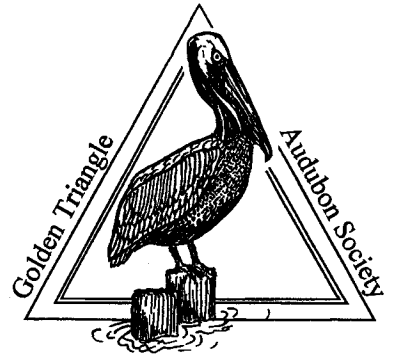


Brown Pelican

Scanned from Originals

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 9 No. 2

February 2003

Membership Meeting
Thursday, February 20, 2003
6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont
Behavior of Birds on the Coastal Bend

R.A.F. (Bill) Hill
Portland, Texas

Wildlife enthusiast and nature photographer, R.A.F. (Bill) Hill will speak to Golden Triangle Audubon in February. His bird photos have been published and one of his better well-known photos is a skimmer flying. He has been interested in nature 60 of his 67 years. He began photography 15 years ago because he would try to tell others what he had seen. He believes in the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words." He will bring about 15 prints.

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.

January Membership Meeting

At the January meeting, David Baker talked about maximizing the inspirational value of birding. In his introduction, David reminded the audience that humans had drawn inspiration from birds since man lived in caves. The oldest "bird-headed man" inscription in caves has been dated to 10-15,000 B.C. The Egyptian Sun God Horana had the head or body of a falcon. Every state has a state bird.

The first level was to understand bird behavior. At an elementary level, he mentioned the tongue of a woodpecker, split so that it can be stored on both sides of the head, the webbed feet of grebes, able to be folded, and the egg tooth of the Wood Duck (and other species). At a somewhat more advanced level, he mentioned the advantages of the flight formation of geese, the jump from the nest hole of fledging Wood Ducks, the aerial feeding of Purple Martins and the hibernation (torpor) state of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

The second level was to identify human applications. Cooperation as exemplified by the flight formations of the geese, faith from the jump of the Wood Duck, industriousness from the aerial feeding of the Purple Martins, weakness from the feigning of a broken-wing by Killdeer, laziness from the parasitic nesting of cowbirds. The third level involved designing motivational and adult study projects. Among the examples David cited were building martin houses and study of time management from the Purple Martins. As a final example he distributed some "Big Thicket" woodpecker pencils, with holes drilled into the top of them.

We thank David for an interesting and thought-provoking evening.

John A. Whittle

The Brown Pelican

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Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

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SOCIETY INFORMATION
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Calendar of Events

February 14-17. Great Backyard Bird Count. The Sixth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count promises to add important new information to our understanding of birds' movement and overall health by focusing our common birds as well as on birds of special concern.

A project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon, the GBBC combines high-tech web tools with an army of citizen-scientist bird observers. The GBBC asks families, individuals, classrooms, and community groups to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders, local parks, schoolyards, and other areas during any or all of the four count days. Participants enter their sightings at BirdSource, www.birdsource.org/gbbc. The state-of-the-art website was developed by Audubon and the Cornell Lab.

Thursday February 20. Membership Meeting. "Behavior of Birds on the Coastal Bend" by R.A.F. (Bill) Hill. See page 1 for details

February 21-23. Whooping Crane Festival. Call 1-800-45COAST or see www.portaransas.org/cranes.asp for more details.

Saturday February 22. Field trip to West Harris County. Leader Steve Mayes. This trip will look for sparrows – Harris's are being seen this year, raptors (Caracara, White-tailed Hawk, and perhaps Bald Eagle) as well as waterfowl. Vermilion Flycatcher will be sought, and if time permits, a trip to Baer Creek Park to look for Rusty Blackbirds will be added at the end.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Randall's Supermarket on the northeast corner of Barker-Cypress Road and Clay Road west of Houston. To reach this location, take IH-10 west through Houston and across Loop 610 on the west side to Barker-Cypress Road – exit 748. This exit is 15 miles west of Loop 610, is beyond Beltway 8 and just beyond Highway 6. Turn right (north) on Barker Cypress and proceed just under three miles to the intersection with Clay Road. The Randall's parking lot can be

entered from Barker-Cypress immediately north of the intersection.

The Randall's opens at 6 a.m. and has restrooms located immediately inside the door. There is a Starbucks just a little further inside the store. There is a Conoco station on the southeast corner of the intersection, which doubtless also has coffee. (Veterans of previous trips will recognize that the Randall's used to be an Albertson's and the Conoco used to be a Shell.)

The meeting place is about 105 miles from Beaumont (IH-10 and College St.), and the travel time at that hour of the morning is a little under 2 1/2 hours.

Car pooling from Beaumont is desirable. The fewer cars we have in the rural areas of west Harris County, the better. Maps and the opportunity to arrange car pooling will be available at the February Membership meeting on Thursday February 20. Please let Steve Mayes know in advance if you intend to come, and please provide a cell phone number if there will be one in your vehicle on the way over.

