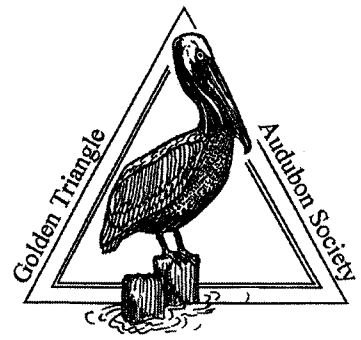


# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 14 No. 2

February 2008

**Membership Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 21, 2008**  
**7:00 PM, "The Green Barn"**  
**adjacent to the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**A Community-based Web Site System for Birding**  
**Jeff Pittman**

Jeff, who teaches at Lamar University in the Department of Earth and Space Sciences, will be presenting at our February meeting. The GTAS website has gone through several iterations over the years, at one time showing the bird classification, along with photographs of different species taken by our members, especially Don Jeane. A new system is now in place on the GTAS website that will restore and add exciting capabilities to our site. Jeff will demonstrate how to log in to the web site and use the system to add bird sightings, upload photographs, and communicate with other GTAS members. This functionality will be important as we start using our website to greater effect all during the year, to augment efforts during Christmas Bird Counts and Migration Counts, and to help with Audubon's efforts in bird conservation and monitoring. A most important part of the new web site is the facility for adding locations, described by simple latitude and longitude coordinates. Location coordinates may be specified for various content items, allowing for search queries that focus on specific areas. The presentation will include an example of how bird sightings made on an afternoon foray to a local area would be added to the web site, and how such reporting is coordinated with the long-standing and ongoing efforts of GTAS to keep local bird sightings records.

Jeff's interests, in addition to web site programming for such local groups as GTAS and the Big Thicket Association, include research on dinosaurs and geology, which is his educational training. Recently, he has trained for research in field biology, and is studying an area near Woodville called Rush Creek, with Randall Terry, botanist at Lamar.

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. sharp.

# The Brown Pelican

Vol. 14, No.2 February 2008

## Golden Triangle Audubon Society

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

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## Calendar of Events

**Saturday, February 9th, 2008.**  
McFaddin and Texas Point Refuges will be holding a volunteer work day on McFaddin NWR, time probably 8:00 a.m. start. The tasks will be to pick up trash, collect old sand fence, transplant stabilizing dune grasses and put up new sand fence.

**Thursday February 21, 2008.**  
**Membership Meeting.** See page 1 for details.

### Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Jim and Jennifer Armacost, Needa Reed, Jean Hollingsworth, Lynn Otto, John Park and Debbie Bradshaw for providing the refreshments at the January meeting. **We need volunteers to bring all items for February and the remaining spring 2008 meetings.** Please do not wait until the last minute to volunteer! 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 far in advance as possible.** Please help if you can!

**Saturday February 23. 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. Last year, we saw an all white Red-tailed Hawk, two Harris Hawks and also added Sprague's Pipit to the park bird list!

This year, unlike last year, we will meet at the Environmental Learning Center at 8:15 a.m. The Environmental Learning Center is at 15315 Beaumont Highway (Business 90) at Park Road 138. 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 continue on Highway 90 west for a little under 20 miles to the intersection with FM2100 in Crosby. In Crosby, take the Beaumont Highway (Business 90, not the "main" US 90) and proceed about 5 miles to the park entrance to the right. If you reach Beltway 8 you have gone too far.

From south county, take Highway 73 to Winnie, then IH10 west to Beltway 8 and turn north. After just under four miles cross (under?) US 90. Go another half mile or so and turn right on Business 90 (Beaumont Highway) and proceed less than a mile to the park entrance on the left.

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

The park does not open until 8:00 a.m. The park telephone number is 281-456-2800.

### Saturday, March 8, 2008

Marsh Madness at McFaddin NWR, 10:00 a.m. to -2:00 p.m.. There will be a raptor show, beach seining, retriever demonstrations, bird ID, and tons more for the whole family. (If you would like to help, contact Stephanie Martinez at [stephanie\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:stephanie_martinez@fws.gov) or 409-252-4311 ext. 30)

**Saturday March 15, 2008. Sabine Woods Work Day.** We will be preparing the Woods for the upcoming spring migration season. We are particularly in need of some help from someone with enough plumbing experience to help us with the backflow preventer and other various valves in our system. Otherwise, most of what we need to do will be routine trail maintenance which mostly involves trimming back vegetation. Join us at the woods any time after 7:30 a.m. We normally work until about noon. We plan to provide refreshments.



