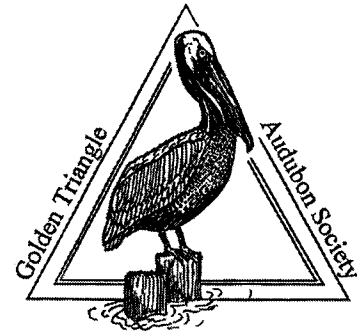


Brown Pelican

Scanned from Originals

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 11 No. 4

April 2005

Membership Meeting
Thursday, April 21 2005
6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

Pale Male
The Story of New York City's Famous Red-tailed Hawks

Pale Male is DVD movie about a Red-tailed Hawk who built a nest on Fifth Avenue in New York City on the top of a structure of a high-rise apartment building that has very affluent residents. The location of this nest makes viewing the nesting hawks from Central Park convenient. This movie reminds one of how many city people finally come in touch with some part of nature at various times of their lives.

In December of last year, the building management removed the nest and the spikes (intended to thwart pigeons) that had anchored it. The ensuing uproar included numerous items on local and nationwide television newscasts and a front page story in the New York Times. Eventually, the building's management reinstalled supports. The hawks have successfully rebuilt the nest, and word of this year's breeding are awaited. We will show a second DVD of news broadcasts including the reactions of New York City residents. It is a very captivating true story if you are interested in how people and animals learn to live together and to rely on each other. Jana Whittle will present this DVD which was compiled by National Audubon.

Refreshments are served at 6:30 p.m. The program begins at 7:15 p.m. As always, the public is invited.

April 16 Field Trip – Sea Rim State Park Bird Walk

This month's Field Trip is one month earlier than usual, and thus is on the Saturday before the Membership Meeting. We will meet at the Headquarters of Sea Rim State Park at 7:30 a.m. This field trip involves only very easy and very limited walking, and is wheelchair accessible. We will first look for neotropical songbird migrants from the boardwalk at the Willow Pond area. Then, for those interested, we will drive down to Texas Ornithological Society's Sabine Woods sanctuary about six miles east along Highway 87, and continue birding there. If we are lucky there may be many colorful migrants, but, more than with most birding trips, a lot depends on the recent weather in our area, in the areas of Mexico and South America where the birds fly across the Gulf from, and in between.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 11, No.3 March 2005

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

RARE BIRD ALERT AND
SOCIETY INFORMATION
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(409) 728-6957 (728-OWLS)

www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge Spring 2005 Yellow Rail Walks.

April 3, Sun. 7:00 am and 4:00 pm

April 9, Sat. 7:00 am and 4:30 pm

April 16, Sat. 7:00 am

April 17, Sun. 4:30 pm

April 24, Sun. 7:00 am and 5:00 pm

All tours begin at the Visitor Information Station at Anahuac NWR. To reach the Visitor Information Station, proceed south from Winnie on Highway 124 (towards High Island). After about 10 miles, turn right (west) on FM1985 and proceed about 10 miles to the well marked access road to the left (south). The Information Station is about 3 miles down this limestone/shell road.

Participants should wear waterproof boots (rubber boots are best). Also recommended are binoculars, insect repellent, and drinking water!

For more information, please contact the Refuge at 409-267-3337.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Joan and Dan Harmon, Carol Lynn and Andy Loker and Brad Hogue for bringing refreshments in March. Michelle Nunez and Dora Siragusa have volunteered to bring the drinks and desserts but we still **need volunteers to bring sandwiches in April and all items for all the remaining 2005 meetings.** 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!

Saturday April 16. Sea Rim SP Bird Walk. Jointly sponsored by Sea Rim State Park and Golden Triangle Audubon. Meet at Park HQ at 7:30 AM. Easy walking (or driving) to the boardwalk at Willows. Later, drive to Sabine Woods to continue birding for those who wish. Easy walking on the boardwalks at both locations. This field trip is especially suited for not-very-

experienced birders, and those who are unable to walk over rougher ground.

Sea Rim State Park is on Highway 87, 10 miles west of Sabine Pass.

Thursday April 21. Membership Meeting. See page 1 for details.

Saturday May 14. Jefferson County Spring Migration Count. Contact John Whittle (john.whittle@lamar.edu or 409-722-4193) to volunteer to help in this county-wide count. Note that this is not the day before Mother's Day this year!

Thursday May 19. Membership Meeting. Speaker: Tucker Slack, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, J. D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area.