Should you be late, the first stop will be at Gummert Road to look for sparrows. To reach Gummert Road, continue north on Barker-Cypress from Clay Road about 1 1/2 miles, and turn left on a relatively inconspicuous Old Greenhouse Road. Follow Old Greenhouse Road and continue straight on Gummert when Old Greenhouse veers left. Continue almost to the dead end, and look for the group on the right.

The plan is to reach the lunch stop at an Exxon Station at US 290 and Becker Road about 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. This intersection has a Subway, and some other fast food outlets (chicken and pizza). After lunch, the trip will proceed through eastern Waller County looking primarily for raptors, and back through the Katy Prairie towards the starting point.

Those with evening commitments should remember that IH-10 between Highway 6 and Loop 610 is typically stop and go eastbound any time on a weekend afternoon or evening.

Thursday March 20. Membership Meeting. "Seaside Sparrows" by Matt Whitbeck, Anahuac NWR.

Saturday March 22. Field trip to Bolivar Flats. Leader Steve Mayes. Meet at the vehicle barrier at the Flats at 8:30 a.m. To reach the Flats from Highway 87 west of Crystal Beach, turn south on Rettilon Road. Upon reaching the beach, turn right (west) and proceed with care one half-mile to the vehicle barrier. Fuller directions in next month's issue.

March 27-30 The Hawk Migration Association of North America Conference, Corpus Christi, Texas.

One of the main purposes of the HMANA Conference, held every three years, 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, Pete Dunne (co-author of *Hawks in Flight*), and Bill Clark (co-author *Peterson Guide to the Hawks, Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*). There will also be workshops on HAWKCOUNT, the on-line electronic database, satellite telemetry, and the use of NEXRAD radar.

The theme for the 2003 HMANA Conference will be 'A Celebration of Flight'. For further information, visit the HMANA web site at: www.hmana.org

Saturday April 12. Sea Rim SP Bird Walk. Joint with Sea Rim State Park. Meet at park HQ at 7:30 a.m. Easy walking (or driving) to the boardwalk at Willows. Drive to Sabine Woods to continue birding for those who wish.

Thursday April 17. Membership Meeting. Speaker: Sandy Komito, author of "I Came, I Saw, I Counted"

Thursday May 15. Membership Meeting. Speaker: Victor Emanuel of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours.

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 or even someone elsewhere who would like to provide service to our members? We use the recording to provide information as well as receive messages. Most of the information would reach the volunteer by email. To volunteer, contact any Board member – see panel on opposite page for numbers.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. Volunteers are now solicited for March 2003 onwards. 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.

Field Trip to Cattail Marsh -- January 18, 2003

The January field trip to Tyrell Park's Cattail Marsh is traditionally the coldest of the year and the 2003 edition was no exception. The day dawned with sub-freezing temperatures and the anticipation of cold birding! It would not have been surprising if the trip had a very low turnout, but birders are a hardy lot. More than a dozen birders, both field trip veterans and first timers, showed up for the water bird spectacle of Cattail Marsh, freeze or no freeze.

Cattail Marsh is well known to local birders as one of the top spots in the area at any time of year but in winter, it really shines. Hundreds of ducks of a dozen or more species can be seen this time of year along with numerous raptors, sparrows and other birds. That is in addition to the many wading birds and other resident species that make their home in the man-made wetland year round. Plus, with rarities such as Long-tailed Duck and Least Grebe having been recorded there, the marsh is a magnet for birders seeking the unusual.

As always, the wooded area surrounding the parking lot produced lots of birds before the group even got into the marsh. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were easily seen by all. Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers flitted through the trees. A Hermit Thrush popped into view for a look at the strange group then headed back into the brush. And then there were the Robins. This seems to be the year for American Robins on the upper Texas coast (and other parts of the state). Although reduced in numbers in their usual haunts in the Big Thicket, they are much more abundant than usual from Beaumont southward. Robins are one of many species than are prone to winter "irruptions" in our area. Many years few are seen around the area with none making it down to the coast and then one year something happens and they our into Jefferson County, all the way down to Sabine Pass. Whether this is tied to severe weather or reduced food supplies further north is not completely understood.

Moving onto the levee roads winding through the marsh, the first of the ducks were seen. The first cell contained many of the usual species including Lesser Scaup, Green-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Duck. As always, there were plenty of Northern Shovelers and Blue-winged Teal to look at throughout the marsh but the number of Northern Pintail was much higher than usual. Mallards are always hit or miss at Cattail Marsh but they were definitely a hit on this day with birds seen flying and on the water. Sharp eyes spotted a few American Wigeon among the flocks and some female Canvasbacks as well. The identification skills of the group were put to the test trying to pick out Greater Scaup from the numerous Lesser but eventually some were found.

