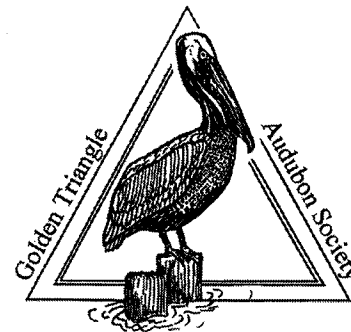


# *Brown Pelican*

**Scanned from Originals**

# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 13 No. 2

February 2007

**Membership Meeting  
Thursday, February 15, 2007  
6:30 PM, Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**Birdlife of Houston, Galveston and the Upper Texas Coast  
Ted Eubanks**

The focus of Ted Eubanks' presentation will be the recently published book of the above title, co-authored with Robert A. Behrstock and Ron J. Weeks. He will have copies available for sale and signing.

Ted, currently residing in Austin and Galveston, received a BA in Journalism from the University of Houston in 1978, and since 1984 has been involved in the founding and development of a series of businesses. Eubanks founded Fermata in 1992, and since that time has been engaged in studying and promoting experiential tourism and outdoor recreation as sustainable approaches to community revitalization.

He has served as president of the Houston Audubon Society, as president of the Texas Ornithological Society, and as a member of the board of directors of the National Audubon Society. Currently Ted serves on the board of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

As usual, the doors will be open no later than 6:30 p.m., but the talk will start at 7:15 p.m. approximately.

## Climate Change

Our editorial last month was very timely, it seems. The debate on climate change has very suddenly emerged as a leading current issue. Before we are tempted to use the local colder and much wetter than usual winter as a contra-indicator of "global warming," we should note that the effects of global warming are not spread uniformly. Global warming is likely to cause more frequent and more intense El Niño events, resulting in wetter winters along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States and warmer winters in the nation's midsection. There are also predictions that continuously warmer waters off Eastern Canada will disrupt the Gulf Stream and actually cause cooler temperatures in maritime Western Europe. Thus we prefer to use the term "Climate Change."

## The Brown Pelican

Vol. 13, No.2 February 2007

Golden Triangle  
Audubon Society

See Web Site for more  
information  
[www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org)

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## Calendar of Events

**Thursday February 15, 2007.**  
**Membership Meeting.** Speaker: Ted Eubanks on birds of the Upper Texas Coast. See page 1 for details

**February 16 through 19. Great Backyard Bird Count.** Help monitor the populations of backyard and other local birds, and watch the results graphically on the Internet as they are reported. Full details at available at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/) This site has all the details of how to submit a checklist. Results from last year are also available.

**Saturday February 17. Field Trip to Sheldon Lake State Park.** Sheldon Lake State Park has lake, marsh, some woodland and agricultural field habitats. Nancy and Don Fisher of the Friends of Sheldon Lake will be our hosts. Because there will be a large number of people at the Environmental Learning Center in the morning, we will meet instead at 8:30 a.m. at the maintenance area at 14320 Garrett Road. Normal travel time from the Golden Triangle should be about one hour 30 minutes to one hour 40 minutes. It is about 85 miles from Beaumont, and a little further from mid and south county.

From **Beaumont (and points north)**, the shortest route is to take Highway 90 to Dayton. From Dayton take Highway 90 west for about 23 or 24 miles to Beltway 8. Turn right (north) and proceed about two miles to Garrett Road. (If you come to C.E. King Parkway/Lake Houston Parkway, you have gone to far!) Turn right on Garrett Road and go about two miles to the maintenance area accessed by a gravel road on the right (south). Nancy and Don Fisher will meet us there. If you prefer IH-10 over US90, you can follow the directions below from Winnie.

From **south county**, take Highway 73 to Winnie, then IH10 west to Beltway 8 and turn north. After just under four miles and just before the US90 intersection, Beltway 8 ceases to be a freeway with a service road, and becomes just a divided highway with two lanes in each direction. Continue on Beltway 8 for two more miles and turn right onto Garrett Road. (If you come to

C.E. King Parkway/Lake Houston Parkway, you have gone to far!) Turn right on Garrett Road and go about two miles to the maintenance area accessed by a gravel road on the right (south). Nancy and Don Fisher will meet us there.

From **mid county**, take FM365 to IH-10, turn left (west), proceed to Beltway 8 and follow the directions given for south county above.

Nancy hopes to be able to have the rest rooms at the Maintenance Area open, but this is not guaranteed. It is recommended that you make a stop at a service station near the meeting point. Rest room stops will be arranged later in the morning.

**Saturday March 10. Marsh Madness at McFaddin NWR.** Activities focused on marsh activities and education for older children. Full details in next month's *Brown Pelican*

**Thursday March 15. Membership meeting.** Details in the next *Brown Pelican*.

**Saturday March 17. Field Trip.** Likely destination: Bolivar Flats. See next month's *Brown Pelican* for confirmation and details.

## Big Thicket Christmas Counts

Once again the Golden Triangle Audubon group participated in both Big Thicket National Preserve Christmas counts in a big way! Sherry Gibson, Steve Mayes, Ken Sztraky, and Curtis Hoagland were at the Visitor's Center bright and early for the Turkey Creek count. The Beech Creek count volunteers were Ellen Baker, Bruce Bishop, Howard Davis, Margie Aln, Bill Tarbox, Kathryn Walker, and Bruce Walker. Those attending **BOTH** counts were Dave Baker, Don Jeane, Rose Ann Jordan, Harrison Jordan, Jeff Pittman, and John Whittle. Thanks to everyone! We couldn't do it without you.