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

**Thursday March 20. Membership Meeting.** Don Jean on "Alaska." More details in next month's *Brown Pelican*.

**Saturday March 22. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats.**

**Important Note:** *Galveston County operates a parking permit program on the Bolivar Peninsula. Any one can drive on the beach for free. But if you park on the beach you must have a parking permit on your windshield. The fee for the permit is \$10.00 a year obtainable from most merchants on the Bolivar Peninsula.*

Meet at the vehicle barrier at 8:30 a.m. From Winnie, take TX 124 south to High Island. At the shoreline, turn right (west) on TX 87 and proceed through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you reach the intersection where Loop 108 turns right (north). Turn left (the opposite way to Loop 108) along Rettilon Road. At the beach, if conditions permit, turn right (west) about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. It takes at least one and a half hours to drive from the Golden Triangle; more if you bird on the way! We will leave the vehicle barrier at about 8:45 a.m., although the group will be visually obvious on the flats should you be a few minutes later than that. The opportunity will exist to visit High Island on the way back. Some walking is necessary on this field trip. How much depends on how much mud flat is exposed, and this depends on both the tide and the winds that have prevailed over the previous day or so.

**Saturday April 19. Field Trip to Sabine Woods and Sabine Pass Area.** Full details in future issues.

**Saturday May 10. North American Migration Count.** Put this county wide count onto your calendar!

## 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. The date prefixed by AU is the date your National Audubon Society subscription expires. 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.

## Cattail Marsh Closure Update

Cattail Marsh is currently closed to the public during a major rehabilitation project. This project will involve the reconstruction of each cell one at a time, with a view to eliminating areas of deep water so that vegetation can be reestablished. Because the work can only be accomplished during dry periods, the project is estimated to take three to five years to complete. We have spoken with the Director of the Water Reclamation Department, Mr. George Newsome, and expressed our desire to work out some public access, at least during the September through April periods. We do understand that seven day a week access may not always be possible, and that there will be a period when the cell immediately inside the gate (Cell 2) is being worked on that may well require complete closure.

## New National Forest Rules for Off Highway Vehicle Travel

The following notice has been received from Fred S. Salinas, Forest Supervisor, National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, 415 S. First Street, Suite 110, Lufkin, TX 75901-3801, Phone 936-639-8501

On January 4, 2008, I signed the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Non-significant Amendment #9 to the 1996 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (*Plan*)

to incorporate the final Travel Management Rule (*Rule*) regulations (36 CFR Parts 212, 251, 261, and 295). This non-significant *Plan* amendment will prohibit the unrestricted cross-country use of motor vehicles on the Angelina, Davy Crockett, and Sabine National Forests in accordance with the *Rule* regulations by restricting the use of motor vehicles to designated roads, trails, and areas. This decision will be implemented upon the public release of the first Motor Vehicle Use Maps designating the roads, trails, and areas open for motor vehicle use on the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (36 CFR 212.56).

This decision will prohibit people from continuing to ride off-highway vehicles (OHV) cross-country on areas of the Angelina, Davy Crockett, and Sabine National Forests for recreational purposes, including hunting. In an effort to provide more off-highway riding opportunities, the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas will continue collaborations with the public and interested groups. We are currently working with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and with Trails Unlimited to conduct a preliminary analysis to identify areas on the National Forests in Texas most suitable for the development of OHV trails. This information will be used to further develop proposals for future OHV trails.

Copies of the Decision Notice - FONSI are enclosed for those who submitted comments during the decision-making process. Copies of the Decision Notice - FONSI, Legal Notice, and Environmental Assessment and Appendices for this *Plan* amendment are available on our website at [http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/texas/planning/nepa\\_index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/texas/planning/nepa_index.shtml) or from this office.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217.3

## Reports on Orange County and Beech Creek Christmas Bird Counts.

We had planned to include reports on these counts in this issue. However, lack of space has forced us to hold this over until next month.