Birders live for spotting the rarities and this field trip provided several opportunities. Among ducks, a female Common Goldeneye was located (despite frequent diving) in one of the back cells. This small diving duck is hard to find in Jefferson County and is an infrequent visitor at best to Cattail Marsh. A pair of Cinnamon Teal were found in the marsh a little later in the day. This species can usually be found in Cattail Marsh in small numbers in the winter but picking them out of the hordes of other ducks is often difficult. Perhaps the oddest bird seen on the day was a single Brown Pelican flying over the wetland. Although common on the coast not too many miles south, these large waterbirds are coastal and do not generally travel very far inland. This was the first record of a Brown Pelican at the marsh that any of the assembled birders could remember.

Winter is also the time for raptors in southeast Texas. Hordes of Red-tailed Hawks, Accipiters and Kestrels invade our area every year along with less numerous other raptors. This day started out for the first arriving birders with Red-shouldered Hawks perched near the parking lot. Red-tailed Hawks in several different plumage variations were seen well by the group and American Kestrels put on a show. One particularly feisty Kestrel took issue with a nearby Merlin, repeatedly diving at the (slightly) larger falcon. An Osprey was seen flying over the water perhaps in search of her next meal.

Smaller birds were also found on this trip. American Pipits flushed in front of the birders as the group moved along the levees. Several species of sparrow were located including Savannah, Song and Swamp Sparrows. Eastern Phoebe were easily seen flitting out from their perches to hawk whatever insects might be out on a cold day. Warblers were also out along the levee roads. A few Pine Warblers, including a bright yellow male, fed on the ground. A Common Yellowthroat briefly popped up from the reeds only to dive back down again. Palm Warblers were "pished" up from the underbrush, pumping their tails as they hopped from bush to bush. Birders in the northern U.S. probably think of Spring as the time for warblers in Texas but a five warbler day in January is pretty good too.

Winding around the marsh provided looks at a good assortment of other birds usually seen around the water. Wading birds such as Great Egret, Tricolored Heron and White-faced Ibis were seen. Shorebirds were also about with Dowitchers, Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpiper feeding in the shallows. Double-crested Cormorants and an Anhinga were located along with diving Pied-billed Grebes. Ring-billed,

Laughing and Bonaparte's Gulls loafed near the water along with Forster's and Caspian Terns. Belted Kingfishers chattered from their perches.

The most unusual sighting of the day was not of birds, however. Early on, the group had heard numerous gunshots that seemed very close by. Looking across the marsh with binoculars and scopes, a disturbing sight was seen. Three people, a man and probably two boys, were hunting in Cattail Marsh! They could be seen carrying shotguns and trying to scare up ducks. They had a dog with them and there was no doubt as to their purpose. They must have gotten in by boat and snuck into the marsh looking to do some easy poaching. The assembled birders flagged down some city workers who were working nearby. They drove to investigate but meanwhile, it looked like the hunters were trying to beat a hasty retreat. The worker could be seen speaking to one of the boys but the man had disappeared (back to the boat?). The hunters all apparently left at that point though exactly what happened was not clear. It is disappointing to see such reckless and selfish behavior in our own backyard. Most hunters (like most birders) obey the laws but a small proportion, like these knuckleheads, do their best to ruin it for everyone. Hopefully, something can be done to prevent this kind of nonsense in the future. It would be a terrible shame if a few individuals ruined a great spot either by driving away the birds or by endangering the people by hunting in a public park within the city limits.

A strange but productive day ended back where it started, at the gates to Cattail Marsh. Many more cold field trips will be led here with many more unusual sights to see. Hopefully, hunters will not be among them.

Species seen and heard on the trip:

GREBE, Pied-billed (4); PELICAN, Brown (1); CORMORANT, Neotropic (5); CORMORANT, Double-crested (15); ANHINGA (1); HERON, Great Blue (6); EGRET, Great (6); EGRET, Snowy (35); HERON, Tricolored (1); IBIS, White-faced (5); VULTURE, Black (4); VULTURE, Turkey (4); GOOSE, Snow (60); GADWALL (150); WIGEON, American (8); MALLARD (12); TEAL, Blue-winged (200); SHOVELER, Northern (750); PINTAIL, Northern (100); TEAL, Green-winged (1000); CANVASBACK (3); DUCK, Ring-necked (250); SCAUP, Greater (2); BUFFLEHEAD (2); BUFFLEHEAD (5); GOLDENEYE, Common (2); DUCK, Ruddy (15); OSPREY (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (2); HAWK, Red-tailed (3); KESTREL, American (3); MERLIN (1); COOT, American (500); KILLDEER (25); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (3); SANDPIPER, Spotted (1); SANDPIPER, Least (3); DOWITCHER species (250); GULL, Laughing (35); GULL, Bonaparte's (1); GULL, Ring-billed (50); TERN, Caspian (3); TERN, Forster's (4); KINGFISHER, Belted (1); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (4); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (1); WOODPECKER, Downy (1); FLICKER, Northern (1); PHOEBE, Eastern (8); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (1); CROW, Fish (15); SWALLOW, Tree (10); CHICKADEE, Carolina (2); WREN, Carolina (1); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (9); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (7); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (2); THRUSH, Hermit (1); ROBIN, American (5); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (1); STARLING, European (1); PIPIT, American (50); WARBLER, Orange-crowned (9); WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (35); WARBLER, Pine (5); WARBLER, Palm (3); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (1); SPARROW, Savannah (10); SPARROW, Swamp (10); SPARROW, White-throated (1); SPARROW, White-crowned (1); CARDINAL, Northern (1); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (50); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (1)

