SW 8/31(7) JAW
<b>BLACKBIRD, Red-winged</b>	JEF 5 reps(33)
<b>MEADOWLARK species</b>	JEF 3 reps(8)
<b>GRACKLE, Common</b>	JEF 9 reps(71)
<b>GRACKLE, Boat-tailed</b>	JEF 3 reps(34)
<b>GRACKLE, Great-tailed</b>	JEF 6 reps(156)
<b>COWBIRD, Bronzed</b>	JEF 8/31(1) JAW
<b>COWBIRD, Brown-headed</b>	JEF 2 reps(24)
<b>ORIOLE, Orchard</b>	JEF 3 reps(30)
<b>ORIOLE, Baltimore</b>	JEF-SW 8/30(3) JHH
<b>FINCH, House</b>	JEF-NEDR 8/3(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 8/7(4) JAW
<b>SPARROW, House</b>	JEF 9 reps(94)
<b>Number of Species</b>	114
<b>Number of Individuals</b>	4742

**County Abbreviations:**  
JEF - Jefferson

**Location Codes:**  
BMT - Beaumont; MCFW - McFaddin NWR; NEDR - Nederland; SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW - Sabine Woods; TP - Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Mar; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim.

**Observer Abbreviations:**  
BCO - Bob Collier; HM - John Haynes and Steve Mayes; JAW - John Whittle; JHH - John H. Haynes; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; MHW - Steve Mayes, John Haynes, John Whittle.

## Details on Rare Species

**Magnificent Frigatebird -- 17 August 2002 -- John Haynes and Steve Mayes**

Unusual, although not completely unprecedented, was a Magnificent Frigatebird soaring over Sabine Woods.

**Franklin's Gull - 31 August 2002 - John Whittle**

On west beach at Sea Rim State Park, Jefferson County, Texas. Bird was resting in a large group of Laughing Gulls and Royal Terns on the beach. Eventually, the bird walked away into a large closely knit group of gulls, and then the birds all flew when flushed by a beachgoer. The bird was not relocated.

The observer's attention was drawn to the bird because its back was a slightly darker gray than any of the Laughing Gulls. Upon

closer examination, it was seen that the bird had a neat dark gray "half hood". The hood, on the back half of the head and nape, was uniform, not blotchy as were the Laughing Gulls with black remaining on the head. The white eye crescents were large and essentially circular. The bird stood slightly less in height than the nearest Laughing Gulls. The bill was smaller than the typical Laughing Gull, with minimal droop at the distal end. The bird was not seen to extend its wings. However, the black of the primary, when standing, did not show any white markings.

Although Franklin's Gulls are not expected on the UTC until very late September or early October, this bird nevertheless had essentially all the characteristics and markings of a first summer/second winter Franklin's Gull. The observer acknowledges the extreme difficulty of distinguishing a first summer or second winter Franklin's Gull from a Laughing Gull, especially if the upper wing markings are not studied. Interestingly, although UTC checklists suggest that the species passes through in the fall essentially in October and November, Grant (*Gulls: a Guide to Identification*) states that molt occurs before southbound migration -- which is indicated as July to October. (If southbound migration commences as early as July (from breeding areas which straddle the western US/Canada border, why do none appear on the UTC until early October? Surely some birds, especially non-breeding one-year old birds, will be found south of the normal range? Are there a few first summer/second winter birds on the UTC in the fall before October that are just too difficult to distinguish?)

**Bronzed Cowbird -- 31 August 2002 -- John Whittle**

At Sea Rim State Park, Jefferson County, Texas in parking lot adjacent to beach of Gulf of Mexico. Bird was drinking water from a pool on the edge of the parking lot with marsh behind. The pool was also being used by a group of Western and Least Sandpipers, and a couple of Killdeer. After some time, something spooked the Killdeers, which departed noisily, and the bird flew off north.

The bird was the size of a Red-winged Blackbird, but the bill was heavy and the head flat. The bird was a dull dark gray overall. The eye color was a light but rich brown. Apparently a young male bird.

A Bronzed Cowbird population exists in Galveston, which is approximately 40 miles further west along the coast.

