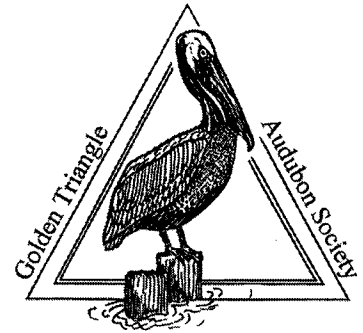


Brown Pelican

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The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 12 No. 12

December 2006

Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count Sunday December 31, 2006 Meet in Sabine Pass at 7:00 a.m.

at the intersection of Highway 87 and FM3322 in Sabine Pass. This is at the stop sign in Sabine Pass, where Highway 87 turns west. We will meet in front of the Old Tyme Diner just west of the intersection.

Countdown dinner at 6:00 p.m., location to be confirmed.

Please contact John Whittle 409-722-4193 (H), 409-880-8276 (W) or john.whittle@lamar.edu and let us know you plan to attend.

Orange County Christmas Bird Count Monday January 1, 2006 Meet in Orange at 7:15 a.m.

at the Service Station at the intersection of Highway 105 and FM1442.

Please contact Ken Sztraky 409-385-2835 (H) or kens@ih2000.net

Please join us for what we hope will be two enjoyable birding days. All are invited, even if you are not an experienced birder or are only able to bird for part of the day. Feeder watchers are welcome to participate. Let us know in advance and we will find a suitable group for you to join. The more pairs of eyes in a group, the more birds will be seen.

Other local counts which will welcome your participation include the Bolivar Peninsula Count on Thursday December 21 (contact Bill Graber 409-866-5452), the Turkey Creek Count (in the Big Thicket north of Kountze) on December 16 (contact Curtis Hoagland at Big Thicket NP at 409-951-6720 or Curtis_Hoagland@nps.gov), the Beech Creek Count (in the Steinhagen Lake area) on December 23 (contact Curtis Hoagland). More details and other counts in Calendar section on page 2.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 12, No.12 December 2006

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

See Web Site for more
information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Nederland, Texas 77627-1292

Calendar of Events

Saturday December 16 Turkey Creek Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Big Thicket Visitor Center on US69 at FM420, about 7 miles north of Kountze at 6:30 a.m. Contact Curtis Hoagland at Curtis_Hoagland@nps.gov or 409-951-6720 for more information.

Sunday December 17. Johnson Bayou Christmas Bird Count. Contact Ken Sztraky at kens@ih2000.net or (409) 385-2835 (evenings) for details of meeting place.

Thursday December 21. Bolivar Peninsula Christmas Bird Count. Contact Bill Graber, 409-866-5452.

Saturday December 23. Beech Creek Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Corp of Engineers Picnic Area on FM92 immediately north of the intersection with FM1746 in Town Bluff at 6:30 a.m. Contact Curtis Hoagland at Curtis_Hoagland@nps.gov or 409-951-6720 for more information.

Sunday December 31. Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count. Meet outside the Olde Tyme Diner at the corner at the stop sign on Highway 87 in Sabine Pass at 7:00 a.m. Contact John Whittle at john.whittle@lamar.edu or 409-722-4193 or for more details.

Monday January 1, 2007. Orange County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Ken Sztraky at 409-385-2835 or kens@ih2000.net for more information.

Thursday January 18, 2007. Membership Meeting. Speaker: Don Jeane on Bird Photography.

Saturday January 20, 2007 Field Trip to Katy Prairie/West Harris County.

This has become one of our most popular field trips. Houston is rapidly advancing towards the heart of this excellent birding area, with its wintering waterfowl, sparrows (including Fox and Harris's) and raptors (including Caracara and Bald Eagle). The meeting place will be as in previous years: 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 though 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, but because of continuing construction may not be well signposted. Turn right (north) on Barker Cypress and proceed just under three miles to the Intersection with Clay. The Randall's parking lot can be entered from Barker-Cypress immediately north of the intersection. Please be sure to check with Steve Mayes at the Membership Meeting on January 18 or check the web-site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org or call Steve Mayes at 722-5807 two or three days before to confirm details. It is a two and one-half hour 105-mile drive from the Golden Triangle.

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 January Membership meeting.

Should you be late, the plan is to first proceed to Bear Creek Park. We will probably enter the park by turning south off Clay Road, just east of the golf course.

Thursday February 15, 2007. Membership Meeting. Details in future issues of the *Brown Pelican*.

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.



Earth Share
OF TEXAS

Earth Share of Texas represents the Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll deduction plans for charitable giving. For information, call 1-800-GREENTX or email estb@earthshare-texas.org.