Saturday June 4 (tentative). Field trip to Hardin County. We plan to run a field trip to Hardin County to look for the nesting species of the area – Hooded, Pine, Prairie and Swainson's Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo and Painted Bunting, Gray Catbird, Summer Tanager, Acadian Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch and others.

The meeting place will be at 7:00 a.m. (note the necessary early start!) at the shopping center on the northeast corner of the intersection of FM92 and FM418 in the northern part of Silsbee. To reach this from Beaumont, take US 69 north and then US96 north. Take Business 96 into and through downtown Silsbee. When Business 96 turns right a short distance after crossing the railroad, continue straight ahead on FM92 for about a mile to the shopping center. There is a Bealls, a Dominos and an O'Reilly Auto Parts store in the center. We will bird the Firetower Road/Gore Store Road/Camp Waluta area and any nearby areas that are brought to our attention as being productive. We will probably finish before noon.

For those interested in Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow, we would recommend a trip to Boykin Springs, site 007 on the UTC Birding Trail. For further details see www.tpwd.state.tx.us/birdingtrails/ As you drive in heading west from Texas 63 north of Jasper along Forest Road 313, after two or three miles, there is a

marked Red-cockaded Woodpecker colony on the north side of the road with a marked trail through it. The area on the north side of FR313 just before you reach the colony is excellent Bachman's Sparrow habitat.

Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on this issue. If the date on your label NOT prefixed by "AU" has passed, or there is no other date, 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.

Bird Alerts

This Bird Alert was compiled on March 29, 2005

Neotropical passerine migrants continue to be seen in Sabine Woods in modest numbers, but relatively good variety, with some species showing up "early." On the weekend of March 25-27 there were two Prairie Warblers signing vigorously in response to each other, and we are now wondering if perhaps there were two all winter. Another wintering warbler, much less visible and only seen a very few times, but seen well again on Saturday March 26, is a fall/winter plumaged (and presumably female) Magnolia Warbler. This bird has only very faint streaks, and shows no signs as of yet of attaining breeding plumage. A female Eastern Towhee is also still present.

On Saturday March 26, eleven species of warbler were seen in Sabine Woods: Yellow-rumped, Northern Parula, Black-and-white, Hooded, Orange-crowned, Yellow-throated, Prairie, Magnolia, Blue-winged, Common Yellowthroat, Louisiana Waterthrush. A Black-throated Green

at the Willows at Sea Rim would make 12 warblers for the day. Sunday March 27 brought most of the same species, including many Northern Parula, as well as Black-and-white, Hooded, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned and that a Black-throated Green was seen, as was a Prairie. We have reports of 13 warbler species on March 28, including a Nashville Warbler (for which details are awaited), and a Prothonotary Warbler, the last mentioned having been unusually scarce so far this spring.

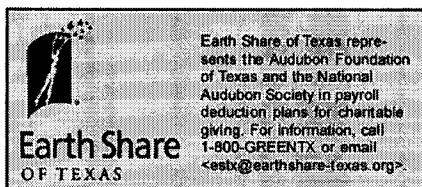
Vireos on March 26, 27 and 28 comprised White-eyed, Yellow-throated and Blue-headed. On March 27, a female Whip-poor-will and a male Chuck-will's-Widow were in the south west quadrant of the woods. A Great-crested Flycatcher was seen March 27, and Eastern Kingbirds were around more especially at the Willows at Sea Rim. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are numerous.

Over the March 25-27 period, Field, Lincoln's and Swamp Sparrows were seen, as were many White-throated Sparrows uncharacteristically feeding on Saturday in the tops of sprouting oak trees!

The new ponds just north of Highway 87 and just east of the entrance to McFaddin NWR (Clam Lake Road) have been successful in attracting shorebirds. American Golden Plovers have been there – often around the easternmost pond – this weekend and last. On March 26, also present were Wilson's Snipe, Dowitchers that appeared to be Long-billed, Pectoral and Least Sandpipers, as well as lots of terns and gulls.

We have a delayed report of a Swallow-tailed Kite over Highway 96 between Buna and Kirbyville (Jasper County) on March 15, and another was seen to the north of Sabine Woods around 8 am on March 27. Two Broad-winged Hawks were seen from Highway 69 just north of Nederland on March 27.

John A. Whittle



Sponsor our Birdathon!

As most of you will know, the Chapters in Texas and Louisiana nominated me for the National Audubon Society (NAS) Board of Directors, and I was duly elected to the board in 2004.

One of the most successful means of fundraising for Audubon, and the one I am most able to participate in, is a birdathon. Royce Pendergast has again graciously agreed to join with me in a Spring Birdathon.