Steve Mayes

Bird Sightings – December 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: We wrap up the chronicling of 2002 with a report heavily influenced by the Christmas Bird Counts. Unfortunately, the reporting of these counts does not routinely segregate the birds by county and both the counts in the Big Thicket area are divided between two counties. Therefore, we have only partial reports for these. We do have a breakdown by county/state for the Sea Rim Count and the Sea Rim data is included this month's report.

The total of 175 species is indicative of the incredible variety of bird life in southeast Texas in winter. We may not quite match the number of species that can be found on the central coast, where wooded riparian areas extend all the way to the coast, and where there are more species normally associated with south Texas. But no birder in our area should lack for opportunities to bird in winter.

LOON, Common	JEF 1 rep(1)	TEAL, Blue-winged	JEF 5 reps(312)
GREBE, Pied-billed	JEF 8 reps(70)	TEAL, Cinnamon	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW
GREBE, Horned	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW	SHOVELER, Northern	JEF 6 reps(4426)
GREBE, Eared	JEF 3 reps(10)	PINTAIL, Northern	JEF 6 reps(704)
GANNET, Northern	JEF 12/29(1) SR07; JEF-SRSP	TEAL, Green-winged	JEF 7 reps(8521)
12/29(10) SR10		CANVASBACK	JEF-TP 12/21(2) JAW; JEF-TP
PELICAN, Amer, White	JEF 8 reps(1217)	12/26(2) JAW; JEF 12/29(250) SR04; JEF-PI 12/29(21) SR01	
PELICAN, Brown	JEF-TX87 12/8(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(18)	REDHEAD	JEF 12/29(6) SR04
SR04; JEF 12/29(2) SR05; JEF 12/29(3) SR06; JEF 12/29(6)		DUCK, Ring-necked	JEF 4 reps(337)
SR07; JEF-PI 12/29(6) SR01; JEF-PI 12/29(1) SR02;		SCAUP, Greater	JEF-TP 12/8(7) JAW; JEF-TP
JEF-SRSP 12/29(27) SR10; JEF-TX87 12/30(10) JAW		12/21(10) JAW; JEF-TP 12/26(3) JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR13;	
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF 15 reps(295)	JEF-MCFW 12/29(1) SR12	
CORMORANT, Double-crest.	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(829)	SCAUP, Lesser	JEF 10 reps(3347)
CORMORANT, Species	JEF 1 rep(1)	SCAUP species	JEF 3 reps(116)
ANHINGA	JEF 12/29(1) SR04; JEF 12/29(4)	BUFFLEHEAD	JEF 6 reps(85)
SR05; JEF 12/31(1) JAW		GOLDENEYE, Common	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(2)
BITTERN, American	JEF-MCFW 12/29(4) SR12;	JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(12) SM; JEF 12/29(1) SR13	
JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10		MERGANSE, Hooded	JEF-TP 12/26(2) JAW; JEF 12/29(10)
HERON, Great Blue	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 12 reps(147)	SR04; JEF 12/29(13) SR07	
EGRET, Great	JEF 15 reps(280); TYL 1 rep(2)	MERGANSE, Red-breasted	JEF 6 reps(40)
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 12 reps(510)	DUCK species	JEF 1 rep(4)
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 4 reps(39)	DUCK, Ruddy	JEF 5 reps(263)
HERON, Tricolored	JEF 9 reps(228)	OSPREY	JEF-TX87 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TP
EGRET, Reddish	JEF 1 rep(1)	12/21(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR04; JEF 12/29(3) SR05; JEF	
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 2 reps(4)	12/29(1) SR06; JEF 12/29(1) SR07; JEF 12/29(1) SR13;	
HERON, Green	JEF-TP 12/8(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(1)	JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10	
SM; JEF 12/29(2) SR04; JEF 12/29(3) SR05; JEF 12/29(1)		KITE, White-tailed	JEF 6 reps(8)
SR06; JEF-MCFW 12/29(1) SR12		HARRIER, Northern	JEF 10 reps(41)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.	JEF 3 reps(152)	HAWK, Sharp-shinned	JEF 3 reps(3)
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.	JEF 12/29(10) SR04; JEF 12/29(6)	HAWK, Cooper's	JEF 12/29(1) SR04; JEF 12/29(1)
SR05		SR06; JEF 12/29(1) SR08	
IBIS, White	JEF-TP 12/21(10) JAW; JEF-TP	HAWK, Red-shouldered	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(4); ORA 3
12/26(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(250) SR04; JEF 12/29(24) SR13		reps(4); TYL 1 rep(4)	
IBIS, Glossy	JEF-TP 12/26(1) JAW	HAWK, Red-tailed	HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 15 reps(81); ORA 1
IBIS, White-faced	JEF-TP 12/26(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(600)	rep(1)	
SR04; JEF 12/29(38) SR06		KESTREL, American	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 17 reps(91)
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF 12/8(50) JAW; JEF-TX87	MERLIN	JEF 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/8(3)
12/8(130) JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(14) JAW; JEF-TP 12/26(2) JAW;		JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR06; JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10	
JEF 12/29(150) SR13		FALCON, Peregrine	JEF 12/29(1) SR04; JEF 12/29(1)
SPOONBILL, Roseate	JEF 12/26(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(150)	SR13	
SR04; JEF 12/29(3) SR13		RAIL, Yellow	JEF-MCFW 12/29(1) SR12
VULTURE, Black	JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 6 reps(40)	RAIL, Clapper	JEF 3 reps(7)
VULTURE, Turkey	HAI 2 reps(9); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 8	RAIL, King	JEF 12/29(6) SR04; JEF 12/29(2)
reps(62); TYL 1 rep(11)		SR05; JEF-MCFW 12/29(1) SR12	
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous	JEF 12/29(12) SR04	RAIL, Virginia	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(1)
GOOSE, White-fronted	JEF 6 reps(360)	SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/29(1) SR12	
GOOSE, Snow	JEF 7 reps(6205)	SORA	JEF-TP 12/26(1) JAW; JEF-MCFW
GOOSE, Ross's	JEF 12/21(15) JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(30)	12/29(1) SR12	
JAW; JEF-MCFW 12/29(2) SR12		RAIL species	JEF 1 rep(1)
GOOSE, Canada	JEF 1 rep(6)	MOORHEN, Common	JEF 4 reps(53)
SWAN, Mute	JEF 12/18(1) JJW	COOT, American	JEF 10 reps(7321)
GADWALL	JEF 6 reps(1740)	PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 4 reps(82)
WIGEON, American	JEF 4 reps(262)	PLOVER, Snowy	JEF-SRSP 12/29(30) SR10
MALLARD	JEF 4 reps(54)	PLOVER, Semipalmated	JEF 2 reps(62)
DUCK, Mottled	JEF-TP 12/8(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(2)	PLOVER, Piping	JEF 12/29(15) SR07; JEF-SRSP
SM; JEF 12/26(2) JAW; JEF-TP 12/26(17) JAW; JEF 12/29(6)		12/29(1) SR10	
SR04; JEF 12/29(8) SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/29(10) SR12; JEF-PI		KILLDEER	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 12 reps(277)
12/29(8) SR01		OYSTERCATCHER, Amer.	JEF 12/29(2) SR06