# Bird Sightings – December 2007

**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:** The December report includes two of the local Christmas Bird Counts, Turkey Creek and Sea Rim State Park. The

intense scrutiny that these counts provide always ensures that we have a lot of species to report in December. We described the unusual birds on these counts in last month's *Brown Pelican*. Perhaps the most unusual sighting was an adult Golden Eagle, found in west Jefferson County on the last day of the year. Others trying to relocate this bird found three subadult Bald Eagles within a mile of where the Golden Eagle had been seen. As will be fully reported next month, the adult Golden Eagle was seen several times subsequently, but even more amazing, a subadult Golden Eagle was also seen several times! We have not condensed the reports of various species of hummingbird, although we may have to in future years. Wintering hummingbirds are being reported much more frequently along the Gulf coast of Texas and Louisiana. To some extent, this may be that more people are aware that they are there. But it may also be that the planting of plants liked by hummingbirds, and the maintenance of feeders throughout the winter has increased the number of hummingbirds successfully wintering along the coastal belt.

<b>WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous</b> (29-29)	JEF-SRSP 12/29(6)	<b>ANHINGA</b> (29-29)	JEF 12/29(4) SR5; JEF 12/29(7) SR5A; JEF-MUR 12/29(3) SR4
SR10		<b>HERON, Great Blue</b> (8-31)	JEF 17 reps(63)
<b>GOOSE, White-fronted</b> (29-31)	JEF 4 reps(61)	<b>EGRET, Great</b> (8-31)	JEF 12 reps(778); TYL 1 rep(1)
<b>GOOSE, Snow</b> (4-31)	HAI 2 reps(121); JEF 12 reps(21650)	<b>EGRET, Snowy</b> (8-29)	JEF 9 reps(440)
<b>GOOSE, Ross's</b> (29-31)	JEF 12/29(24) SR5A; JEF-MCFW 12/29(3) SR11A; JEF-MUR 12/29(1) SR4; JEF 12/31(10) JAW	<b>HERON, Little Blue</b> (8-29)	JEF 6 reps(30)
<b>GOOSE, Cackling</b> (31-31)	JEF 12/31(7) JAW	<b>HERON, Tricolored</b> (8-29)	JEF 7 reps(66)
<b>GOOSE, Canada</b> (29-29)	JEF 1 rep(57)	<b>HERON, Green</b> (29-29)	JEF-MUR 12/29(3) SR4
<b>DUCK, Wood</b> (15-15)	HAI 12/15(1) TC05	<b>NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr</b> (29-29)	JEF 1 rep(21)
<b>GADWALL</b> (29-29)	JEF 5 reps(396)	<b>NIGHT-HERON, Yell-cr</b> (15-29)	JEF 12/29(4) SR5; JEF 12/29(6) SR5A; TYL 12/15(1) TC02
<b>WIGEON, American</b> (29-29)	JEF 2 reps(27)	<b>IBIS, White</b> (8-29)	JEF 6 reps(1079)
<b>MALLARD</b> (29-31)	JEF 2 reps(6)	<b>IBIS, Plegadis</b> (29-31)	JEF 6 reps(2588)
<b>DUCK, Mottled</b> (29-29)	JEF-MCFW 12/29(10) SR11A; JEF-MUR 12/29(35) SR13N; JEF-MUR 12/29(23) SR4; JEF-PI 12/29(2) SR1	<b>SPOONBILL, Roseate</b> (29-29)	JEF 5 reps(108)
<b>TEAL, Blue-winged</b> (29-29)	JEF 4 reps(52)	<b>VULTURE, Black</b> (8-29)	HAI 4 reps(28); JEF 4 reps(90); TYL 2 reps(19)
<b>SHOVELER, Northern</b> (29-29)	JEF 3 reps(135)	<b>VULTURE, Turkey</b> (8-31)	HAI 6 reps(42); JEF 12 reps(82); TYL 3 reps(34)