A Birdathon is very similar to other "athons" you may be familiar with, such as telethons, walkathons, etc. The idea is for us to get up at the crack of dawn on a day in late April – we're planning April 23, with April 24 and 27 as alternate days if the weather does not look as if it will cooperate -- and make a run to include the coast of east Jefferson County, Cattail Marsh, the woods and lakeshores of East Texas, perhaps Anahuac NWR, High Island and Bolivar Flats looking for as many species of birds as can be found. We're aiming for at least 150 species.

We're hoping you will sponsor us at \$.50, \$.75, or \$1.00 (or whatever amount you choose) per bird species. A flat donation is also welcome. Please take the time to make a pledge today -- your donation to our Birdathon will be earmarked to support Audubon's mission of protecting our natural heritage in Texas and the nation by supporting conservation, education and advocacy. Again this year, half of the funds we raise will be designated for Audubon Texas activities and programs, and the other half for NAS. Checks should be made out to Audubon Texas and all contributions are, of course, tax deductible. Local businesspeople and businesses are often very receptive to this kind of fund raising and we would welcome any suggestions of where we might find receptive potential supporters. We appreciate all of you who contributed generously last year, and hope you will consider Please contact me at john.whittle@lamar.edu or 409-880-8276 (W) or 409-722-4193 (H) with your pledge and your suggestions.

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings – February 2005

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 john.whittle@lamar.edu or call (409) 880-8276 or fax to (409) 880-7977. 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: A rather routine February, enlivened only by a variety of hummingbirds and the irruptive species – Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin and Purple Finch. Observer effort in February is always at a relatively low level and this year is no exception. A casual reading of the sightings reports for this winter would probably indicate a relatively poor sparrow winter. This may be an invalid conclusion, because the problem well be that the sparrow habitat at our heavily birded sites such as Cattail Marsh is not as extensive or as favorable as in past years, due to extensive mowing and clearance of trees and bushes. A conclusion that there was a paucity of ducks on the coast would, however, not be invalid