## Bird Alerts

The fall migration season has been relatively uneventful, bird wise, so far this fall. The tropical storm Isidore and the hurricane Lili both passed to our east, leaving us on the dry, west side of the center of circulation, with strong north winds. Some migrants did, undoubtedly take advantage of these winds. However, while there have been some "good" days at Sabine Woods, there have been no truly outstanding concentrations of migrants.

A very early Orange-crowned Warbler was seen well in Sabine Woods, and a very early Savannah Sparrow has been noted at Anahuac NWR.

Total numbers of hawks seen at the Texas Hawk Watch sites have been relatively low, although Smith Point has seen two very good days, one of them the day of our field trip. See page 6.

## Volunteer Needed

Ken Sztraky has looked after our telephone answering machine for more than seven years, but is moving out of the 768 exchange area (Vidor). Is their a volunteer in Vidor to take on this function? To volunteer, contact any Board member -- see page 2 for numbers.

## Field Trip to Smith Point – 28 September 2002

For several years now, our September field trip has attempted to catch the “big day” at the Hawk Watch at the Candy Abshier WMA in Smith Point. Although last year’s trip left most participants reasonably satisfied, this year’s trip was certainly the best ever.

A trip to the oak motte in the early morning was a little disappointing in that there were no Passerine migrants in the woods. However, everything perked up when an unusual sound was heard coming from the shoreline just east of the Hawk Watch tower. Almost in disbelief, the word Kiskadee was uttered. Then, a Great Kiskadee flew from west to east at low level along the shore line of East Bay in front of the tower. The bird was relocated at the end of Smith Point Road where it dead ends at the bay, and seen well perched on the top of a 20-foot tree. Although there have been a pair of Kiskadees in Baytown for some time now, this is certainly a first for the Hawk Watch and a very unusual bird for the Upper Texas Coast.

The serious business of hawk counting then resumed, as hawks began to move on a rather warm relatively windless day. Official counter Josh Berman and volunteer Bill Saulmon were very helpful during the entire day, always trying to assist visitors to the Hawk Watch. An article in the previous day’s *Houston Chronicle* led to a good number of “beginning birder” visitors to the tower. Conditions were reasonable for spotting hawks, although at times there was more blue sky than clouds. But there were enough puffy cumulus clouds to indicate the presence of thermals and help the observers find the birds. Hawks are very difficult to spot against a background of blue sky!

By 9:30 a.m., there were a number of Broad-winged Hawks milling around, quite possibly birds which had spent the night nearby. A couple of times, one perched in trees in full sight of the tower, enabling visitors to be shown telescope views of perched birds. As the morning progressed, a surprising number of Cooper’s Hawks passed over, as well as Sharp-shinned Hawks. Generally speaking, Cooper’s Hawks are much less common than Sharp-shinned, and often are outnumbered one Cooper’s to five Sharp-shinned. Not on this day! The Cooper’s Hawks especially were flying high and perhaps more obvious, with many of the Sharp-shinned coming past at more normal lower altitudes. An immature White-tailed Hawk – an unusual species for the area -- was cooperative, and eventually flew almost directly overhead to allow everyone a good view. A few Mississippi Kites, mostly immature birds, milled around with the other species.

One of the nice things about the Smith Point tower is that it provides an opportunity to look at whatever birds may be working over the bay. In fact, the tower is one of the best places to watch Magnificent Frigatebirds, especially late in the season when they are difficult to find elsewhere. The eight seen comprised one male, one female and six immature birds. A few Brown and White Pelicans were also working over the bay.

On most days at Smith Point, the majority of the action is over by noon or thereabouts. On this day, however, things

were just beginning to started at noon. By then, a few “small” kettles of Broad-wing Hawks (150 here, 300 there) had been sighted and counted, with some difficulty as they were unusually high. Most, if not all of the kettles eventually elected not to cross the bay towards Galveston, and headed northeast to go round Trinity Bay.

In the early afternoon, the excitement on the tower grew as larger and larger kettles of Broad-winged Hawks came into view and spent much time in the air fairly close to the tower, but mostly rather high. The largest kettle was officially counted at 2,700 birds. Some visitors were reluctant to believe that the specks they were being shown in telescopes were hawks because there were so many of them!