STILT, Black-necked	JEF 9 reps(459)	CHICKADEE, Carolina	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 6
AVOCET, American	JEF 8 reps(352)	reps(16); ORA 16 reps(26); TYL 1 rep(16)	
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF 5 reps(18)	TITMOUSE, Tufted	JAS 1 rep(1); ORA 19 reps(26); TYL 1
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	JEF 3 reps(7)	rep(11)	
WILLET	JEF 6 reps(131)	NUTHATCH, Brown-headed	JAS 12/1(2) JJW; TYL 12/14(2)
SANDPIPER, Spotted	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(1)	TCCBC	
SR04; JEF 12/29(1) SR05; JEF 12/29(2) SR06; JEF-PI 12/29(1)		WREN, Carolina	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(12); TYL 1
SR01		rep(7)	
WHIMBREL	JEF 12/29(5) SR07	WREN, House	JEF 12/29(1) SR02; JEF 12/29(4)
GODWIT, Marbled	JEF 12/29(2) SR07	SR05; JEF 12/29(1) SR06; JEF 12/29(3) SR08; TYL 12/14(1)	
TURNSTONE, Ruddy	JEF 2 reps(68)	TCCBC	
KNOT, Red	JEF 12/29(3) SR07	WREN, Sedge	JEF 12/29(6) SR04; JEF 12/29(1)
SANDERLING	JEF 3 reps(210)	SR05; JEF 12/29(9) SR07; JEF 12/29(1) SR08; JEF-MCFW	
SANDPIPER, Western	JEF 2 reps(103)	12/29(14) SR12	
SANDPIPER, Least	JEF 6 reps(221)	WREN, Marsh	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/26(4)
DUNLIN	JEF 1 rep(251)	JAW; JEF 12/29(4) SR04; JEF 12/29(3) SR06; JEF 12/29(1)	
SANDPIPER, Stilt	JEF-TP 12/26(4) JAW	SR07; JEF-MCFW 12/29(1) SR12; JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10	
DOWITCHER, Short-billed	JEF-PI 12/29(25) SR01	KINGLET, Golden-crowned	JEF-SW 12/8(10) JAW; JEF-TP
DOWITCHER, Long-billed	JEF 2 reps(333)	12/8(2) JAW; JEF 12/29(15) SR05; JEF 12/29(2) SR06; JEF	
DOWITCHER species	JEF 7 reps(507)	12/29(20) SR08; JEF-SW 12/30(2) JAW; TYL 12/14(8) TCCBC	
SNIFE, Wilson's	JEF 6 reps(14)	KINGLET, Ruby-crowned	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 12 reps(177); ORA 2
GULL, Laughing	JEF 11 reps(533)	reps(2); TYL 1 rep(20)	
GULL, Bonaparte's	JEF 4 reps(153)	GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray	JEF 11 reps(100)
GULL, Ring-billed	JEF 14 reps(2117)	BLUEBIRD, Eastern	HAI 2 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 5
GULL, Herring	JEF 9 reps(63)	reps(14); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(44)	
TERN, Caspian	JEF 9 reps(47)	THRUSH, Hermit	JEF-SW 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TP
TERN, Royal	JEF 7 reps(208)	12/21(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR04; JEF 12/29(16) SR05; JEF	
TERN, Sandwich	JEF 12/29(1) SR13	12/29(1) SR06; JEF 12/29(4) SR08; ORA 12/27(1) SBE; ORA	
TERN, Common	JEF-SRSP 12/29(2) SR10	12/30(1) SBE; ORA 12/31(1) SBE; TYL 12/14(5) TCCBC	
TERN, Forster's	JEF 12 reps(255)	ROBIN, American	HAI 1 rep(12); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 21
TERN, Black	JEF-TP 12/8(250) JAW	reps(482); ORA 2 reps(10); TYL 1 rep(163)	
DOVE, Rock	JEF 11 reps(187)	CATBIRD, Gray	JEF 12/29(12) SR04; JEF 12/29(3)
COLLARED-DOVE, Euras.	JEF-TX87 12/8(2) JAW; JEF-TX87	SR05; JEF 12/29(1) SR08	
12/24(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(17) SR06; JEF 12/31(23) JAW		MOCKINGBIRD, Northern	JEF 13 reps(104); ORA 5 reps(5); TYL
DOVE, White-winged	JEF-TX87 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TX87	1 rep(12)	
12/24(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR05; JEF 12/29(32) SR06;		THRASHER, Brown	JEF 6 reps(53); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1
JEF-NEDR 12/30(8) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JAW		rep(3)	
DOVE, Mourning	JEF 14 reps(236); ORA 1 rep(2)	STARLING, European	JEF 11 reps(232); ORA 1 rep(2)
DOVE, Inca	JEF 2 reps(18); TYL 1 rep(6)	PIPIT, American	JEF 5 reps(146)
GROUND-DOVE, Common	ORA 12/10(1) SBE	WAXWING, Cedar	JEF 4 reps(82); TYL 1 rep(40)