Field Trip to Western Jefferson County -- November 18, 2006

There is a phenomenon in birding known as the "Patagonia Picnic Table Effect". Loosely defined, this term refers to when a rare bird is found at a particular spot and hordes of birders descend on that spot and, in the process of looking for the first rare bird, end up finding other rare birds in the same place. The effect is named after a picnic table at a certain roadside rest area near Patagonia, Arizona where a rare stray (Black-capped Gnatcatcher, I believe) was found only to be followed by several other rare birds when birders came looking. There are a number of explanations for the Patagonia Picnic Table Effect. One is that locations where rare birds show up tend to be really good habitat so it is only natural that other rare birds might stray to the same spot. Another theory states that more birders out looking means it is just much more likely that a bird (rare or not) will be noticed if it happens to show up. Whatever explanation you believe, birders from the Golden Triangle Audubon Society experienced a good dose of the Patagonia Picnic Table Effect in western Jefferson County on the November field trip.

The western part of Jefferson County is largely rural with many cattle pastures and rice fields. When the fields are flooded, they can be filled with shorebirds and waterfowl. Naturally, with such abundant prey and large open expanses, it is a good area for raptors as well. It was one of the raptors (among other birds) that the group was looking for in particular – a Golden Eagle. An adult Golden Eagle had been seen several times in the preceding week in the area of McDermand Road. This is quite an unusual bird for the upper Texas coast. Bald Eagles are seen in small numbers every year but Golden Eagles are much more rare in these parts. Golden Eagles used to be more common in the eastern United States but widespread shooting coupled with problems associated with the pesticide DDT nearly wiped out the populations east of the Mississippi River. Though Golden Eagles are still fairly common in parts of the western United States, one in Jefferson County is still big birding news!

The day started off quite foggy and the group waited on Johnson Road for the fog to lift so the birding could start in earnest. One of the other main targets for this trip were sparrows and they started cooperating early. Savannah Sparrows were easily seen (as they usually are) on the nearby fence lines and a cooperative Vesper Sparrow was scoped. Swamp Sparrow was pushed up along with several cooperative Sedge Wrens. A Hermit Thrush was sighted nearby along with a Yellow-rumped Warbler. A Merlin briefly perched in the road for the group to admire. More vigorous pishing produced the best birds of the early going, however – LeConte's Sparrows! These often shy little birds can be quite difficult to see in the wet fields they prefer but on this morning they put on quite a show! LeConte's Sparrows certainly defy the general convention that sparrows must be dull colored, as the bright buffy-orange of their face beautifully contrasts with the gray, rufous and white of the rest of their plumage. The whole group agreed that they could not remember seeing LeConte's Sparrows being so cooperative and they were admired at close range for a good while.

A trip further down Johnson Road until it turns at the intersection with Heisig Road leads to a small wooded area with a different mix of birds. More sparrows were present including White-throated and Chipping Sparrows. Woodpeckers were well represented in the small woodland with sightings of Northern Flicker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Red-bellied Woodpecker. A Blue-headed Vireo was well seen while a few Gray Catbirds were less cooperative. Brown Thrasher and American Robin were heard but not seen but Pine Warblers were seen quite well. The high whistles of a Golden-crowned Kinglet took a few minutes to pin down but eventually the group got satisfactory looks at this tiny, colorful bird.

Moving down Johnson Road toward Old League Road, more of the targets of the day began to be spotted. A large flock of geese often reside in this area in the winter and this year was no exception. Hundreds of Snow Geese could be seen flying up out of distant fields

(perhaps in response to hunters in the area) along with lesser numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese and the small Ross's Geese. Several raptors were also noted in this area, no doubt adding to the nervousness of the geese, including Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and American Kestrels. A field along League Road also produced a few Brewer's Blackbirds. This species is not common in Jefferson County and so was much appreciated.

Another of the specialties of this area is Sandhill Crane. These tall, stately birds are difficult to find in Jefferson County except in the extreme western part of the county. In recent years, a flock numbering from a few dozen to a thousand (or more), have spent all or part of the winter in the fields near FM 1406. On this trip, the birds were seen most easily in the fields on League Road as they foraged in the short grass or flew overhead. Their far-reaching, yodeling calls are often the first clue to the Sandhill Crane's presence and should be listened for whenever this species is known to be in the area.

Finally, the group stopped on McDermand Road. A group of flooded fields near the intersection with FM 365 had held many shorebirds and some waterfowl in recent days and was also the location of the Golden Eagle sightings. The group scoped out several congregations of birds in these fields which consisted mostly of Dunlin and Long-billed Dowitcher. Numerous Long-billed Curlews were also present along with both yellowlegs species. Killdeer, Black-bellied Plovers and Western Sandpipers completed the shorebird complement in the fields (or so we thought) though there were other species in the area. American Pipits walked along the small levees between the fields while many geese and cranes flew overhead. Dozens of Tree Swallows swooped low over the water while a small flock of Northern Shoveler foraged in the water. An adult Peregrine Falcon perched on the ground, on the lookout for an easy meal.