During the morning, there had been one or two American Kestrels and a Merlin. None of these birds spent any time at Smith Point, however, and continued on there way without delay. Josh Berman had found and pointed out a distant Peregrine Falcon. during the day, several more came through, but none were very close. A White-tailed Kite came through, and two Red-shouldered Hawks – probably local residents – were seen, as was one perched Red-tailed Hawk.

During the afternoon, three separate Swainson’s Hawks were located mixed in with other birds and a couple of Ospreys added to the totals.

There were a few “other” birds around, including an *Empidonax* flycatcher boldly labeled an Alder Flycatcher by one well known Galveston gentleman. A Nashville Warbler was cooperative, while a probable Orange-crowned was not!

Altogether, a very satisfactory day!

### Birds seen on the Field Trip:

Laughing Gull (2); Caspian Tern (1); Anhinga (23); Neotropic Cormorant (6); American White Pelican (16); Brown Pelican (10); Magnificent Frigatebird (8); Roseate Spoonbill (4); White Ibis (100); *Plegadis* species Ibis (1); Wood Stork (2); Tricolored Heron (2); Cattle Egret (4); American Oystercatcher (1); Mourning Dove (5); White-winged Dove (13); Turkey Vulture (15); Black Vulture (5); White-tailed Kite (2\*); Mississippi Kite (8\*); Northern Harrier (4\*); Sharp-shinned Hawk (45\*); Cooper’s Hawk (43\*); Red-tailed Hawk (1\*); Red-shouldered Hawk (2\*); White-tailed Hawk (1\*); Swainson’s Hawk (3\*); Broad-winged Hawk (7544\*); Peregrine Falcon (7\*); Merlin (3\*); American Kestrel (33\*); Osprey (2\*); Belted Kingfisher (2); Red-bellied Woodpecker (1); Northern Flicker (1); Hummingbird species (4); Eastern Kingbird (2); Great Kiskadee (1); Great Crested Flycatcher (1); Alder Flycatcher (1); Least Flycatcher (1); *Empidonax* species (1); Blue Jay (25); Northern Cardinal (2); Indigo Bunting (1); Painted Bunting (1); Cliff Swallow (1); Barn Swallow (1+); Tree Swallow (2+); Bank Swallow (5+); Northern Rough-winged Swallow (1500); Loggerhead Shrike (2); Nashville Warbler (1); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Common Yellowthroat (1); Northern Mockingbird (4); Brown Thrasher (10); Carolina Wren (2); House Wren (1); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (15); 59 species. Numbers marked by an asterisk are the preliminary numbers from the official counters.

John A. Whittle

## 2003 HMANA Conference

The Hawk Migration Association of North America holds its conferences once every three years. One of the main purposes of the HMANA Conference is to provide a venue for the presentation of papers from individuals and organizations from all over North America. Papers cover such topics as raptor migration site reports, long-term trends, banding results, migration ecology, owl migration, hawk watching history, and education with raptors to name just a few. In addition to the paper sessions there will be talks by representatives of other raptor organizations and many invited speakers, including Scott Weidensaul (author - Living on the Wind), Pete Dunne (co-author - Hawks in Flight), and Bill Clark (co-author - Peterson Guide to the Hawks, Photographic Guide to North American Raptors). There will also be speakers and workshops on new initiatives such as HAWKCOUNT, the on-line electronic database provided by HMANA, satellite telemetry, and the use of NEXRAD radar.

The theme for the 2003 HMANA Conference will be 'A Celebration of Flight'. Without forgetting the importance of collecting data or the work that needs to be done for the environment, conference goers will take time to appreciate the phenomenon of hawk migration and the joys of hawk watching. Add in the Corpus Christi Area and King Ranch conference field trips, with the possibility of seeing a wide variety of birds and large numbers of raptors, and you have the makings of an exciting conference. Corpus Christi offers excellent weather and a beautiful venue with great facilities in the Ramada Bayfront Inn.

HMANA relies on local co-hosts to help organize, fund, and run its conferences. The two excellent partner organizations in 2003 are HawkWatch International (HWI) and the Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi (AOC). National sponsors are Swarovski Optik and Eagle Optics. Local corporate sponsors are American Electric Power / Central Power and Light and VALERO. Bill Clark, Mike Overton, and Joel Simon are putting together the pre- and post-conference tours.