OWL, Barn	JEF 12/29(1) SR05; JEF 12/29(5)	WARBLER, Orange-crown.	JEF 12 reps(60); TYL 1 rep(2)
SR08		WARBLER, Yellow-rumped	HAI 1 rep(11); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 17
OWL, Great Horned	JEF 12/29(1) SR08	reps(475); ORA 16 reps(26); TYL 1 rep(33)	
HUMMINGBIRD, Calliope	JEF-NEDR 12/24(0) JAW; JEF-NEDR	WARBLER, Pine	JEF 9 reps(61); TYL 1 rep(13)
12/25(1) JJW		WARBLER, Palm	JEF-TP 12/8(1) JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(1)
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous	JEF-NEDR 12/25(3) JJW; JEF-NEDR	SM; JEF-TP 12/26(3) JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR04	
12/30(3) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/31(2) JAW		WARBLER, Prothonotary	ORA 12/5(5) SBE
HUMMINGBIRD, Selasph.	JEF-NEDR 12/24(1) JAW	YELLOWTHROAT, Common	JEF 6 reps(33)
HUMMINGBIRD species	JEF-NEDR 12/1(2) JJW; JEF-NEDR	TOWHEE, Eastern	JEF-SW 12/8(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(1)
12/17(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JAW		SR05; TYL 12/14(4) TCCBC	
KINGFISHER, Belted	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 16 reps(76)	SPARROW, Bachman's	TYL 12/14(1) TCCBC
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied	HAI 1 rep(7); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 10	SPARROW, Chipping	HAI 1 rep(20); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 1
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell.	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(21); ORA 6	rep(7); TYL 1 rep(38)	
reps(6); TYL 1 rep(7)		SPARROW, Savannah	JEF 13 reps(246)
WOODPECKER, Downy	JEF 7 reps(33); TYL 1 rep(3)	SPARROW, LeConte's	JEF 12/29(2) SR05; JEF-MCFW
FLICKER, Northern	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(17); ORA 1	12/29(3) SR12	
rep(1); TYL 1 rep(3)		SPARROW, Nelson's S.-t.	JEF 3 reps(47); ORA 1 rep(5)
FLICKER, N. (Red-shafted)	ORA 12/4(1) SBE; ORA 12/5(2) SBE;	SPARROW, Seaside	JEF 6 reps(47)
ORA 12/7(1) SBE; ORA 12/8(1) SBE; ORA 12/9(2) SBE; ORA		SPARROW, Song	JEF 5 reps(52); TYL 1 rep(1)
12/14(1) SBE		SPARROW, Lincoln's	JEF 12/29(2) SR08
WOODPECKER, Pileated	JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 4 reps(5); TYL 1	SPARROW, Swamp	JEF 9 reps(184); TYL 1 rep(1)
rep(6)		SPARROW, White-throated	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 7 reps(77); ORA 5
PHOEBE, Eastern	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 14 reps(111); ORA	reps(14); TYL 1 rep(94)	
3 reps(4); TYL 1 rep(6)		SPARROW, White-crowned	JEF 5 reps(12); ORA 10 reps(12)
SHRIKE, Loggerhead	JEF 14 reps(126); ORA 2 reps(2)	JUNCO, Dark-eyed	JEF 1 rep(3); TYL 1 rep(7)
VIREO, White-eyed	TYL 12/14(1) TCCBC	CARDINAL, Northern	HAI 1 rep(3); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 12
VIREO, Blue-headed	JEF 2 reps(4); TYL 1 rep(4)	reps(85); ORA 22 reps(141); TYL 1 rep(36)	
JAY, Blue	JEF 13 reps(78); ORA 11 reps(17);	BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	JEF 13 reps(4030); ORA 4 reps(5)
TYL 1 rep(13)		MEADOWLARK, Eastern	JEF 5 reps(70)
CROW, American	HAI 1 rep(22); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 1	MEADOWLARK species	JEF 7 reps(18)
rep(2); ORA 2 reps(3); TYL 1 rep(51)		GRACKLE, Common	JEF 9 reps(282); ORA 1 rep(1)
CROW, Fish	JEF 12/1(2) JJW; JEF-TP 12/8(160)	GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	JEF 5 reps(765)
JAW; JEF-TP 12/21(118) JAW; JEF-TP 12/26(101) JAW		GRACKLE, Great-tailed	JEF 13 reps(444)
CROW, species	JEF 3 reps(6)	COWBIRD, Brown-headed	JEF 4 reps(79)
SWALLOW, Tree	JEF 17 reps(2223)	BLACKBIRD species	JEF 2 reps(110); ORA 10 reps(59)
		FINCH, House	JEF 12/29(8) SR06; ORA 12/8(1) SBE;