Thinking that the possibilities of these fields had been exhausted, the group prepared to leave. As the group leader pulled away, he noticed that two vehicles were not following – they were stopped and looking at something. A quick call on the walkie-talkie explained the reason: a phalarope had been spotted. Pat Jeane and Sherrie Roden spotted a strange bird feeding in the water right along a small levee. When the rest of the group got a look, one thing was clear – this was not a Wilson's Phalarope (the only one likely in our area). A quick check of the field guide was in order. The bird had a short, thick bill and a gray unstreaked back. These marks added up to Red Phalarope! This is a rare bird for anywhere in Texas as it usually winters in the ocean waters off the east and west coasts. Scope views gave no doubt, however, that this was what the group was seeing! Red Phalarope was a life bird for several participants (including the field trip leader) and was admired for quite some time with a couple of participants attempting photos of the rare bird. As the group looked on, the Peregrine must have gotten hungry as it swooped down scaring all of the shorebirds up (including the phalarope). The Red Phalarope was not immediately relocated but the field trip ended on this very high note. The Phalarope was later relocated in the same fields and, in fact, hung around for several days.

So, the field trip ended without the targeted rare bird (Golden Eagle) but with an even rarer species (Red Phalarope). It just goes to show that rare birds can pop up anywhere and a birder must always be prepared for the unusual!

The following species were noted by the field trip leader:
Great Blue Heron(4), Great Egret(18), Snowy Egret(1), White Ibis(15), Plegadis Ibis (300), Turkey Vulture(4), Greater White-fronted Goose(500), Snow Goose(2500), Ross's Goose(10), Northern Shoveler(10), Northern Harrier(20), Sharp-shinned Hawk(1), Cooper's Hawk(1), Red-shouldered Hawk(1), Red-tailed Hawk(11), American Kestrel(10), Merlin(1), Peregrine Falcon(1), Sandhill Crane(700), Black-bellied Plover(4), Killdeer(10), Greater

(continued on page 5)

Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Refuge Complex, which comprises McFaddin, Texas Point, Anahuac and Moody National Wildlife Refuges, is the planning document addressing the next 15 years, and is part of a much larger document including a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Land Protection Plan (LPP). The entire document (38 MB) can be downloaded from <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/Plan/completeplans.html>. We have a CD of the entire document if anyone would like to borrow it, or you can request a CD from the Complex Office (409-267-3337). The Fish and Wildlife Service is requesting comments by January 16, 2007.

Here we present an unofficial high level summary of the CCP, hopefully not distorting the meaning of any part, but with some bias towards wildlife observation and some bias toward proposals for McFaddin and Texas Point Refuges. We hope it encourages you to review at least the entire CCP and offer your comments to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Planning, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103.

Management Focus

The Refuge Complex plans to "continue and expand current habitat management and native habitat restoration, with increased monitoring and research to assess management actions and facilitate "a more effective adaptive management approach." Concurrently, the Complex plans "additional restoration of native habitats including wetlands, prairie and woodlots with a focus on priority species identified in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the National Shorebird Conservation Plan, the National Waterbird Conservation Plan and the Partners in Flight Regional Conservation Plan.

Specifically mentioned are addressing shoreline erosion on the Gulf of Mexico, Galveston Bay and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW). Methods to be employed include barrier beach/dune restoration on Texas Point, using dredge material and structural protection along east Galveston Bay and the GIWW. Interior marsh will be protected by restoration of fresh water inflows, restriction of salt water intrusion and use of dredge material.

Interesting is planned participation in research and monitoring of the effects of relative sea level rise, in effect predicting such a rise due to global climate change. Additional monitoring of invasive exotic plant species will include research to assess the efficiency of ongoing and new control techniques.

The Refuge Complex would provide and promote opportunities for all six of the National Wildlife System's priority wildlife recreational uses: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, environmental education and interpretation.

One important item to facilitate implementation is a plan for seven additional positions: a wildlife biologist, a plant ecologist, a GIS-computer specialist, a natural resources (oil

and gas management) specialist, a refuge operations specialist (all based at Anahuac NWR), a heavy equipment operator (Texas Point), and an additional law enforcement officer (McFaddin).

The document notes in the rationale for the focus that the Texas Gulf Coast is the primary wintering ground for Central Flyway ducks, hosting between 30 and 70 percent of the total population as well as 95 of the Snow, Canada and Greater White-fronted Geese. In addition, "hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, waders and marsh birds winter or migrate through the region." The coastal woodlots and prairies support 150 species of migratory and resident land birds, including nine species classified as 'rare and declining' species in grasslands, and seven in woodlands. The plan notes that almost all of the historic native tall grass prairie and associated wetlands have disappeared, and that coastal woodlots as "imminently threatened by development and other land use changes."

The plan notes a current annual visitation to the Complex of 172,000. Trends noted include the increasing population of six million in the eight county area around Houston, and the increasing popularity of the Texas Gulf Coast as a destination for national and international ecotourism.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The CCP details five goals with objectives and strategies under each. Here we list all the goals and almost all of the objectives, and attempt to summarize the nature of the strategies. Please refer to the complete plan for further details.