Rose Ann Jordan



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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 [estx@earthshare-texas.org](mailto:estx@earthshare-texas.org).

## Field Trip to Katy Prairie – January 20, 2007

The Golden Triangle Audubon Society's annual trip to the Katy Prairie is the longest distance field trip of the year being approximately two hours away from our usual Golden Triangle haunts. Consequently, when bad weather threatens on field trip day, many people think twice about traveling such a distance. This problem has hit the Katy Prairie field trip before and, unfortunately, the wet winter of early 2007 raised this problem again. Rain, wind and cold weather threatened to put a damper on the day's birding activities and this led to a small turnout for the field trip. Though the birding conditions were far from ideal on the day, four hardy birders made the trip anyway and reaped the benefits.

The Katy Prairie formerly stretched through much of Harris and Waller counties and hosted thousands (if not millions) of birds including uncountable numbers of wintering waterfowl, raptors and song birds. Though much of this prairie now lies under subdivisions and roads, enough remains to still put on a great birding show in the winter. The geese, eagles and sparrows may not come in the numbers of the past but they still come and this draws many birders out to find the specialties of the area. Those specialties include species like Bald Eagle, White-tailed Hawk, Harris's Sparrow and Ash-throated Flycatcher – all easier to find in the Katy Prairie area than in our own area. Rarities like Couch's Kingbird, Rusty Blackbird, Bewick's Wren and Ferruginous Hawk also turn up from time to time. It was for these species that the Golden Triangle Birders had come.

Starting out in the wooded confines of Bear Creek Park, some typical wintering and resident birds of the southeastern forests were noted. Pine Warblers were easy to find as were Eastern Bluebirds. A couple of Brown Creepers were appreciated along with Chickadees and Titmice (or is it Titmouses?). Vocal American Crows were obvious especially when they were being harassed by a (probable) Sharp-shinned Hawk. The show stoppers for the park were probably the Red-headed Woodpeckers seen. The group first located them by their somewhat mechanical sounding calls but the brilliant red, black and white plumage was much enjoyed when they were located. The multiple Merlins normally present in the park in winter are apparently absent this winter. The group had to settle for Gray Catbird, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Red-shouldered Hawk.

Moving out toward the more prairie-like areas (now mostly pastures and agricultural fields) a disturbing trend from previous trips continued. A stop at a woodland on Peek Road that normally hosts Great Horned Owls turned up nothing. Nothing that is except that the area would soon be converted to another subdivision for ever-sprawling Houston. A single field is a small loss but there are too many of these small losses happening year after year and they are not good for the birds (or the birders). The Katy Prairie Conservancy ([www.katyprairie.org](http://www.katyprairie.org)) does its best to protect some areas and they need all the help they can get.

Despite these issues, the prairie still produced lots of good birds. The flooded fields and ponds along Longenbaugh Road hosted many ducks including Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler and American Wigeon. Geese were,

as always in this area, easy to see with many flyovers of Snow Geese with smaller Ross's Geese mixed in (in ever increasing numbers). Greater White-fronted Geese were less numerous but still easily found. The group struck out on Canada/Cackling Geese but the sheer numbers of waterfowl were good to see after last year's very dry winter and poor waterfowl showing. Perhaps, the best waterfowl stop of the day was at Warren Ranch Lake. This lake hosted hundreds of birds this year including American Coot, Ring-necked Duck, Blue-winged Teal and Gadwall along with species such as Anhinga. Perhaps the best bird at Warren Lake was the immature Bald Eagle scoped out in a tree across the lake.

Speaking of raptors, the Katy Prairie always has a good supply. Red-tailed Hawks in many forms are some of the most obvious. The "Eastern" and "Fuertes" type Red-tails are the most typical of the upper Texas coast and both were seen on this day but the pale "Krider's" form and the very dark "Harlan's" Hawk were also seen well. Colorful White-tailed Hawks were seen several times on the day including a cooperative adult bird in flight on Jack Road. American Kestrels were easy to find and Crested Caracaras were seen on several occasions. Northern Harriers cruised low over nearly every wet field while Cooper's Hawks were less numerous but still appreciated.

Sparrows are a special point of interest for this trip and the group sought them out as best they could under difficult conditions. Unfortunately, the wind and cold weather kept most of the birds down and they seemed unwilling to come up for a look. Still, birds such as Savannah Sparrow were common and small numbers of Field, Chipping and Swamp Sparrows were seen (among others). In recent years, Harris's Sparrows have been quite easy to find on this trip. Such was not the case this year but with perseverance, the group managed good looks at one Harris's Sparrow in a flock of White-crowned Sparrows. Unfortunately, the hoped for Fox Sparrow did not put in an appearance.

Sparrows are not the only songbirds searched for (and found) on this trip. American Pipits were easily seen as were American Robins, numerous everywhere this year it seems. Eastern Phoebes were obvious while House Wren was less cooperative. Brewer's Blackbirds were found in good numbers usually in groups of Brown-headed Cowbirds. The group searched for the Great Kiskadees often seen in the area to no avail. Fortunately, the pair of Couch's Kingbirds on Penick Road showed off for the group and were found with little effort.

Lots of waterfowl, raptors and sparrows with a smattering of harder to find species – just another, typical day on the Katy Prairie. We may never again see it as it was but what remains can still be spectacular. Hopefully, it can be kept that way. More great birds await next years trip and maybe the weather will even cooperate then to allow even more birders to enjoy one of the best birding areas in Texas – the Katy Prairie.