<b>PINTAIL, Northern</b> (29-31)	JEF 4 reps(594)	<b>OSPREY</b> (8-29)	JEF 7 reps(9)
<b>TEAL, Green-winged</b> (29-29)	JEF 5 reps(465)	<b>KITE, White-tailed</b> (4-29)	JEF 8 reps(14)
<b>CANVASBACK</b> (29-29)	JEF-MUR 12/29(800)	<b>EAGLE, Bald</b> (9-31)	JEF-TP 12/9(2) SM; JEF 12/30(1) RC; JEF 12/31(1) JAW; JEF 12/31(3) JHH
SR4; JEF-PI 12/29(50) SR1		<b>HARRIER, Northern</b> (8-31)	JEF 16 reps(53)
<b>REDHEAD</b> (8-8)	JEF-MCFW 12/8(3) JAW	<b>HAWK, Sharp-shinned</b> (15-29)	JEF 3 reps(5); TYL 1 rep(1)
<b>DUCK, Ring-necked</b> (29-29)	JEF 2 reps(19)	<b>HAWK, Cooper's</b> (16-31)	HAI-SILS 12/19(1) MG; JEF 12/16(2) JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR5A; JEF-MUR 12/29(1) SR4; JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10; JEF 12/31(1) WWW
<b>SCAUP, Greater</b> (8-29)	JEF-MCFW 12/8(1)	<b>HAWK, Red-shouldered</b> (15-31)	HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 7 reps(7); TYL 1 rep(3)
JAW; JEF-PI 12/29(3) SR1		<b>HAWK, White-tailed</b> (16-31)	JEF 12/16(1) JAW; JEF 12/31(2) JAW; JEF 12/31(2) SM
<b>SCAUP, Lesser</b> (29-29)	JEF 4 reps(1094)	<b>HAWK, Red-tailed</b> (1-31)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 15 reps(82); TYL 1 rep(1)
<b>SCAUP species</b> (29-29)	JEF 2 reps(736)	<b>EAGLE, Golden</b> (31-31)	JEF 12/31(1) WWW
<b>SCOTER, White-winged</b> (29-29)	JEF-PI 12/29(1) SR1	<b>CARACARA, Crested</b> (29-31)	JEF-MUR 12/29(1) SR4; JEF-SRSP 12/29(2) SR10; JEF-SW 12/29(1) SR8; JEF 12/31(1) JAW
<b>BUFFLEHEAD</b> (29-29)	JEF 2 reps(25)	<b>KESTREL, American</b> (8-31)	HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 9 reps(55); TYL 2 reps(4)
<b>GOLDENEYE, Common</b> (29-29)	JEF-MUR 12/29(5)	<b>MERLIN</b> (29-31)	JEF 12/29(1) SR5; JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10; JEF-SW 12/29(2) SR8; JEF 12/31(1) WWW
SR13N; JEF-PI 12/29(1) SR1		<b>FALCON, Peregrine</b> (29-29)	JEF 12/29(1) SR7; JEF-MUR 12/29(1) SR13N
<b>MERGANSER, Hooded</b> (29-29)	JEF-MUR 12/29(9) SR4	<b>RAIL, Clapper</b> (29-29)	JEF 3 reps(4)
<b>MERGANSER, Red-breasted</b> (29-29)	JEF 6 reps(43)	<b>RAIL, King</b> (29-29)	JEF-MUR 12/29(2) SR4
<b>DUCK species</b> (29-29)	JEF 1 rep(38)	<b>MOORHEN, Common</b> (8-29)	JEF 8 reps(101)
<b>DUCK, Ruddy</b> (29-29)	JEF 2 reps(70)	<b>COOT, American</b> (29-29)	JEF 8 reps(4656)
<b>BOBWHITE, Northern</b> (15-29)	HAI 1 rep(9); JEF 1 rep(1)		
<b>LOON, Common</b> (29-29)	JEF 2 reps(4)		
<b>GREBE, Pied-billed</b> (8-29)	JEF 9 reps(39)		
<b>GREBE, Horned</b> (29-29)	JEF-MUR 12/29(1) SR4		
<b>GREBE, Eared</b> (8-29)	JEF 3 reps(36)		
<b>GANNET, Northern</b> (29-29)	JEF 12/29(1) SR7		
<b>PELICAN, Amer. White</b> (29-29)	JEF 10 reps(696)		
<b>PELICAN, Brown</b> (29-29)	JEF 9 reps(93)		
<b>CORMORANT, Neotropic</b> (8-29)	JEF 9 reps(309)		
<b>CORMORANT, Double-crest.</b> (29-29)	JEF 9 reps(400)		
<b>CORMORANT, Species</b> (29-31)	JEF 3 reps(176)		