Goal 1 is to conserve, enhance and restore wetlands. Three separate objectives address different habitat types within the wetland: A) to maintain 30-40 percent of the marshes in early and mid-successional species by water level control, burning, grazing and control of muskrat and nutria; B) to maintain 10 percent open water by controlling phragmites, cattail and California bulrush to reopen, and controlling water levels and salinities; and C) to maintain and manage 1900 acres of shallow freshwater wetlands by employing continuation of 500 to 700 acres of cooperative rice farming, preferably organic, increasing managed moist soil units to 1000 acres on Anahuac, and restoring 100 acres on McFaddin, all by year 15 of the plan.

Goal 2 is to conserve, enhance and restore the region's coastal prairies and coastal woodlands to provide wintering, migration and nesting habitat for resident and migratory land birds, including Neotropic-Nearctic migratory birds. Two objectives separately address the prairie grasslands and the coastal woodlots; A) to protect and manage, by year 15, all 5744 acres of non-saline grasslands, including native prairie remnants, permanently fallowed croplands, and already restored grasslands in Anahuac NWR, and restore an additional 2223 acres of fallowed former cropland to native prairie on Anahuac. Strategies for management of existing grasslands include prescribed spring burning, mowing, control of exotics, limited summer burns, and a revised grazing program. Restoration will involve sprigging and seeding with

native grasses and forbs; B) to create 29 acres of new coastal woodlots and protect and diversify the 127 acres of existing woodlots and riparian areas. Strategies include control of exotic and feral hogs, creation of two one-acre lots on Anahuac and a 27-acre woodlot along a riparian area in the East Unit of Anahuac.

Goal 3 is to conduct a comprehensive biological [data collection] program for all species of native fish, wildlife and plants. An extensive series of censuses and surveys is proposed along with some habitat improvements. Strategies include: A) to document populations and maintain healthy populations of waterfowl, shorebirds by providing march through May shorebird habitat on 300 acres of Anahuac, and small Least Tern and Black Skimmer nesting areas as well as many habitat manipulation projects to promote successful Mottled Duck breeding habitat; B) to conduct surveys of migratory and resident land birds; C) to document population trends in fish and other aquatic species; D) to support recovery efforts of threatened and endangered species including participation in appropriate surveys, including those pertaining to Bald Eagle, Piping Plover and Brown Pelicans, with extensive winter and migration surveys of LeConte's Sparrow. Spragues Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, White-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier and Short-eared Owls. Also planned is an expansion of Project Prairie Birds, fall, wintering and spring beach and bay surveys for Piping Plover, Snowy Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Wilson's Plover, American Golden-Plover. Short-billed Dowitcher, Reddish Egret, Least Tern, Black Skimmer and Gull-billed Tern, biweekly spring surveys for Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, American Golden-Plover, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Wood Stork; surveys for Yellow Rail, Black Rail; special studies of Black Rail, Yellow Rail, American Bittern, Burrowing Owl, White Ibis and White-faced Ibis; E) to conduct surveys of mammals; F) to conduct surveys of reptiles and amphibians (with extensive alligator studies); G) to conduct surveys of invertebrates, including butterflies; H) to conduct fire studies on plants.

Goal 4 is by working with others locally and on a landscape level to address threats to natural biological diversity, ecological integrity and environmental health on the Refuge Complex. Objective for the goal are A1) to address threats from sea level rise, reduced sediment supply and shoreline erosion (currently 50 feet per year on Texas Point, 10-15 feet per year on McFaddin; A2) address threats from altered hydrology by increasing freshwater mineral sediment inflows and by reducing salt water intrusion; B) control exotic and invasive species including tallow, McCartney Rose and other species; C) to identify and monitor all potential point and non-point source pollution impacts and develop a strategy to clean up contaminants; D) to manage new oil and gas exploration and development to ensure environmentally sensitive procedures and the use of best practices.

Goal 5 is that all local national and international visitors will enjoy safe and high quality outdoor experiences on the Refuge Complex. Objectives to accomplish this are A) to ensure that by year 15, 90 percent of all hunting visits are high quality (as defined). Strategies for this objective include providing additional hunting areas, including opening some areas of Anahuac to dove hunting in cooperation with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Short Term Public Hunting Lease Program, and opening areas

of the East Unit to hunting during the early teal season; B) to ensure that, by year 15, 90 percent of all fishing visits are high quality (as defined). Strategies include various projects to improve access, including extending open hours along Clam Lake Road and Star Lake Road at McFaddin on a daily basis, and increased walk in access on Anahuac. Additional fishing platforms and boat launch areas, including one on Pilot Station Road at Texas Point, are proposed; C) by year 15 to provide several new high quality opportunities to view and photograph wildlife in managed and restored habitats. Strategies include, in addition to maintaining existing facilities, and entrance fee program at Anahuac, significant new trails and platforms at McFaddin and Texas Point; D) To provide Environmental Education and Interpretation such that by year 15, 90 percent of visitors feel they have increased knowledge and understanding of fish, wildlife and plants, and conservation thereof. Proposed strategies include interpretative displays, signs, brochures and videos, and cooperation with Refuge Friends Groups to provide programming for K through fifth grade; E) to improve management of beach areas on McFaddin, by expanded law enforcement activities and expanded coordination with the Texas General Land Office and county agencies; F) Use community outreach and partnerships in the promotion of conservation and the management and public use programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Strategies include the enhancement and restoration of 1500 acres of coastal and prairie wetlands, 500 acres of prairie and 10 acres of woodlots on private lands in the Refuge Complex region in cooperation with private landowners.