The following species were noted on the trip:  
Greater White-fronted Goose (70), Snow Goose (731), Ross's Goose (35), Gadwall (47), American Wigeon (11), Mallard  
*(continued on page 7)*

## Bird Sightings – December 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:** Christmas counts uncovered a good number of unusual species during December. Reference to many of them was made in the accounts in last month's *Brown Pelican*. Fuller details of the very rare species are included here in this month's report. As is typical of December, we have comparatively few reports from the first half of the month. Perhaps because of the prolonged cold spell early in the month, lingering neotropical migrants were scarce this year. The Nashville Warbler reported from Sabine Woods on December 2 is probably the only report that falls into that category with any certainty. The Prairie Warbler, the Northern Waterthrush and the Rose-breasted Grosbeak are all probably birds wintering here.

GOOSE, White-fronted	(27-31)	JEF 4 reps(103)	
GOOSE, Snow	(2-31)	JEF 13 reps(37869)	
GOOSE, White	(2-2)	JEF 1 rep(1000)	
GOOSE, Ross's	(2-31)	JEF 12/2(4) JAW; JEF 12/9(25) JAW; JEF 12/10(25) JAW; JEF 12/27(8) JAW; JEF 12/31(5) SR04; JEF 12/31(2) SR08; JEF 12/31(8) SR10	
GOOSE, Cackling	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(11) SR10	
GOOSE, Canada	(28-31)	JEF 3 reps(67)	
GADWALL	(10-31)	JEF 4 reps(245)	
WIGEON, American	(31-31)	JEF 1 rep(7)	
MALLARD	(31-31)	JEF 2 reps(4)	
DUCK, Mottled	(27-31)	JEF 12/27(2) JAW; JEF 12/31(22) SR11A; JEF 12/31(2) SR01; JEF 12/31(8) SR04; JEF 12/31(2) SR05; JEF 12/31(6) SR07; JEF 12/31(2) SR10; JEF 12/31(65) SR13	
TEAL, Blue-winged	(10-31)	JEF 8 reps(173)	
SHOVELER, Northern	(10-31)	JEF 8 reps(799)	
PINTAIL, Northern	(10-31)	JEF 3 reps(2578)	
TEAL, Green-winged	(10-31)	JEF 6 reps(1546)	
CANVASBACK	(10-10)	JEF-TP 12/10(1) JAW	
DUCK, Ring-necked	(10-31)	JEF 3 reps(242)	
SCAUP, Greater	(10-10)	JEF-TP 12/10(2) JAW	
SCAUP, Lesser	(10-31)	JEF 9 reps(1210)	
SCAUP species	(31-31)	JEF 1 rep(90)	
SCOTER, Surf	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(14) SR10	
SCOTER, Black	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(3) SR10	
DUCK, Long-tailed	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR10	
BUFFLEHEAD	(31-31)	JEF 1 rep(1)	
GOLDENEYE, Common	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR01	
MERGANSE, Hooded	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(3) SR04; JEF 12/31(5) SR07	
MERGANSE, Red-breasted	(31-31)	JEF 5 reps(34)	
DUCK species	(31-31)	JEF 1 rep(168)	
DUCK, Ruddy	(10-31)	JEF 4 reps(325)	
LOON, Common	(31-31)	JEF 3 reps(5)	
GREBE, Pied-billed	(10-31)	JEF 8 reps(31)	
GREBE, Eared	(10-31)	JEF 2 reps(2)	
GREBE, <i>Aechmophorus</i>	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(2) SR07	
GANNET, Northern	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(10) SR10	
PELICAN, Amer. White	(31-31)	JEF 9 reps(971)	
PELICAN, Brown	(31-31)	JEF 8 reps(75)	
CORMORANT, Neotropical	(31-31)	JEF 9 reps(122)	
CORMORANT, Double-cr.	(10-31)	JEF 11 reps(93); TYL 1 rep(2)	
ANHINGA	(10-31)	JEF 5 reps(30)	
BITTERN, American	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(3) SR11A	
HERON, Great Blue	(2-31)	JEF 16 reps(99)	
EGRET, Great	(2-31)	JEF 15 reps(374)	
EGRET, Snowy	(2-31)	JEF 12 reps(211)	
HERON, Little Blue	(10-31)	JEF 6 reps(14)	
HERON, Tricolored	(10-31)	JEF 9 reps(55)	
EGRET, Cattle	(9-31)	JEF 2 reps(21)	
HERON, Green	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR04; JEF 12/31(1) SR05A	
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr.	(10-31)	JEF 2 reps(53)	
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(13) SR05; JEF 12/31(11) SR05A	
IBIS, White	(10-31)	JEF 9 reps(591)	
IBIS, White-faced	(27-31)	JEF 4 reps(21)	
IBIS, <i>Plegadis</i>	(10-31)	JEF 7 reps(663)	
SPOONBILL, Roseate	(31-31)	JEF 6 reps(81)	
VULTURE, Black	(2-31)	JEF 7 reps(40); TYL 2 reps(19)	
VULTURE, Turkey	(2-31)	JEF 12 reps(102); TYL 2 reps(36)	
OSPREY	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR11A; JEF 12/31(3) SR04; JEF 12/31(1) SR05; JEF 12/31(1) SR06; JEF 12/31(1) SR08; JEF 12/31(2) SR11; JEF 12/31(2) SR05A	
KITE, White-tailed	(31-31)	JEF 5 reps(10)	
HARRIER, Northern	(2-31)	JEF 15 reps(74)	
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	(31-31)	JEF 2 reps(7)	
HAWK, Cooper's	(8-31)	JEF-BMT 12/8(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 12/28(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/29(1) JAW; JEF 12/31(1) SR04; JEF 12/31(1) SR06; JEF 12/31(1) SR08	
ACCIPITER species	(23-23)	TYL 12/23(1) BCCBC	
HAWK, Harris's	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR05	
HAWK, Red-shouldered	(2-31)	JEF 12 reps(21); TYL 1 rep(2)	
HAWK, Red-tailed	(2-31)	JEF 16 reps(87); TYL 1 rep(1)	
HAWK, Red-tail. (Kriger's)	(2-2)	JEF 12/2(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/2(2) HM	
CARACARA, Crested	(2-31)	JEF-TX87 12/2(2) HM; JEF 12/27(1) JAW; JEF 12/31(1) SR08; JEF 12/31(1) SR05A; JEF 12/31(1) SR08A	
KESTREL, American	(2-31)	JEF 10 reps(85)	
MERLIN	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR06	
FALCON, Peregrine	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR11A; JEF 12/31(1) SR07	
RAIL, Clapper	(31-31)	JEF 5 reps(21)	
RAIL, Virginia	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR11A; JEF 12/31(3) SR07	
SORA	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) SR05A	
MOORHEN, Common	(31-31)	JEF 5 reps(42)	
COOT, American	(10-31)	JEF 11 reps(1471)	
CRANE, Sandhill	(2-27)	JEF 12/2(400) JAW; JEF 12/9(57) JAW; JEF 12/10(300) JAW; JEF 12/27(5) JAW	
PLOVER, Black-bellied	(2-31)	JEF 6 reps(117)	
PLOVER, Snowy	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(45) SR10	
PLOVER, Semipalmated	(31-31)	JEF 2 reps(7)	
PLOVER, Piping	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(8) SR07; JEF 12/31(4) SR10	
KILLDEER	(2-31)	JEF 12 reps(297); TYL 2 reps(12)	
AVOCET, American	(31-31)	JEF 2 reps(86)	
SANDPIPER, Spotted	(31-31)	JEF 3 reps(4)	
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	(2-31)	JEF 7 reps(53)	
WILLET	(31-31)	JEF 5 reps(83)	
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	(2-31)	JEF 4 reps(27)	
WHIMBREL	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(4) SR07	
CURLEW, Long-billed	(2-31)	JEF 4 reps(98)	
GODWIT, Marbled	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(50) SR07	
TURNSTONE, Ruddy	(31-31)	JEF 3 reps(19)	
SANDERLING	(31-31)	JEF 3 reps(335)	
SANDPIPER, Western	(31-31)	JEF 2 reps(28)	
SANDPIPER, Peep	(31-31)	JEF 2 reps(75)	
SANDPIPER, Least	(2-31)	JEF 7 reps(157)	
DUNLIN	(2-31)	JEF 6 reps(2526)	
SANDPIPER, Stilt	(31-31)	JEF 12/31(10) SR07	