GOOSE, White-fronted	JEF 1 rep(40)	YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	JEF 1 rep(10)
GOOSE, Snow	JEF 2 reps(2702)	WILLET	JEF 2 reps(8)
GOOSE, Ross's	JEF 2/13(10) JAW	TURNSTONE, Ruddy	JEF 1 rep(10)
GOOSE, Cackling	JEF 2/13(2) JAW	SANDERLING	JEF 2 reps(105)
DUCK, Wood	JEF-BMT 2/28(2) HJ	DUNLIN	JEF 1 rep(34)
PINTAIL, Northern	JEF 1 rep(20)	SNIFE, Common	JEF 1 rep(6)
SCAUP species	JEF 2 reps(12)	GULL, Laughing	JEF 3 reps(198)
SCOTER, Surf	JEF-SRSP 2/5(5) SM	GULL, Bonaparte's	JEF 2 reps(95)
SCOTER, Black	JEF-SRSP 2/5(1) SM	GULL, Ring-billed	JEF 3 reps(850)
DUCK species	JEF 1 rep(2000)	GULL, Herring	JEF 2 reps(47)
DUCK, Ruddy	JEF 1 rep(200)	TERN, Caspian	JEF 1 rep(1)
LOON, Common	JEF 2 reps(11)	TERN, Royal	JEF 3 reps(40)
GREBE, Pied-billed	JEF 1 rep(1)	TERN, Common	JEF 2/12(1) JAW
GANNET, Northern	JEF-SRSP 2/5(30) SM; JEF	TERN, Forster's	JEF 2 reps(145)
2/12(40) JAW		SKIMMER, Black	JEF 1 rep(1)
PELICAN, Amer. White	JEF 2 reps(4)	DOVE, Rock	HAI 1 rep(10); JEF 11 reps(206)
PELICAN, Brown	JEF-TX87 2/6(11) JAW; JEF	COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian	JEF 11 reps(22); ORA 1 rep(2)
2/12(7) JAW; JEF-PI 2/12(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP 2/12(5) JAW; JEF-TX87 2/12(8) JAW		DOVE, White-winged	JEF 17 reps(144)
CORMORANT, Neotropic	JEF-TX87 2/6(12) JAW; JEF-PI	DOVE, Mourning	HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 15 reps(119);
2/12(4) JAW; JEF-TX87 2/12(11) JAW		ORA 3 reps(5)	
CORMORANT, Double-crested	JEF 2 reps(28)	DOVE, Inca	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 2 reps(3)
HERON, Great Blue	JEF 5 reps(23); ORA 1 rep(1)	OWL, Barn	JEF-SW 2/6(1) JAW
EGRET, Great	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 8 reps(50)	SCREECH-OWL, Eastern	JEF-NEDR 2/9(1) JFW
EGRET, Snowy	JEF 6 reps(99)	OWL, Great Horned	JEF-SW 2/6(1) JAW
HERON, Little Blue	JEF 1 rep(1)	HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr.	JEF-NEDR 2/6(1) JAW
EGRET, Cattle	JEF 5 reps(51)	HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chinned	JEF-NEDR 2/23(1) JAW
IBIS, White	JEF 2/13(50) JAW	HUMMINGBIRD, Archilochus	JEF-NEDR 2/18(1) JAW; JEF-
IBIS, Plegadis	JEF-TX87 2/6(150) JAW; JEF	NEDR 2/26(2) JAW	
2/13(250) JAW		HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tailed	JEF-NEDR 2/17(1) JAW; JEF-
SPOONBILL, Roseate	ORA 2/25(6) SBE	NEDR 2/18(1) JAW	
VULTURE, Black	JEF 1 rep(2)	HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous	JEF-NEDR 2/6(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR
VULTURE, Turkey	HAI 2 reps(8); JEF 4 reps(15)	2/7(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 2/8(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 2/12(1) JAW;	
OSPREY	JEF-TX87 2/6(1) JAW	JEF-NEDR 2/15(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 2/17(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR	
KITE, White-tailed	JEF 3 reps(6)	2/18(1) JAW	
HARRIER, Northern	JEF 2 reps(11)	HUMMINGBIRD, Selasphorus	JEF-NEDR 2/13(1) JAW
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	HAI 2/10(1) KS; HAI 2/20(1) KS;	HUMMINGBIRD species	JEF-NEDR 2/12(1) JAW; JEF-
JEF 2/24(1) JAW		NEDR 2/21(1) JAW	
HAWK, Cooper's	JEF 2/22(1) JAW	KINGFISHER, Belted	JEF 4 reps(18); ORA 1 rep(2)
HAWK, Red-shouldered	HAI 3 reps(3); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1	WOODPECKER, Red-headed	HAI 2/11(1) KS
rep(2)		WOODPECKER, Red-bellied	HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 3
HAWK, Red-tailed	JEF 5 reps(36); ORA 1 rep(1)	reps(5)	
CARACARA, Crested	JEF 2/13(1) JFW	SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(2); ORA 1
KESTREL, American	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(20); ORA	rep(2)	
1 rep(1)		WOODPECKER, Downy	HAI 3 reps(3); JEF 4 reps(5)
MERLIN	JEF-SRSP 2/5(1) SM	WOODPECKER, Pileated	HAI 1 rep(1); ORA 2 reps(2)
SORA	JEF 2/12(1) JAW	PHOEBE, Eastern	JEF 5 reps(13); ORA 1 rep(1)
MOORHEN, Common	JEF 1 rep(1)	SHRIKE, Loggerhead	JEF 6 reps(55); ORA 1 rep(3)
COOT, American	JEF 1 rep(1)	VIREO, White-eyed	JEF-SW 2/6(1) JAW
PLOVER, Black-bellied	JEF 1 rep(4)	VIREO, Blue-headed	ORA 1 rep(1)
PLOVER, Snowy	JEF-SRSP 2/5(35) SM; JEF-SRSP	JAY, Blue	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(17); ORA
2/6(60) JAW; JEF-SRSP 2/12(41) JAW		3 reps(7)	
PLOVER, Semipalmated	JEF 2 reps(6)	CROW, American	HAI 1 rep(1)
PLOVER, Piping	JEF-SRSP 2/5(2) SM; JEF-SRSP	CROW, Fish	ORA 2/18(1) SBE
2/6(3) JAW		CROW, species	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 2 reps(14)
KILLDEER	HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 5 reps(72);	CHICKADEE, Carolina	HAI 2 reps(4); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 3
ORA 1 rep(2)		reps(4)	
AVOCET, American	JEF 2 reps(43)	TITMOUSE, Tufted	HAI 2 reps(9); ORA 3 reps(4)
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	JEF 1 rep(1)	NUTHATCH, Red-breasted	HAI 2/18(1) SG; HAI 2/21(1) SG;
		HAI 2/22(1) SG; HAI 2/23(1) SG; JEF-SW 2/5(1) SM; JEF-SW	