The Land Protection Plan

The "preferred alternative" in the Land Protection Plan, which defines the perimeter within which the Fish and Wildlife Service will be able to purchase land from willing sellers, is very largely a "fill in the gaps" proposal, as the only areas included that would allow an expanded perimeter are some areas to the north of Anahuac NWR, in the extended riparian areas along Oyster Bayou. Other areas included within the proposed perimeter that are not currently part of one of the refuges are relatively small sections which, while not in-holdings in the normal sense, do "jut into" the existing refuge lands.

Field Trip Report (continued from page 3)

Yellowlegs(55), Lesser Yellowlegs(35), Long-billed Curlew(50), Western Sandpiper(20), "Peep" species(50), Dunlin(1000), Long-billed Dowitcher(200), Red Phalarope(1), Ring-billed Gull(20), Mourning Dove(110), Belted Kingfisher(2), Red-bellied Woodpecker(4), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker(2), Northern "Yellow-shafted" Flicker(1), Eastern Phoebe(17), Loggerhead Shrike(12), Blue-headed Vireo(1), Blue Jay(4), Tree Swallow(300), House Wren(4), Sedge Wren(3), Golden-crowned Kinglet(2), Ruby-crowned Kinglet(6), American Robin(1), Gray Catbird(3), Northern Mockingbird(2), Brown Thrasher(1), European Starling(10), American Pipit(16), Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler(1), Pine Warbler(2), Chipping Sparrow(5), Vesper Sparrow(1), Savannah Sparrow(300), LeConte's Sparrow(10+), Swamp Sparrow(3), White-throated Sparrow(10), Northern Cardinal(4), Red-winged Blackbird(200), Eastern Meadowlark(30), Brewer's Blackbird(10), Common Grackle(10), Great-tailed Grackle(50), Brown-headed Cowbird(1000), Blackbird species(5000), American Goldfinch(3).

Steve Mayes

Bird Sightings – October 2006

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. 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." The range of dates for which the species was reported is shown in parentheses in a column before the sighting details or report summaries.

Commentary: Although there were few rarities as such, October 2006 provided some exciting birding. Each of the last three weekends, especially the Saturdays, provided neotropical migrants in numbers and variety that rivaled some of the better spring days. The sightings for many of these species are summarized rather than detailed in the listing in order to keep the length of the listing within reasonable limits. At least one observer reported a 20-warbler species day. Towards the end of the month, good numbers of sparrows were reported from the coast along with the beginnings of an irruption of Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Dark-eyed Juncos,

which has continued well into November. While "overshooting" species such as these are seen along the coast quite frequently, this is often a one- or two-day event, and the birds quickly retreat back to their more normal habitats in the areas immediately to our north, this year's crop seems to be staying around longer (or else constant being replaced by others of the same species).

Two species reported are perhaps worthy of a specific mention. A Black-whiskered Vireo was seen by Lynn Barber at Sabine Woods on October 16. Everyone is of course wondering if this species was just overlooked in times past because the differences between this species and the Red-eyed Vireo are not very marked to say the least. The Black-whiskered Vireo is strictly a coastal species, normally found only in the southern half of Florida and the West Indies. The appearance of a bird in the fall after multiple birds in the spring begs the question of whether this bird spent the summer somewhere close by. Although Sabine Woods is not birded very much in the summer, it is visited occasionally and birders have been habituated to carefully checking any Red-eyed Vireos there, and we have no reports since early May.

The other species is the Blackpoll Warbler. The fall migration of this species is very much to our east, with many birds taking off from the vicinity of Cape Hatteras non-stop to the northern part of South America. It is extremely rare west of Florida in the fall, so Lynn Barber's sighting in Sabine Woods on October 16 was a rare event.