DOWITCHER, Long-billed (2-9) JEF 2 reps(300)  
DOWITCHER species (31-31) JEF 1 rep(18)  
SNIPE, Wilson's (9-31) JEF 7 reps(76)  
WOODCOCK, American (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR08  
GULL, Laughing (10-31) JEF 13 reps(1146)  
GULL, Bonaparte's (31-31) JEF 1 rep(15)  
GULL, Ring-billed (28-31) JEF 11 reps(1834)  
GULL, Herring (31-31) JEF 9 reps(85)  
TERN, Caspian (31-31) JEF 6 reps(24)  
TERN, Common (31-31) JEF 12/31(8) SR07  
TERN, Forster's (31-31) JEF 7 reps(144)  
TERN, Royal (31-31) JEF 5 reps(48)  
PIGEON, Rock (2-31) JEF 8 reps(197)  
COLLARED-DOVE, Eur. (2-31) JEF 6 reps(37); TYL 1 rep(2)  
DOVE, White-winged (2-31) JEF 6 reps(506)  
DOVE, Mourning (2-31) JEF 9 reps(204); TYL 2  
reps(23)  
DOVE, Inca (23-31) JEF 1 rep(4); TYL 1 rep(4)  
OWL, Barn (2-31) JEF-SW 12/2(2) HM; JEF  
12/31(1) SR07; JEF 12/31(1) SR08; JEF 12/31(1) SR05A  
SCREECH-OWL, Eastern (26-28) JEF-NEDR 12/26(1) JFW;  
JEF-NEDR 12/28(1) JFW  
OWL, Great Horned (2-31) JEF-SW 12/2(1) HM; JEF  
12/31(2) SR05A; JEF 12/31(2) SR08A  
OWL, Burrowing (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR07  
OWL, Barred (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR05A  
WHIP-POOR-WILL (6-6) HAI 12/6(1) JCA  
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (1-30) JEF-BMT 12/1(1) RHJ; JEF-  
BMT 12/3(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/4(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/5(2)  
RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/5(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/7(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT  
12/9(2) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 12/9(3) JAW; JEF-BMT 12/10(1) RHJ;  
JEF-BMT 12/11(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/12(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT  
12/14(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/18(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/19(2)  
RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/28(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/30(2) RHJ  
KINGFISHER, Belted (9-31) JEF 12 reps(51)  
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (2-31) JEF 9 reps(13); TYL 2  
reps(11)  
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell. (5-31) JEF 7 reps(15); TYL 2  
reps(11)  
WOODPECKER, Downy (2-31) JEF 9 reps(32); TYL 2 reps(9)  
FLICKER, Northern (2-31) JEF 6 reps(18); TYL 2 reps(7)  
WOODPECKER, Pileated (23-23) TYL 2 reps(9)  
PHOEBE, Eastern (2-31) JEF 13 reps(98); TYL 2  
reps(15)  
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR04; JEF  
12/31(1) SR08  
KINGBIRD, Western (2-31) JEF-SRSP 12/2(1) HM; JEF  
12/31(1) SR08  
SHRIKE, Loggerhead (2-31) JEF 10 reps(72)  
VIREO, Blue-headed (2-31) JEF 6 reps(18); TYL 1 rep(1)  
JAY, Blue (2-31) JEF 11 reps(52); TYL 2  
reps(13)  
CROW, American (23-23) TYL 2 reps(6)  
SWALLOW, Tree (2-31) JEF 13 reps(618)  
CHICKADEE, Carolina (2-31) JEF 8 reps(32); TYL 1 rep(4)  
TITMOUSE, Tufted (2-23) JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(3)  
NUTHATCH, White-breasted (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR08  
CREEPER, Brown (23-31) JEF 12/31(3) SR05A; TYL  
12/23(1) BCCBC  
WREN, Carolina (2-31) JEF 3 reps(4); TYL 2 reps(9)  
WREN, House (2-31) JEF 5 reps(21); TYL 1 rep(6)  
WREN, Winter (2-2) JEF-SRSP 12/2(1) HM  
WREN, Sedge (31-31) JEF 12/31(6) SR11A; JEF  
12/31(17) SR07; JEF 12/31(3) SR10; JEF 12/31(1) SR05A  
WREN, Marsh (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR04; JEF  
12/31(1) SR06; JEF 12/31(2) SR10; JEF 12/31(2) SR11  
KINGLET, Golden-crowned (2-31) JEF-SW 12/2(5) HM; JEF  
12/31(3) SR01; JEF 12/31(2) SR04; JEF 12/31(1) SR05; JEF  
12/31(2) SR06; JEF 12/31(4) SR08; JEF 12/31(24) SR05A;  
TYL 12/23(3) BCCBC10; TYL 12/23(2) BCCBC01  
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (2-31) JEF 29 reps(154); TYL 2  
reps(27)  
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (10-31) JEF 7 reps(69)  
BLUEBIRD, Eastern (2-31) JEF 4 reps(30); TYL 2  
reps(46)  
THRUSH, Hermit (2-31) JEF 9 reps(30); TYL 2 reps(4)