2/6(1) JAW	
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed	HAI 2/20(1) KS; HAI 2/24(1) SG
WREN, Carolina	HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 1 rep(1)
WREN, House	JEF-SW 2/6(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR
2/26(1) JAW	
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned	HAI 2 reps(4); JEF 2 reps(11)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray	JEF 2 reps(18)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern	HAI 2 reps(8); JEF 3 reps(28);
ORA 1 rep(2)	
THRUSH, Hermit	HAI 2/20(1) JAW; JEF-SW 2/6(1)
JAW; ORA 2/8(1) SBE; ORA 2/18(1) SBE	
ROBIN, American	HAI 3 reps(1023); JEF 21
reps(1466); ORA 3 reps(42)	
CATBIRD, Gray	JEF-SW 2/6(1) JAW
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern	HAI 2 reps(4); JEF 10 reps(63);
ORA 3 reps(7)	
THRASHER, Brown	JEF 2 reps(6); ORA 2 reps(2)
STARLING, European	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 12 reps(217);
ORA 1 rep(8)	
WAXWING, Cedar	HAI 2 reps(44); JEF 9 reps(355)
WARBLER, Orange-crowned	JEF 2 reps(13)
WARBLER, Nashville	JEF-SW 2/6(1) JAW
WARBLER, Magnolia	JEF-SW 2/5(1) SM
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped	HAI 2 reps(9); JEF 4 reps(29);
ORA 3 reps(16)	
WARBLER, Pine	HAI 2 reps(9); JEF 1 rep(3); ORA 1 rep(1)
WARBLER, Prairie	JEF-SW 2/5(1) SM
WARBLER, Black-and-white	JEF-SW 2/5(1) SM
YELLOWTHROAT, Common	JEF 1 rep(3)
TOWHEE, Eastern	JEF-SW 2/5(2) SM; JEF-SW 2/6(1)
JAW	
SPARROW, Field	JEF-SW 2/5(2) SM; JEF-SW 2/6(4)
JAW	
SPARROW, Savannah	JEF 3 reps(7)
SPARROW, Song	JEF 4 reps(16)
SPARROW, Swamp	JEF 3 reps(9)
SPARROW, White-throated	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(12); ORA 3 reps(8)
JUNCO, Dark-eyed	JEF-BMT 2/3(2) HJ; JEF-BMT
2/16(1) HJ	
CARDINAL, Northern	HAI 2 reps(15); JEF 4 reps(15);
ORA 3 reps(24)	
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	JEF 9 reps(880); ORA 3 reps(84)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	JEF 3 reps(12)
MEADOWLARK species	JEF 1 rep(19)
GRACKLE, Common	JEF 11 reps(289); ORA 3 reps(24)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	JEF 2 reps(73)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed	JEF 15 reps(496); ORA 1 rep(53)
GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed	JEF 1 rep(3)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(54); ORA 1 rep(4)
BLACKBIRD species	JEF 1 rep(50)
FINCH, Purple	HAI 2/20(2) KS; JEF-BMT 2/3(2)
HJ; JEF-BMT 2/16(1) HJ; ORA 2/18(3) SBE; ORA 2/25(2) SBE	
FINCH, House	HAI 2/10(1) KS; HAI 2/20(2) KS
SISKIN, Pine	HAI 2/17(2) SG; ORA 2/25(3) SBE
GOLDFINCH, American	HAI 4 reps(179); JEF 23
reps(1001); ORA 3 reps(122)	
SPARROW, House	JEF 6 reps(51)

Number of Species 130
Number of Individuals 15461

County Abbreviations:
HAI – Hardin; JEF – Jefferson; ORA – Orange

Location Codes:
BMT – Beaumont; MCFW – McFaddin NWR; NEDR – Nederland; PI – Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TX87 – Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim State Park

Observer Abbreviations;

HJ – Harrison Jordan; JAW – John Whittle; JFW – Jana Whittle; KS – Ken Sztraky; SBE – Sheri Bethard; SG – Sherry Gibson; SM – Steve Mayes; SR – Sherrie Roden; WWR – John and Jana Whittle, Sherrie Roden

Details of Rare Birds

Swainson's Hawks – 15, 16 January 2005 – South China Road, Jefferson County – Gerald Duhon (15th), Steve Mayes (16th)

Swainson's Hawks normally winter in Argentina, although it is becoming increasingly clear that a very small number do in fact winter in Texas. However, it is still necessary that they be documented. The documentation of these two was squeezed out from last month's issue because of space considerations.