GOOSE, Gtr. White-fronted	(28-28)	JEF 1 rep(80)
GOOSE, Snow	(24-31)	JEF 3 reps(92)
DUCK, Wood	(5-5)	JEF-TP 10/5(1) HM
DUCK, Mottled	(5-28)	JEF 4 reps(7)
TEAL, Blue-winged	(5-16)	JEF 2 reps(5)
SHOVELER, Northern	(5-5)	JEF 1 rep(1)
TEAL, Green-winged	(5-5)	JEF 1 rep(1)
SCAUP, Lesser	(5-5)	JEF-TP 10/5(1) HM
MERGANSER, Red-breasted	(28-28)	JEF-TXPT 10/28(35) SM
DUCK, Ruddy	(5-5)	JEF-TP 10/5(1) HM
GREBE, Eared	(5-28)	JEF-TP 10/5(1) HM; JEF-MCFW 10/28(2) SM
PELICAN, Amer. White	(7-28)	JEF 2 reps(58)
PELICAN, Brown	(14-28)	JEF 4 reps(34)
CORMORANT, Neotropic	(15-22)	JEF 2 reps(47)
CORMORANT, Double-crested	(28-28)	JEF-TXPT 10/28(10) SM
BITTERN, American	(22-22)	JEF-MCFW 10/22(1) SM
BITTERN, Least	(22-22)	JEF-MCFW 10/22(1) SM
HERON, Great Blue	(15-28)	JEF 3 reps(14)
EGRET, Great	(1-28)	JEF 4 reps(90)
EGRET, Snowy	(1-28)	JEF 6 reps(40)
HERON, Tricolored	(1-28)	JEF 3 reps(6)
EGRET, Cattle	(1-7)	JEF 2 reps(44)
HERON, Green	(22-22)	JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW
NIGHT-HERON, Black-crown.	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(3)
IBIS, White	(7-28)	JEF 3 reps(22)
IBIS, Plegadis	(1-22)	JEF 2 reps(13)
SPOONBILL, Roseate	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(8)
VULTURE, Black	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(8)
VULTURE, Turkey	(7-28)	JEF 3 reps(7)
OSPREY	(22-28)	JEF-TX87 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM
KITE, White-tailed	(15-28)	JEF 4 reps(6)
HARRIER, Northern	(7-28)	JEF 6 reps(12)
HAWK, Cooper's	(9-17)	JEF 2 reps(2)
HAWK, Red-shouldered	(15-30)	JEF 4 reps(5)
HAWK, Broad-winged	(1-22)	JEF 4 reps(4)
HAWK, Swainson's	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Red-tailed	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(3)
KESTREL, American	(1-28)	JEF 4 reps(7)
MERLIN	(22-28)	JEF 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM
FALCON, Peregrine	(16-30)	JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB; JEF-PTA 10/30(1) GD
RAIL, Clapper	(28-28)	JEF 1 rep(4)
GALLINULE, Purple	(5-5)	JEF-TP 10/5(1) HM

MOORHEN, Common	(7-22)	JEF 4 reps(8)
PLOVER, Black-bellied	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(6)
PLOVER, Snowy	(22-22)	JEF-SRSP 10/22(2) JAW
PLOVER, Semipalmated	(28-28)	JEF 1 rep(2)
KILLDEER	(1-22)	JEF 3 reps(16)
AVOCET, American	(28-28)	JEF 1 rep(9)
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(9)
WILLET	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(18)
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(1)
GODWIT, Marbled	(23-23)	JEF 10/23(2) MCF
SANDERLING	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(7)
SANDPIPER, Western	(5-5)	JEF 1 rep(1)
SANDPIPER, Least	(5-5)	JEF 1 rep(1)
SANDPIPER, Pectoral	(5-5)	JEF-TP 10/5(2) HM
DOWITCHER, Short-billed	(22-22)	JEF-TXPT 10/22(10) JAW
DOWITCHER, Long-billed	(5-5)	JEF 1 rep(1)
GULL, Laughing	(14-28)	JEF 3 reps(322)
GULL, Franklin's	(22-22)	JEF 10/22(1) JAW
TERN, Caspian	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(26)
TERN, Forster's	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(3)
TERN, Royal	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(14)
PIGEON, Rock	(1-22)	JEF 3 reps(57)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian	(22-22)	JEF 1 rep(13)
DOVE, White-winged	(22-28)	JEF 2 reps(5)
DOVE, Mourning	(1-28)	JEF 5 reps(202)
CUCKOO, Yellow-billed	(15-22)	JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) JAW
CUCKOO, Black-billed	(16-16)	JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW; JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB
OWL, Barn	(15-28)	JEF 3 reps(8)
OWL, Great Horned	(22-22)	JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW
SWIFT, Chimney	(8-22)	JEF 2 reps(3)
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr	(1-28)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(23)
HUMMINGBIRD, Archilochus	(16-31)	JEF-BMT 10/16(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/19(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/20(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/22(1) RHJ; JEF-SW 10/22(2) JAW; JEF-BMT 10/23(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/24(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/27(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/28(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/30(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/31(2) RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous	(2-31)	JEF-BMT 10/2(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/6(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/9(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/10(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/12(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/13(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/20(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/22(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/31(1) RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD species	(15-15)	JEF-NEDR 10/15(1) JAW

KINGFISHER, Belted (7-28) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5
 reps(27)

SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (7-28) JEF 6 reps(8)

WOODPECKER, Downy (7-31) JEF 8 reps(14)