ROBIN, American (2-31) HAI 1 rep(115); JEF 18  
reps(1772); TYL 2 reps(113)  
CATBIRD, Gray (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR01; JEF  
12/31(6) SR04; JEF 12/31(5) SR08; JEF 12/31(10) SR05A  
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (2-31) JEF 13 reps(96); TYL 2  
reps(9)  
THRASHER, Brown (1-31) JEF 19 reps(43); TYL 1 rep(2)  
STARLING, European (2-31) JEF 11 reps(394)  
PIBIT, American (2-31) JEF 7 reps(97)  
WAXWING, Cedar (9-31) JEF 5 reps(149); TYL 1 rep(5)  
WARBLER, Orange-crown. (2-31) JEF 13 reps(55); TYL 2  
reps(3)  
WARBLER, Nashville (2-2) JEF-SW 12/2(1) HM  
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (2-31) JEF 17 reps(401); TYL 2  
reps(71)  
WARBLER, Pine (1-31) JEF 27 reps(119); TYL 2  
reps(64)  
WARBLER, Prairie (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR06  
WARBLER, Palm (9-31) JEF 12/9(1) JAW; JEF  
12/31(1) SR01  
WARBLER, Black-and-wh. (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR05A  
WATERTHRUSH, Northern (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR08A  
YELLOWTHROAT, Common (31-31) JEF 8 reps(25)  
WARBLER, Wilson's (23-23) TYL 12/23(1) BCCBC10  
TANAGER, Summer (22-26) JEF-BMT 12/22(1) RHJ; JEF-  
BMT 12/25(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/26(1) RHJ  
TOWHEE, Eastern (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR08  
SPARROW, Chipping (2-31) JEF 4 reps(32); TYL 2  
reps(272)  
SPARROW, Field (2-31) JEF-SRSP 12/2(1) HM; JEF  
12/31(1) SR08; TYL 12/23(5) BCCBC10  
SPARROW, Field (2-31) JEF 2 reps(2); TYL 1 rep(5)  
SPARROW, Vesper (2-2) JEF 12/2(1) JAW  
SPARROW, Lark (2-2) JEF 12/2(1) JAW  
SPARROW, Savannah (2-31) JEF 14 reps(298); TYL 1  
rep(12)  
SPARROW, Grasshopper (2-2) JEF-SW 12/2(1) HM  
SPARROW, LeConte's (2-31) JEF 12/2(1) JAW; JEF  
12/31(4) SR11A; JEF 12/31(3) SR07  
SPARROW, Seaside (31-31) JEF 2 reps(7)  
SPARROW, Song (2-31) JEF 10 reps(21); TYL 1  
rep(50)  
SPARROW, Lincoln's (23-31) JEF 3 reps(7); TYL 1 rep(7)  
SPARROW, Swamp (10-31) JEF 12 reps(152); TYL 1  
rep(25)  
SPARROW, White-throated (1-31) JEF 25 reps(253); TYL 2  
reps(131)  
SPARROW, Harris's (9-9) JEF 12/9(1) JAW  
SPARROW, White-crowned (2-31) JEF 6 reps(35)  
JUNCO, Dark-eyed (2-31) JEF 3 reps(7); TYL 2 reps(34)  
CARDINAL, Northern (2-31) JEF 10 reps(59); TYL 2  
reps(17)  
GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (31-31) JEF 12/31(1) SR11A  
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (2-31) JEF 14 reps(4454)  
MEADOWLARK, Eastern (9-31) JEF 5 reps(60); TYL 1 rep(12)  
MEADOWLARK species (2-27) JEF 4 reps(41)  
BLACKBIRD, Brewer's (27-27) JEF 12/27(5) JAW  
GRACKLE, Common (2-31) JEF 11 reps(427); TYL 1  
rep(20)  
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (31-31) JEF 9 reps(434)  
GRACKLE, Great-tailed (2-31) JEF 10 reps(411)  
COWBIRD, Brown-headed (2-31) JEF 3 reps(45)  
FINCH, Purple (22-26) JEF-BMT 12/22(1) RHJ; JEF-  
BMT 12/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/25(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/26(1)  
RHJ  
FINCH, House (4-31) JEF 13 reps(26)  
GOLDFINCH, American (1-31) JEF 27 reps(433); TYL 2  
reps(286)  
SPARROW, House (9-31) JEF 9 reps(91)