### Conference Schedule

**March 22 to 27** - Pre-Conference Raptor Tour: In addition to the migrants seen at most HMANA hawk watch sites, birders on this trip will travel with Bill Clark to see all or most of: White-tailed, Hook-billed and Swallow-tailed Kites, White-tailed, Ferruginous, Swainson's, Common Black and Zone-tailed Hawks, Crested Caracara and Aplomado Falcon!

**Thursday, March 27:** Morning - pre-field trip buffet breakfast, field trips (7:00 AM -12:30 PM), main registration, Vendor room. Afternoon - 2003 HMANA Conference General Meeting, invited speakers. Evening - mixer with cash bar, Mexican food buffet and program featuring a talk by Pete Dunne, all in the 10th floor La Vista room with its spectacular view of Corpus Christi Bay.

**Friday, March 28:** Morning - pre-field trip buffet breakfast, field trips (7:00 AM -12:30 PM). Afternoon - Vendor room plus breakout paper sessions, workshops and poster sessions in up to three different venues. Evening - dinner on your own (visit one of the many excellent restaurants nearby) followed

by a program, 'The Corpus Christi Hawk Watch at Hazel Bazemore Park, its past, present, and future'.

**Saturday, March 29:** Morning - breakout sessions followed by a general session. Afternoon - breakout sessions followed by the HMANA membership meeting in the main meeting room. Evening - banquet preceded by a social hour and silent auction at 6:00 PM. The evening's program includes a talk by Scott Weidensaul and the presentation of HMANA awards.

**Sunday, March 30:** Morning - pre-field trip buffet breakfast, field trips (7:00 AM -12:30 PM). Transportation to the airport is available.

**March 30 to April 6** - Post Conference South Texas Birding Tour: South Padre Island, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary (Brownsville), Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen State Park, Rio Grande River and Falcon Dam, Zapata, San Ygnacio! Join Mike Overton and Joel Simon to visit all these hot spots and more. See the HMANA Web Site (address below) for full details.

For further information, visit the HMANA web site at: [www.hmana.org](http://www.hmana.org)

## Audubon Texas Reorganizes

The Audubon Assembly, which met for the first time in Rockport on September 14, 2002, is composed of two delegates from each chapter. Representing the Golden Triangle Audubon Society were Sherrie Roden and Jana Whittle. The Assembly's delegates elected five new Regional Directors to the Audubon Texas board, and three additional At-large Directors. Golden Triangle Audubon is in Region V along with the Coastal Bend Audubon, Houston Audubon and the Rio Grande Delta Audubon. Our newly elected regional director is John Biesmann, President-elect of Houston Audubon Society. Golden Triangle Audubon Society secretary John Whittle is a board-appointed member, and secretary of the Audubon Texas Board of Directors.

The keystone initiatives of the restructuring include components for conservation science, education, outreach/advocacy and support for chapters. In keeping with the Audubon Texas mission to conserve birds, wildlife habitat and promote natural diversity, the Audubon Texas Assembly identified three key issues. Topping the list as a consensus of the regions across Texas is the issue of water. This involves everything from conservation to ground water mining and exploration to water quality. Urban development as it relates to growth and fragmentation of habitat is the second issue the group will focus on in the coming year. The third key issue involves promoting education for quality stewardship of natural resources.

Audubon Texas consists of the approximately 25,000 National Audubon Society in Texas. Presently, about 7,000 of these have no chapter affiliation. Jana and Sherrie will be receiving monthly advisories from the National Audubon Grassroots Coordinator in Washington, D.C. Our hope is to pass on the information to our membership and act as a voice to communicate with Audubon Texas to help meet the needs of Audubon Texas members.

*Sherrie Roden*



## 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.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gift from: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed  Please bill me

Golden Triangle Audubon 7XCH8W25

## *Brown Pelican* SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To subscribe to the Brown Pelican, please complete this form or include the information on or with your check. Mail to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292 or bring to any Membership Meeting. Subscriptions from National Audubon members with mailing addresses outside our official territory, and others wishing to subscribe are \$15 per year. Members with addresses within our official territory are asked to contribute \$15 also if they are able.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 on Siler's Birding on the Net at <http://birdingonthe.net/hotmail.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

-8-

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 12  
Groves, Texas