FLICKER, Northern (1-28) JEF 4 reps(9)

WOODPECKER, Pileated (9-9) JEF 1 rep(1)

WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (7-28) JEF 6 reps(22)

FLYCATCHER, Acadian (7-7) JEF-SW 10/7(1) JG

FLYCATCHER, Trail's (15-15) JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW

FLYCATCHER, Least (15-22) JEF-TXPT 10/15(1) GD;
 JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) JAW

PHOEBE, Eastern (7-28) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(8)

FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (5-5) JEF-TP 10/5(1) HM

FLYCATCHER, Gt. Crested (7-7) JEF-SW 10/7(1) JG

FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (7-22) JEF 5 reps(38)

SHRIKE, Loggerhead (7-28) JEF 4 reps(14)

VIREO, White-eyed (2-28) JEF 12 reps(33)

VIREO, Yellow-throated (15-24) JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW;
 JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB; JEF-SW 10/19(2) DV; JEF-BMT 10/23(1)
 RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/24(1) RHJ

VIREO, Blue-headed (8-30) JEF-SW 10/8(1) RHJ; JEF-
 SW 10/16(1) LB; JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 10/30(1)
 RHJ

VIREO, Warbling (16-16) JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB

VIREO, Philadelphia (15-15) JEF 10/15(1) JAW; JEF-
 SW 10/15(1) JAW

VIREO, Red-eyed (16-28) JEF 4 reps(6)

VIREO, Black-whiskered (16-16) JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB

JAY, Blue (1-28) JEF 6 reps(36)

SWALLOW, Tree (15-28) JEF 3 reps(20)

SWALLOW, N Rough-winged (7-28) JEF 4 reps(352)

SWALLOW, Barn (7-15) JEF 2 reps(190)

CHICKADEE, Carolina (7-28) JEF 4 reps(5)

CREEPER, Brown (28-30) JEF-SRSP 10/28(3) SM;
 JEF-SW 10/28(2) SM; JEF-BMT 10/30(1) RHJ

WREN, Carolina (15-28) JEF 3 reps(5)

WREN, House (7-28) HAI 1 rep(6); JEF 6
 reps(13)

WREN, Sedge (28-28) JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM

WREN, Marsh (28-28) JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM

KINGLET, Golden-crowned (19-28) HAI-SILS 10/19(3) KS;
 JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP
 10/28(6) SM; JEF-SW 10/28(4) SM; JEF-TXPT 10/28(2) SM

KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (7-31) JEF 11 reps(33)

GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (7-28) JEF 7 reps(89)

BLUEBIRD, Eastern (7-19) HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 1 rep(1)

THRUSH, Swainson's (15-22) JEF-SW 10/15(3) JAW;
 JEF-SW 10/16(1) HD; JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW

THRUSH, Hermit (22-28) JEF 2 reps(150)

THRUSH, Wood (15-22) JEF 10/15(2) JAW; JEF-
 SW 10/15(5) JAW; JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB; JEF-SRSP 10/22(1)
 JAW; JEF-SW 10/22(3) JAW

ROBIN, American (22-22) JEF-NEDR 10/22(2) JAW

CATBIRD, Gray (6-28) JEF 10 reps(384)

MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (1-28) JEF 5 reps(6)

THRASHER, Brown (5-28) JEF 12 reps(74)

STARLING, European (7-22) JEF 3 reps(13)

WARBLER, Blue-winged (22-22) JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) JAW

WARBLER, Golden-winged (15-15) JEF 10/15(1) JAW

WARBLER, Tennessee (15-24) JEF 4 reps(19)

WARBLER, Orange-crowned (28-28) JEF-SRSP 10/28(1) SM;
 JEF-SW 10/28(6) SM; JEF-TXPT 10/28(2) SM

WARBLER, Nashville (7-28) JEF 5 reps(10)

PARULA, Northern (2-28) JEF 6 reps(16)

WARBLER, Yellow (15-22) JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW;
 JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) GD

WARBLER, Chestnut-sided (15-19) JEF 3 reps(5)

WARBLER, Magnolia (7-28) JEF 7 reps(68)

WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (22-31) JEF 3 reps(32)

WARBLER, Black-thr. Green (7-28) JEF 8 reps(19)

WARBLER, Blackburnian (19-19) JEF-SW 10/19(1) DV

WARBLER, Yellow-throated (14-28) JEF-SRSP 10/14(1) GD;
 JEF-SW 10/28(1) SM

WARBLER, Pine (7-24) JEF 5 reps(7)

WARBLER, Palm (15-15) JEF-TXPT 10/15(1) GD

WARBLER, Bay-breasted (15-15) JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW

WARBLER, Blackpoll (16-16) JEF-SW 10/16(1) LB

WARBLER, Black-and-white (8-22) JEF 6 reps(25)

REDSTART, American (7-28) JEF 9 reps(43)