Number of Species 194  
Number of Individuals 80819  
County Abbreviations:  
HAI-Hardin; JEF-Jefferson; TYL-Tyler  
(continued on page 6)

## Sightings (cont. from page 5)

### Location Codes:

BMT-Beaumont; NEDR-Nederland; 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

BCCBC01 and 10 - Beech Creek CBC areas 1 and 10; HM-John Haynes and Steve Mayes; JAW-John Whittle; JCA-John C. Arvin; JFW-Jana Whittle; JP-John Park; RHJ-Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SRxx - Sea Rim Area xx where xx represents the Area number.

## Details of Very Rare Species

### Long-tailed Duck - Sea Rim State Park - 31 December 2006

Seen by Levie Horton, Steve Mayes and Jeff Pittman in the surf off the beach at Sea Rim State Park during the Sea Rim CBC. Similar in size to nearby Surf Scoter, dark bill, very pale duck mottled with brown. Face white with some brown on cheek and top of head.

### Harris's Hawk - Sabine Pass - 31 December 2006

Seen by Don and Nancy Fisher, Sherrie Roden, Tex Wells and Jana Whittle in flight and perched on Backridge Road north of Sabine Pass on the Sea Rim CBC. A brown hawk, with red patch on front of wings; white rump and white tip of tail.

### White-breasted Nuthatch - Sabine Woods - 31 December 2006

Seen by Harrison Jordan and Bill Tarbox on the Sea Rim CBC clinging upside down on the underside of a branch 15 feet off the ground. Nuthatch with long pointed bill, dark head, pure white face and breast, no stripe on head.

### Rose-breasted Grosbeak - McFaddin NWR - 31 December 2006.

Seen by Patrick Walther and John Whittle seen in flight only on a portion of McFaddin NWR south of 10-mile cut on the Sea Rim CBC. Similar in size to Red-winged Blackbird but with massive bill. Dark above; red breast conspicuous in flight. Large white patches in wings.

## Johnson Bayou Christmas Bird Count

Ken Sztraky has provide the results of the Johnson Bayou Count, conducted on December 17, 2006. Noteworthy are the large numbers of ducks and sparrows. Unusual species included Blue Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting, both on Gray Estate property. Ken expresses thanks for the access provided by the Gray Estate. The Crested Caracara was on Deep Bayou Road.

Species seen: Greater White-fronted Goose (7); Gadwall (725); American Wigeon (4); Mallard (74); Mottled Duck (12); Blue-winged Teal (98); Northern Shoveler (1147); Northern Pintail (253); Green-winged Teal (1712); Greater Scaup (2); Lesser Scaup (350); Scaup species (10); Bufflehead (1); Ruddy Duck (254); Pied-billed Grebe (14); American White Pelican (31); Brown Pelican (4); Neotropic Cormorant (8); Double-crested Cormorant (39); Great Blue Heron (19); Great Egret (78); Snowy Egret (96); Little Blue Heron (3); Tricolored Heron (6); Green Heron (1); White Ibis (155); Plegadis species Ibis (192); Roseate Spoonbill (24); Black Vulture (2); Turkey Vulture (14); White-tailed Kite (6); Northern Harrier (13); Sharp-shinned Hawk (2); Cooper's Hawk (1); Red-shouldered Hawk (2); Red-tailed Hawk (31); Crested Caracara (1); American Kestrel (13); Merlin (1); Clapper Rail (6); Common Moorhen (20); American Coot (1200); Black-bellied Plover (3); Snowy Plover (5); Piping Plover (3); Killdeer (26); Black-necked Stilt (30); Greater Yellowlegs (6); Lesser Yellowlegs (1); Long-billed Curlew (1); Ruddy Turnstone (3); Sanderling (19); Least Sandpiper (30); Dunlin (5); Long-billed Dowitcher (9); Wilson's Snipe (7); Laughing Gull (373); Bonaparte's Gull (2); Ring-billed Gull (207); Herring Gull (4); Caspian Tern (5); Common Tern (2); Forster's Tern (214); Royal Tern (23); Rock Pigeon (2); White-winged Dove (2);