January 15: The first bird was unlike the typical Red-shouldered or Red-tailed Hawks, being more lanky and evenly proportioned, tapered from neck to head and body, with long wingtips. The head and nape looked funny, with distinct brown and white striping from the head down to the extreme upper back, strong white cheeks and superciliary with black eyeline reaching about 1/2 way to the nape. Most unusual was the appearance of the shoulder/malar area, which was like a black patch and seemed to extend to the extreme upper breast area as well. The view was sideways, then the bird flushed. The bird was relocated perched out in the open at the edge of a tree facing the observer at about 40 feet or From an excellent look at the underparts they was seen to be very clear cream colored, with a slight buffy/rufous wash to the lower belly and very large, splotchy black patches on both sides that almost closed in the middle, outlining a very white throat. When the bird flushed again, a hint of a "reverse wing pattern" of white leading edge/dark trailing edge was detected. The bird flew once again to the top of the trees almost back to the intersection with FM365. When it flew again, the observer got great looks at the underwing pattern. It began soaring and gaining altitude, showing the long narrow dihedral type flight pattern so characteristic of this raptor. It began soaring south and west down FM365, and the observer gave chase and parked on the side of the road. This time it was joined by ANOTHER Swainson's, this bird much larger and more cleanly patterned underneath.

January 16: One of the hawks today was relocated on FM365 just before you get to South China Road. It was perched on a telephone pole. Through a scope it was classic (if a little pale) immature Swainson's Hawk. It appeared to be only lightly marked on the underside but has more spotting in the breast area and the distinctive dark blotches on the side of the upper breast/neck that points to young Swainson's. It had a definite pale superciliary stripe and dark eye-line. Had was pale overall. The wings reached nearly or to the tail tip. Legs were pale yellow, the beak was dark at the end with a paler cere (could not tell color). Eventually, the bird took flight. It had a brownish tail (no bands noticed) with a lighter area at the uppertail coverts area just above the base of the tail. The underwings were distinctly two toned with darker flight feathers and paler under wing coverts. The wings were long and pointed, very unlike a Red-tail or most other Buteos.



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Field Trip to Bolivar Flats, March 19, 2005

Conducting field trips is fraught with uncertainties. Will the weather cooperate? What birds will show up? Will everyone be able to get good looks? There is however, one certainty in conducting bird field trips: if you go to Bolivar Flats, you will see lots of birds. With that key bit of knowledge in hand, a group of Golden Triangle birders headed to the Houston Audubon Society's Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary for the March field trip. The results? Thousands of birds enjoyed by all!

The Bolivar trip is an annual early spring rite for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society and it has been carried out in a variety of weather conditions. Some trips have been very cold with biting winds others have seen summer-like heat. A least one trip was rained out completely. None of this was a problem on this day as pleasant temperatures and calm winds produced ideal birding conditions. This was as pleasant a birding trip as anyone could remember. And then, of course, there were the birds.

Hundreds of pelicans, both Brown and White loafed out on the flats. The birders looked for the melanistic "Black" White Pelican that had been previously reported but it was not to be seen. Great Egrets and were seen and at least one dark morph Reddish Egret danced in the shallow waters of the flats. One of the highlights of the day was watching a Great Blue Heron catch, subdue and, eventually, swallow a large fish. These birds seem to have a snake-like ability to swallow prey much larger than would seem possible. But swallow it he did evidenced by the large lump in his otherwise slender neck. Other wading birds also put in appearances. Tricolored Herons and Roseate Spoonbills flew over the nearby marsh and a few White Ibis gave good looks.

A group of Red-breasted Mergansers put on another kind of feeding display. The birds had obviously cornered a school of fish and they were giving rapid, lunging pursuit in short bursts across the surface of the water. The birds would stop briefly and then start up all over again. Blue-winged Teal were also seen on the flats on this trip and Lesser Scaup plied the gulf waters a little farther out. A single Mottled Duck flew over the marsh.

Shorebirds are the main attraction at Bolivar Flats as the mud, sand and surf teem with these walking (and flying) identification challenges. Though shorebirds can be tough, this is one of the best spots in the country for sorting them out. On this trip, dozens of Western Sandpipers, some in breeding plumage, were about and could be compared to their Least Sandpiper cousins. A little larger, pale Sanderlings worked the shore line while Dunlins, stout little birds with slightly curved bills, probed shallow waters. Dowitchers probed deeper water while Lesser Yellowlegs fed nearby. A few Ruddy Turnstones checked the shoreline debris for appetizing morsels while big Long-billed Curlews demonstrated the use of their long bills by inserting them into the mud after deeper dwelling invertebrates. Marbled Godwits also used their long bills to their advantage.