CRANE, Sandhill (31-31) JEF 12/31(12) JAW; JEF 12/31(50) SM  
PLOVER, Black-bellied (8-29) JEF 7 reps(144)  
PLOVER, Snowy (8-29) JEF-MCFW 12/8(11)  
JAW; JEF 12/29(10) SR10X; JEF-PI 12/29(1) SR1; JEF-SRSP 12/29(20) SR10  
PLOVER, Semipalmated (8-29) JEF 5 reps(30)  
PLOVER, Piping (8-29) JEF-MCFW 12/8(3)  
JAW; JEF 12/29(10) SR7  
KILLDEER (8-31) HAI 1 rep(16); JEF 13  
reps(116); TYL 2 reps(19)  
STILT, Black-necked (29-29) JEF 2 reps(27)  
AVOCET, American (29-29) JEF 3 reps(78)  
SANDPIPER, Spotted (29-29) JEF 2 reps(2)  
YELLOWLEGS, Greater (8-31) JEF 9 reps(90)  
WILLET (8-29) JEF 7 reps(98)  
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (29-29) JEF 1 rep(1)  
YELLOWLEGS species (29-29) JEF 1 rep(30)  
WHIMBREL (29-29) JEF 12/29(3) SR7; JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10  
CURLEW, Long-billed (29-31) JEF 4 reps(80)  
GODWIT, Marbled (29-29) JEF 12/29(3) SR7  
TURNSTONE, Ruddy (29-29) JEF 2 reps(8)  
SANDERLING (8-29) JEF 6 reps(213)  
SANDPIPER, Western (29-29) JEF 5 reps(60)  
SANDPIPER, Least (29-29) JEF 4 reps(24)  
DUNLIN (29-29) JEF 4 reps(425)  
SANDPIPER, Stilt (29-29) JEF-MUR 12/29(7)  
SR13N  
DOWITCHER, Short-billed (29-29) JEF 12/29(1) SR7  
DOWITCHER, Long-billed (31-31) JEF 1 rep(100)  
DOWITCHER species (29-31) JEF 2 reps(85)  
SNIPE, Wilson's (29-29) JEF 5 reps(10)  
WOODCOCK, American (15-15) HAI 12/15(1) TC05  
GULL, Laughing (8-29) JEF 9 reps(406)  
GULL, Bonaparte's (8-29) JEF 2 reps(3)  
GULL, Ring-billed (8-31) JEF 13 reps(1021)  
GULL, Herring (8-29) JEF 6 reps(21)  
TERN, Caspian (8-29) JEF 6 reps(21)  
TERN, Common (29-29) JEF-SRSP 12/29(5)  
SR10  
TERN, Forster's (8-29) JEF 11 reps(386)  
TERN, Royal (29-29) JEF 7 reps(148)  
PIGEON, Rock (16-29) HAI 1 rep(71); JEF 3  
reps(97)  
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (29-31) JEF 3 reps(7)  
DOVE, White-winged (16-29) JEF 6 reps(15)  
DOVE, Mourning (2-31) HAI 7 reps(146); JEF 9  
reps(213); TYL 2 reps(4)  
OWL, Barn (29-29) JEF 12/29(1) SR5A;  
JEF-SW 12/29(1) SR8  
OWL, Great Horned (8-29) HAI-SILS 12/16(1) MG;  
HAI-SILS 12/20(1) MG; JEF-SW 12/8(1) JAW; JEF 12/29(2)  
SR5; JEF 12/29(6) SR5A; JEF-SW 12/29(1) SR8  
OWL, Barred (15-15) HAI 12/15(1) TC05  
HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chin. (20-31) JEF-BMT 12/20(1) RHJ;  
JEF-BMT 12/22(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 12/25(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR  
12/26(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/27(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/30(2)  
JAW; JEF-BMT 12/31(1) RHJ  
HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tailed (25-25) JEF-NEDR 12/25(1) JJW  
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (12-27) JEF-BMT 12/12(1) RHJ;  
JEF-BMT 12/16(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT  
12/20(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/21(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/24(1)  
RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/27(1) RHJ  
HUMMINGBIRD species (23-31) JEF-NEDR 12/23(1)  
JFW; JEF-NEDR 12/28(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) WWW  
KINGFISHER, Belted (8-31) JEF 12 reps(43)  
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (1-30) HAI 9 reps(17); JEF 3  
reps(4); TYL 2 reps(2)  
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (13-29) HAI 3 reps(2); JEF 4  
reps(7); TYL 2 reps(5)  
WOODPECKER, Downy (1-29) HAI 6 reps(12); JEF 8  
reps(39); TYL 2 reps(2)  
WOODPECKER, Hairy (30-30) HAI-SILS 12/30(1)  
MG