Mourning Dove (34); Barn Owl (3); Great Horned Owl (1); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1); Belted Kingfisher (13); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (13); Downy Woodpecker (4); Northern Flicker (25); Eastern Phoebe (34); Loggerhead Shrike (5); White-eyed Vireo (2); Blue-headed Vireo (13); Blue Jay (7); Tree Swallow (87); Brown Creeper (2); House Wren (20); Winter Wren (3); Sedge Wren (17); Marsh Wren (1); Golden-crowned Kinglet (34); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (60); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (21); Hermit Thrush (23); American Robin (27); Gray Catbird (3); Northern Mockingbird (10); Brown Thrasher (16); European Starling (155); Cedar Waxwing (46); Orange-crowned Warbler (18); Yellow-rumped Warbler (68); Pine Warbler (5); Black-and-white Warbler (2); Common Yellowthroat (12); Wilson's Warbler (1); Chipping Sparrow (1); Field Sparrow (1); Savannah Sparrow (685); LeConte's Sparrow (15); Seaside Sparrow (1); Song Sparrow (75); Lincoln's Sparrow (24); Swamp Sparrow (727); White-throated Sparrow (539); White-crowned Sparrow (413); Dark-eyed Junco (5); Northern Cardinal (28); Blue Grosbeak (2); Indigo Bunting (2); Red-winged Blackbird (1102); Eastern Meadowlark (33); Common Grackle (1); Boat-tailed Grackle (88); Great-tailed Grackle (80); Brown-headed Cowbird (85); American Goldfinch (71). 121 Species.

Participants: John Haynes, Don Jeane, Steve Mayes, Jeff Pittman, Ken Sztraky, John Whittle.

## Orange County Christmas Bird Count

Ken Sztraky has provided results of the Orange County Christmas Bird Count, conducted on January 1, 2007. He expresses thanks to Entergy for access to the land surrounding the Power Plant in Bridge City.

Species seen: Greater White-fronted Goose (23); Snow Goose (242); Ross's Goose (6); Wood Duck (26); Gadwall (20); Blue-winged Teal (10); Canvasback (2); Redhead (2); Ring-necked Duck (19); Lesser Scaup (21); Bufflehead (11); Hooded Merganser (6); Red-breasted Merganser (41); Common Loon (1); Pied-billed Grebe (20); American White Pelican (49); Brown Pelican (10); Neotropic Cormorant (55); Double-crested Cormorant (23); Anhinga (5); Great Blue Heron (22); Great Egret (59); Snowy Egret (16); Little Blue Heron (5); Tricolored Heron (1); Green Heron (1); Black-crowned Night-Heron (18); White Ibis (9); Plegadis species Ibis (13); Black Vulture (8); Turkey Vulture (18); Osprey (9); Northern Harrier (3); Cooper's Hawk (3); Red-shouldered Hawk (14); Red-tailed Hawk (11); American Kestrel (13); Clapper Rail (1); Common Moorhen (23); American Coot (270); Semipalmated Plover (5); Killdeer (21); Spotted Sandpiper (4); Greater Yellowlegs (19); Willet (10); Lesser Yellowlegs (1); Western Sandpiper (20); Least Sandpiper (28); "Peep" Sandpiper (115); Dunlin (2); Long-billed Dowitcher (1); Dowitcher species (100); Wilson's Snipe (8); Laughing Gull (223); Bonaparte's Gull (10); Ring-billed Gull (240); Herring Gull (3); Caspian Tern (2); Forster's Tern (117); Royal Tern (1); Black Skimmer (3); Rock Pigeon (101); Eurasian Collared-Dove (3); White-winged Dove (1); Mourning Dove (102); Inca Dove (8); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1); Rufous Hummingbird (1); Belted Kingfisher (21); Red-bellied Woodpecker (40); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (10); Downy Woodpecker (33); Northern Flicker (6); Pileated Woodpecker (12); Eastern Phoebe (37); Loggerhead Shrike (6); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue-headed Vireo (3); Blue Jay (32); American Crow (24); Fish Crow (1); Tree Swallow (160); Carolina Chickadee (45); Tufted Titmouse (12); Brown-headed Nuthatch (3); Brown Creeper (4); Carolina Wren (37); House Wren (12); Winter Wren (2); Marsh Wren (1); Golden-crowned Kinglet (8); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (100); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2); Eastern Bluebird (47); Hermit Thrush (23); American Robin (853); Gray Catbird (16); Northern Mockingbird (95); Brown Thrasher (8); European Starling (59); American Pipit (4); Cedar Waxwing (42); Orange-crowned Warbler (24); Yellow-rumped Warbler (280); Pine Warbler (79); Common Yellowthroat (5); Eastern Towhee (1); Chipping Sparrow (25); Field Sparrow (5); Vesper Sparrow (1); Savannah Sparrow (182); Song Sparrow (13); Swamp Sparrow (29); White-throated Sparrow (80); Dark-eyed Junco (7); Northern Cardinal (72); Red-winged Blackbird (446); Eastern Meadowlark (22); Common Grackle (708); Boat-tailed Grackle (113); Great-tailed Grackle (71); American Goldfinch (165); House Sparrow (40). Species:121.