Plovers are a special goal on this field trip and the group eventually saw all seven expected species. The ubiquitous Killdeer is usually easy to see (and hear) but the other six take

a little more work. American Golden-Plover is always the trickiest, not usually occurring on the flats, but the group found one later in the day at Fort Travis Park. Chunky Black-bellied Plovers were found, mostly, far out on the flats (a bit of walking required to get good numbers of them). Wilson's Plovers were easier, seen even from near the vehicle barrier. A little further along, Snowy Plovers began to appear. Far out onto the flats, the Piping and Semipalmated Plovers began to be seen – in good numbers! Though Piping Plovers are (correctly) on the Endangered Species list, they were easily seen on this trip. A few were color banded as part of a research program carried out on their breeding grounds. By checking the unique combination of colored bands on their legs, these birds can be identified as individuals. Our birds originated on the tundra of south-eastern Saskatchewan. It's a sobering thought that our group was probably looking upon as much as 2% of the entire world's population of Piping Plovers. Information like this just emphasizes how important places like Bolivar Flats really are.

Other interesting birds were also seen on the flats on the trip. Odd looking American Oystercatchers were distantly glassed (the ones on Frenchtown Road later in the day were closer) while even odder looking Black Skimmers, with their over-long lower mandibles, loafed on the beach. Plenty of gulls and terns were also found. Many Laughing, Ring-billed, Herring and Bonaparte's Gulls sat on the beach and in the surf. Caspian, Royal, Forster's and Sandwich Terns were also found. Gull-billed Terns, not always easy to find on the beach, were easily seen as were a few early Least Terns. One of the most spectacular things about Bolivar Flats is its collection of wintering American Avocets. Every year, thousands of these slender wading birds call the flats home. This winter was no different and the group was able to see hundreds of these beautiful birds in near breeding plumage.

The Bolivar trip does not end at Bolivar Flats, however. With such locations as Rollover Pass and High Island nearby, any birding group would be foolish to pass them by. On this day, these varied sites were very productive. Fort Travis Park produced nice looks at Clapper Rail while Yacht Basin Road produced a Spotted Sandpiper. An Osprey dined on a fish on Bob' Road while Tree Swallows worked the skies over Rollover Pass. Boy Scout Woods in High Island produced a nice variety of early migrants including Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, Northern Parula and Black and White Warbler. At Smith Oaks, Cedar Waxwings and a male Black-throated Green Warbler were nice additions to the trip list.

The trip ended, as is traditional, looking out over the Smith Oaks rookery. Hundreds of Roseate Spoonbills, Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, Tricolored Herons and Black-crowned Night-Herons prepared their stick nests. Cormorants looked on while an Anhinga soared overhead. As the sun began to set, it called an end to another great day of Bolivar birding. Join the group in March 2006 for the next annual spring trip to one of America's great birding meccas – Bolivar Flats!

The following species were recorded on this trip:

Gadwall (26); Mottled Duck (1); Blue-winged Teal (30); Lesser Scaup (100); Red-breasted Merganser (36); Pied-billed Grebe (5); Eared/Horned Grebe (1); Northern Gannet (1); American White Pelican (450); Brown Pelican (96); Neotropic Cormorant (250); Double-crested Cormorant (300); Cormorant species (520); Anhinga (1); Great Blue Heron (7); Great Egret (257); Snowy Egret (206); Little Blue Heron (17); Tricolored Heron (12); Reddish Egret (1); Cattle Egret (2); Black-crowned Night-Heron (4); White Ibis (8); Roseate Spoonbill (356); Turkey Vulture (5); Osprey (2); White-tailed Kite (1); Northern Harrier (1); American Kestrel (3); Clapper Rail (1); Common Moorhen (1); American Coot (17); Black-bellied Plover (101); American Golden-Plover (1); Snowy Plover (3); Wilson's Plover (5); Semipalmated Plover (25); Piping Plover (80); American Oystercatcher (5); Black-necked Stilt (4); American Avocet (3500); Lesser Yellowlegs (1); Willet (63); Spotted Sandpiper (1); Peep Sandpiper (750); Long-billed Curlew (10); Marbled Godwit (40); Ruddy Turnstone (8); Sanderling (250); Western Sandpiper (100); Least Sandpiper (25); Dunlin (500); Short-