12/13(1) SBE; ORA 12/14(1) SBE; ORA 12/16(1) SBE; ORA
 12/21(2) SBE; ORA 12/28(2) SBE; ORA 12/31(4) SBE
GOLDFINCH, American JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 8 reps(82); ORA 8
 reps(17); TYL 1 rep(10)
SPARROW, House HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 2 reps(15); ORA 3
 reps(6)
Number of Species 175
Number of Individuals 60959
County Abbreviation:
 HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; ORA - Orange; TYL -
 Tyler
Location Codes:
 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 State Park ; TXPT - Road to Pilot Station at Texas
 Point.

Observer Abbreviations:

JAW - John Whittle; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; SBE - Sheri
 Berthard; SM - Steve Mayes; SR01 - Sea Rim Christmas Bird Count
 Area 1; SR02 - Sea Rim CBC Area 2; SR04 - Sea Rim CBC Area 4;
 SR05 - Sea Rim CBC Area 5; SR06 - Sea Rim CBC Area 6; SR07 -
 Sea Rim CBC Area 7; SR08 - Sea Rim CBC Area 8; SR10 - Sea Rim
 CBC Area 10; SR12 - Sea Rim CBC Area 12; SR13 - Sea Rim CBC
 Area 13; TCCBC - Turkey Creek Christmas Bird Count

Birding by Boat — Part 2 — On to Cozumel

by Gerald Duhon

On to Cozumel. This is a truly tiny island, barely ten miles by four, and overall less developed than the mainland, but definitely more so than Belize. As such, tourist facilities are numerous -- save your money and forego any of the prepackaged excursions, if birding is your day's goal. As soon as we disembarked the *Rhapsody*, there were numerous vendors with ring binders containing photos of various automobile rentals and rates. However, it is a short (3 km), cheap (\$10 US) cab ride to *Chankanaab Park*, one of the premier ecotourist destinations. Another option would be to go ahead and retain a car for the day, drop off those in your party that may be interested in snorkeling, swimming with dolphins, and sun lounging. Birders could then slowly cruise the loop road that encircles the island looking for lifers. Webb and Howell's *A Birdfinding Guide to Mexico* has a very good section on Cozumel, including driving directions, but does not cover Chankanaab as it is fairly new. That being said, the park has enough jungle to keep a birder busy.