Participants: Bruce Bishop, Gary Kelley, Steve Mayes, Sherry Gibson, Royce Pendergast, Jeff Pittman, Sherrie Roden, Ken Sztraky, Jana and John Whittle

# The Ivory-bill Chronicles, Chapter 5

John Arvin, Research Coordinator, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

(Posted to the *TEXBIRDS Listserv* January 8, 2007)

The prime search season in the Big Thicket area is now upon us, and the next three months will be very busy ones. The deciduous trees along the Neches and Trinity Rivers are about as bare as they get all year, so visibility in the bottoms is as good as it gets. Since the Texas search is part of a larger, multi-state effort we had to modify our methodology somewhat to comply with the standardization of the search set forth by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. It was decided that searches should be conducted in a manner following a Habitat Occupancy Model developed by ecologists at the University of Georgia. This model requires that the search areas be divided into 2 km square "patches" (roughly 500 acres) and that a random sample of these patches be visited at least three times for searches of at least 4 hours duration. The process of establishing the patches is tedious and time-consuming. Beth Wright, the search team leader, has taken this task nearly to completion which required teaching herself to use a complex computer program.

I knew that conditions on the ground in the search areas were going to be difficult due to the tremendous amount of Hurricane Rita-downed canopy trees (75% along the Neches). In fact conditions are even more difficult than I imagined. In the single growing season that has passed since the storm an amazing amount of early secondary successional vegetation (especially vines, and seemingly especially those vines that have thorns) has begun to choke the canopy gaps. This natural process will proceed for decades and will eventually fill in the large gaps in the forest with a dense growth of young trees, brush, and vines, vastly changing their nature for a very long time. What that means in terms of bird populations is that species requiring dense brush like White-eyed Vireos will be greatly increased at the expense of canopy species like Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos. In that sense it is a lucky thing that we are searching now rather than five years from now when the secondary vegetation will be even more impenetrable than it is already. Nevertheless we are forced to take the path of least resistance making a really systematic search impossible.

The meandering nature of the searches required by the realities of the terrain means that getting lost is even a greater danger than it would be under normal conditions. The crew has developed expert navigation skills using GPS and compass, an absolute requirement for anyone entering these almost completely road-less, trail-less areas. Coupled with the ongoing hunting season (forget camouflage; we have to wear brilliant "hunter orange" vests) there is a certain amount (hopefully small) of physical danger involved in this often exhausting work. The good news is that the mosquitoes (thick when we started the season in early November) succumbed to the first frost. Nor have snakes, poisonous or otherwise, been seen during searches. And then there's the climate. While much of the rest of the state has withered under severe drought, the southeastern corner has enjoyed abundant rainfall since midsummer. High water in the Neches River and its associated system of innumerable sloughs, lakes, and bayous

is a good news-bad news situation. Areas that were accessible on foot with rubber boots now require chest waders, and areas that required chest waders are only accessible by boat. On the other hand some streams with excessive amounts of portaging required during low flow periods are now navigable as long as they are not actually in flood.

We are receiving on loan from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology one of their Autonomous Recording Units (ARU) and a couple of time-lapse video cameras that can be programmed to take one still frame at whatever interval is desired. The ARU will be deployed in an area that has been identified as some of the best old growth forest. It will record whatever sounds are made within a certain radius for a period of two weeks. At the end of that time it must be shipped back to Cornell for analysis of the recordings. Unfortunately this analysis is quite expensive so we are very limited in how much use we can make of this technology. The cameras will be set up on interesting looking woodpecker cavities or bark foraging signs. With limited manpower we cannot "stake out" these kinds of possible woodpecker signs so the cameras will enable us to monitor these sites while searchers work elsewhere.

## Field Trip report *(continued from page 3)*

(2), Blue-winged Teal (4), Northern Shoveler (245), Northern Pintail (800), Green-winged Teal (1030), Ring-necked Duck (515), Pied-billed Grebe (1), Double-crested Cormorant (1), Anhinga (1), Great Blue Heron (5), Great Egret (10), Snowy Egret (3), Plegadis species Ibis (130), Black Vulture (34), Turkey Vulture (10), Bald Eagle (1), Northern Harrier (16), Cooper's Hawk (2), Accipiter species (1), Red-shouldered Hawk (3), White-tailed Hawk (3), Red-tailed Hawk (35), Red-tailed (Krider's) Hawk (1), Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk (3), Crested Caracara (6), American Kestrel (8), American Coot (28), Sandhill Crane (16), Killdeer (31), Greater Yellowlegs (9), Lesser Yellowlegs (5), Least Sandpiper (5), Dowitcher species (150), Wilson's Snipe (2), Mourning Dove (32), Dove Species (2), Belted Kingfisher (1), Red-headed Woodpecker (3), Red-bellied Woodpecker (6), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1), Downy Woodpecker (4), Northern Flicker (1), Eastern Phoebe (8), Couch's Kingbird (2), Loggerhead Shrike (27), Blue-headed Vireo (3), Blue Jay (3), American Crow (6), Carolina Chickadee (10), Tufted Titmouse (6), Brown Creeper (2), Carolina Wren (3), House Wren (1), Golden-crowned Kinglet (1), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4), Eastern Bluebird (43), Hermit Thrush (1), American Robin (1284), Gray Catbird (1), Northern Mockingbird (31), European Starling (133), American Pipit (37), Orange-crowned Warbler (1), Yellow-rumped Warbler (20), Pine Warbler (44), Chipping Sparrow (3), Field Sparrow (6), Vesper Sparrow (2), Savannah Sparrow (23), Song Sparrow (3), Lincoln's Sparrow (1), White-throated Sparrow (2), Harris's Sparrow (1), White-crowned Sparrow (38), Northern Cardinal (6), Red-winged Blackbird (49), Eastern Meadowlark (23), Meadowlark species (18), Brewer's Blackbird (38), Common Grackle (155), Great-tailed Grackle (1), Brown-headed Cowbird (200), American Goldfinch (1), House Sparrow (5)

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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