billed Dowitcher (25); Laughing Gull (50); Bonaparte's Gull (5); Ring-billed Gull (9); Herring Gull (15); Gull-billed Tern (3); Caspian Tern (8); Royal Tern (45); Sandwich Tern (6); Forster's Tern (130); Black Skimmer (60); Rock Dove (50); Eurasian Collared-Dove (1); Mourning Dove (6); Inca Dove (2); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); Loggerhead Shrike (5); Yellow-throated Vireo (1); Blue-headed Vireo (1); Horned Lark (1); Purple Martin (4); Tree Swallow (66); Cliff Swallow (1); Barn Swallow (9); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2); American Robin (1); Northern Mockingbird (2); European Starling (145); Cedar Waxwing (20); Northern Parula (1); Yellow-rumped Warbler (5); Black-throated Green Warbler (1); Yellow-throated Warbler (1); Black-and-white Warbler (2); Savannah Sparrow (1); Northern Cardinal (1); Red-winged Blackbird (3); Eastern Meadowlark (3); Great-tailed Grackle (3); House Sparrow (6); 93 species.

Steve Mayes

Numbers of Warbler Species Seen in Sabine Woods, Spring 2004

Today, we took the sighting papers from last year off the clipboard and I thought some of it might be of interest to you. I got excited all over about last April. I don't ever remember one being better. As you can see, there seems to have been only one single-digit warbler day in April. Anyway, I wrote down all the numbers of warbler species for last April and May. As usual, the last of April seemed the best. I realize that this is not a scientific record because it is written by humans that believe they have seen various birds (with various levels of birding skills), but I think that it gives us an idea of what was there.

April 2nd= 13 warb. species (plus Lazuli Bunting)	April 16th = 15 April 17th = 11 April 18th = 12 April 19th = 8 April 20th = 16 April 21st = 13 April 22nd = 16 April 23rd = 10 April 24th = 20 April 25th = 22 April 26th = 23 + 7 at willows	April 30th = 13 May 1st = 16 May 2nd = 22 May 3rd = 23 May 4th = 18 May 5th = 8 May 7th = 12 May 8th = 13 May 9th = 15 May 13th = 14 May 14th = 8 May 15th = 14 May 28th = 5 May 31st = 0
April 3rd = 17	April 27th = 24 April 28th = 18 April 29th = 14	
April 4th = 18		
April 5th = 12		
April 6th = 14		
April 7th = 15		
April 8th = 15		
April 9th = 22		
April 11th = 17		
April 12th = 25		
April 13th = 22		
April 14th = 20		
April 15th = 16		

Jana Whittle

Become a Citizen Scientist and Help House Finches!

Ithaca, NY, March 8, 2005 - Coast to coast, House Finches have become afflicted with a debilitating form of conjunctivitis. Two projects through Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology, Audubon's partner in the Great Backyard Bird Count, offer budding Citizen Scientists the opportunity to take

part in tracking and understanding this disease. Neither requires any experience and both are offered free of charge.

Citizen Scientists participating in the "House Finch Disease Survey" help monitor the spread and prevalence of the disease. Participants observe their feeders and submit data on the presence or absence of healthy and/or diseased birds in their particular location. Data can be submitted either on paper or online. The only equipment you need to participate is a feeder and the ability to observe your feeder visitors. Sign up at <http://birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/signup.html> and you'll receive a kit with instructions and information in the mail.

Citizen Scientists participating in the "House Finch Nest Survey" are helping to determine if differences in breeding biology are the cause of seasonal and geographic variation in disease prevalence. Participants locate and monitor House Finch nests around their homes and neighborhoods and keep detailed nest records (nest cards provided). Sign up at www.birds.cornell.edu/hofisignup/nestsignup.html and we'll send you an information packet to teach you how to safely observe House Finch nests.

Questions welcomed at housefinch@cornell.edu or visit the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology at <http://birds.cornell.edu/>.

Federal Judge Rules Against Navy Landing Field

Raleigh, NC, March 8, 2005 - A federal judge ruled that a U.S. Navy decision to place a jet landing field in eastern North Carolina was based on an incomplete and flawed process. Calling the study that backed up the decision "incomplete," Judge Terrence Boyle of the U.S. District Court in North Carolina stopped all activities related to building the field and sent the Navy back to redo its environmental analysis.

The National Audubon Society filed suit against the Navy a little over a year ago to challenge the plans that threatened Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, a globally significant wintering spot for more than 100,000 swans, geese, and other large waterfowl.

To read the entire release, visit www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/Federal_Judge_Pocosin.html.

NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP 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 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) 728-6957
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	(956) 584-2731
San Antonio	(210) 308-6788
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