Here we ran into the only real confusion in leaving the boat. A ship wide intercom announces the exit process in each room -- understandably, the numerous tour groups are organized and allowed to leave first. There is only one gangplank, which I feel is a problem - why not have two, one for tours and the other for passengers going it alone? It takes up quite a bit of time orienting the excursion participants. If there were two exits, the independents would not have to wait behind the excursionists. The second difficulty was that on this particular morning, the coalescing of said groups was slow and somewhat haphazard -- I called the "purser's desk" (what goes for check-in/concierge aboard ship) several times and asked if non-group passengers could get started -- three times I got the answer "No, wait for the announcement". Finally after an hour of wasted daylight, our group simply went to Deck One and took off without incident. My suggestion is to NOT wait for "an announcement", which may not come, but for birders especially to position themselves by the exit and haul it first chance they get.

Chanakanaab is one in a series of what seems to be advertised as "National Parks" in Mexico, but is not all that comparable to ours. Not to say that we couldn't learn a thing or three from them, though. *Chankanaab* (which means "little lagoon") has a nice beach with *palapas*, or shaded grass huts without walls, snorkeling opportunities, shops and eateries. All of this has been done with minimal impact to the environment -- the paved, winding jungle trails remind me very much of the wheelchair accessible portion of *Santa Ana NWR*. The park is built around the forest. The area is big enough so that even with four cruise ships in port, I rarely ran into another hiker. A "typical Mayan Village" has been recreated, as well as an "Archeological Zone", with artifacts from various parts of Mexico.

Cozumel has a number of endemics -- some of which carry the

island's name as a prefix- *Cozumel Thrasher*, *Wren*, *Emerald*, and *Vireo*, among others. The jungle here is a brighter shade of green, not quite as tall or "open" as Belize, but again, very birdy and full of North American warblers. The manmade constructs are so cleverly worked into the natural environment that I had *American Redstart*, *Black-throated Blue*, *Black and White and Yellow-throated Warbler*, as well as *Stripe-headed Tanager*, *Cozumel Vireo* and *Black Catbird* directly above the tourist shops! ("Take your time honey, try on as many dresses as you like!!!!") The Tanager, basically a Cozumel specialty in Mexico, was easy- I had at least six skulking around in the fruiting trees. The female gave me trouble and might've been passed off for a *Saltator* (a kind of tropical grosbeak) or *Grosbeak*, looking nothing like the gaudy, colorful male. But she has very distinct, pale lemon fringing to the flight feathers and a faint patch near the bend of the wing. *Black Catbird* is another great find -- I had about 4 at various locations, they look and act like a *Grey Catbird*, but are completely dark all over. In good light I could detect their reddish eye. The edge habitat and plantings around the parking lot are worth spending some time in- here I found the Cozumel race of *Bannanaquit* in the palms, and the impressive *Cozumel Emerald*, a glittering, emerald backed fork-tailed hummer found nowhere else in the world. The aforementioned jungle trails produced 11 warblers, the Mexican race of *Golden-fronted Woodpecker* and the distinct subspecies of *Rufous-browed Peppershrike*, a bird again confined to this island. A brief walk along the highway frontage leading into *Chankanaab* yielded many of the same species, and a few owl toots brought in *Golden Warbler* and *Yucatan Vireo*, the former another distinct race of the *Yellow Warbler*, sporting a red cap.

On one of these perambulations I was approached by a ranger with a broad smile, who introduced himself as Angel Pavia Solis, the park's Public Relations Officer, and a birder since his youth. Was it the binoculars and constant rubbing of the neck that gave me away? We compared lists, and he provided me hints on finding *American Flamingo* and the now uncommon *Cozumel Thrasher* on the island. Unfortunately, they were not resident in the park. He also mentioned that Cozumel loves birders, and that he can assist in organizing bird finding trips. You can reach him at anripaso68@hotmail.com. Earlier in the day I had been turned back from an intriguing, completely undeveloped part of *Chankanaab*. So accommodating was Angel that he quickly offered, "No problem, my friend, I'll get you in!" Time was moving apace, however, and I was unable to explore this section.

I wound up with a baker's dozen of lifers, along with an almost equal number of birds that I had only seen once or twice before. Birding by Boat, though far from the ideal and rife with compromises, just points out that birds are where you find them, and in the American Tropics they are everywhere.

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