WARBLER, Worm-eating (16-22) JEF-SW 10/16(1) HD; JEF-
 SW 10/16(1) LB; JEF-SW 10/22(1) SM

OVENBIRD (15-28) JEF-SW 10/15(4) JAW;
 JEF-SW 10/16(2) LB; JEF-SRSP 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 10/22(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP 10/28(1) SM; JEF-SW 10/28(1) SM

WATERTHRUSH, Northern (15-22) JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW;
 JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW

WARBLER, Mourning (8-8) JEF-SW 10/8(1) RHJ

YELLOWTHROAT, Common (8-28) JEF 6 reps(32)

WARBLER, Hooded (8-28) JEF 6 reps(17)

WARBLER, Wilson's (7-28) JEF 6 reps(12)

TANAGER, Summer (7-22) JEF 5 reps(7)

TANAGER, Scarlet (15-19) JEF-SW 10/15(2) JAW;
 JEF-SW 10/16(4) HD; JEF-SW 10/19(1) DV

SPARROW, Chipping (28-29) JEF-SRSP 10/28(2) SM;
 JEF-TXPT 10/29(12) GD

SPARROW, Field (28-29) JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM;
 JEF-SRSP 10/29(1) GD

SPARROW, Vesper (22-28) JEF-MCFW 10/22(1) JAW;
 JEF-TXPT 10/28(2) SM

SPARROW, Lark (29-29) JEF-SRSP 10/29(2) GD

SPARROW, Savannah (22-29) JEF 3 reps(23)

SPARROW, Grasshopper (15-29) JEF-TXPT 10/15(1) GD;
 JEF-TXPT 10/29(3) GD

SPARROW, LeConte's (28-28) JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM

SPARROW, Nelson's Sharp-tl. (28-29) JEF-TXPT 10/28(6) SM;
 JEF-TXPT 10/29(4) GD

SPARROW, Seaside (28-29) JEF 2 reps(5)

SPARROW, Song (28-29) JEF 2 reps(3)

SPARROW, Lincoln's (28-29) JEF 2 reps(20)

SPARROW, Swamp (22-29) JEF 3 reps(11)

SPARROW, White-throated (22-31) JEF 6 reps(18)

SPARROW, White-crowned (28-29) JEF-TXPT 10/28(1) SM;
 JEF-TXPT 10/29(5) GD

JUNCO, Dark-eyed (28-28) JEF-TXPT 10/28(2) SM

CARDINAL, Northern (1-28) JEF 4 reps(8)

GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (7-22) JEF 8 reps(68)

GROSBEAK, Blue (15-28) JEF-SW 10/15(1) JAW;
 JEF-SW 10/22(5) JAW; JEF-SRSP 10/28(6) SM

BUNTING, Indigo (5-28) JEF 8 reps(52)

BUNTING, Painted (22-22) JEF-SW 10/22(1) JAW

BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (1-28) JEF 3 reps(168)

GRACKLE, Common (14-14) JEF 1 rep(20)

GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (7-28) JEF 3 reps(193)

GRACKLE, Great-tailed (1-22) JEF 3 reps(364)

GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed (1-15) JEF 3 reps(415)

BLACKBIRD species (1-1) JEF 1 rep(250)

ORIOLE, Baltimore (7-7) JEF-SW 10/7(1) JG

FINCH, House (2-27) JEF-BMT 10/2(1) RHJ;
 JEF-BMT 10/6(1) RHJ; JEF-SW 10/8(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/9(1)
 RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/19(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/20(2) RHJ; JEF-
 BMT 10/22(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 10/27(1) RHJ

SPARROW, House (19-19) HAI 1 rep(12)

Number of Species 173
 Number of Individuals 6336

County Abbreviations:
 HAI—Hardin; JEF—Jefferson

Location Codes:
 BMT—Beaumont; MCFW—McFaddin NWR; NEDR—Nederland;
 PTA—Port Arthur; SILS—Silsbee; SRSP—Sea Rim State Park; SW—
 Sabine Woods; TP—Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87—Texas 87
 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP; TXPT—Road to Pilot Station at
 Texas Point

Observer Abbreviations:
 DV—Don Verser; GD—Gerald Duhon; HD—Howard Davis; HM—John
 Haynes and Steve Mayes; JAW—John Whittle; JG—Johnnie Green;
 JJW—John and Jana Whittle; KS—Ken Sztraky; LB—Lynn Barber;
 MCF—McFaddin and Texas Pt NWRs (Patrick Walther); RHJ—Rose
 Ann and Harrison Jordan; SM—Steve Mayes

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RARE BIRD ALERTS

Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various Internet based means of distribution.

The Texas-wide Rare Bird Alert, maintained by Houston Audubon Society, is available on their web-site at <http://www.houstonaudubon.org/> and each new alert is posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. The archives of this listserv can be accessed at <http://listserv.uh.edu/archives/tebirds.html> It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives.

Transcriptions of many current and recent email alerts are available on the 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 very early issues.

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