FLICKER, Northern (1-31) HAI 18 reps(44); JEF 4  
reps(16); TYL 1 rep(4)  
WOODPECKER, Pileated (1-22) HAI 6 reps(9); TYL 1  
rep(1)  
PHOEBE, Eastern (1-31) HAI 12 reps(18); JEF 10  
reps(64); TYL 1 rep(6)  
SHRIKE, Loggerhead (8-31) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 11  
reps(57)  
VIREO, White-eyed (15-15) TYL 12/15(1) TC02  
VIREO, Blue-headed (15-29) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 4  
reps(12)  
JAY, Blue (15-30) HAI 4 reps(16); JEF 7  
reps(39); TYL 2 reps(15)  
CROW, American (15-15) HAI 3 reps(91); TYL 2  
reps(18)  
CROW, species (15-29) JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 1  
rep(7)  
SWALLOW, Tree (8-31) JEF 13 reps(358)  
CHICKADEE, Carolina (1-31) HAI 9 reps(71); JEF 5  
reps(16); TYL 2 reps(9)  
TITMOUSE, Tufted (1-29) HAI 12 reps(63); JEF 2  
reps(2); TYL 2 reps(7)  
NUTHATCH, Red-breasted (29-29) HAI-SILS 12/29(2) MG;  
JEF 12/29(1) SR5A  
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (15-15) TYL 12/15(7) TC02  
CREEPER, Brown (27-27) HAI-SILS 12/27(1) MG  
WREN, Carolina (1-29) HAI 9 reps(33); JEF 2  
reps(3); TYL 2 reps(10)  
WREN, House (8-29) JEF 7 reps(16); TYL 1  
rep(1)  
WREN, Sedge (8-29) JEF-MCFW 12/8(1)  
JAW; JEF 12/29(1) SR5A; JEF 12/29(2) SR7; JEF-MCFW  
12/29(1) SR11A; JEF-SRSP 12/29(3) SR10  
WREN, Marsh (29-29) JEF-MUR 12/29(1) SR4  
KINGLET, Golden-crowned (15-29) HAI 12/15(2) TC14; HAI-  
BTTC 12/15(2) TC04; JEF 12/29(2) SR5A; JEF-MUR 12/29(3)  
SR4; JEF-SRSP 12/29(2) SR10; JEF-SW 12/29(15) SR8  
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (3-31) HAI 15 reps(37); JEF 15  
reps(122); TYL 1 rep(6)  
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (8-29) JEF 6 reps(85)  
BLUEBIRD, Eastern (1-31) HAI 7 reps(60); JEF 2  
reps(10); TYL 2 reps(49)  
THRUSH, Hermit (15-29) HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 3  
reps(4)  
ROBIN, American (15-31) HAI 3 reps(1907); JEF 4  
reps(28); TYL 2 reps(498)  
CATBIRD, Gray (15-29) HAI 12/15(1) TC05; HAI-  
BTTC 12/15(2) TC04; HAI-SILS 12/19(1) MG; JEF-MUR  
12/29(6) SR4; JEF-SRSP 12/29(1) SR10  
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (1-31) HAI 7 reps(19); JEF 10  
reps(31); TYL 2 reps(7)  
THRASHER, Brown (1-29) HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 2  
reps(9)  
STARLING, European (8-31) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 11  
reps(528)  
PIPIT, American (29-31) JEF 3 reps(7)  
WAXWING, Cedar (15-29) HAI 1 rep(32); JEF 1  
rep(1)  
WARBLER, Orange-crowned (1-31) HAI 18 reps(50); JEF 12  
reps(55)  
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (1-31) HAI 15 reps(45); JEF 12  
reps(361); TYL 2 reps(46)  
WARBLER, Pine (3-31) HAI 17 reps(56); JEF 8  
reps(51); TYL 2 reps(37)  
YELLOWTHROAT, Common (8-29) JEF 9 reps(30)  
SPARROW, Chipping (1-31) HAI 23 reps(512); JEF 1  
rep(1); TYL 2 reps(89)  
SPARROW, Field (15-15) HAI 12/15(1) TC05; TYL  
12/15(2) TC02  
SPARROW, Vesper (16-29) JEF 12/16(4) JAW; JEF-  
SRSP 12/29(1) SR10  
SPARROW, Savannah (8-31) JEF 12 reps(270)  
SPARROW, Nelson's Sharp-t. (29-29) JEF 1 rep(1)  
SPARROW, Seaside (29-29) JEF 2 reps(6)

(continued on page 7)

## Field Trip to West Harris County - 19 January 2008

The Golden Triangle Audubon's annual trip to the Katy Prairie started out cold and wet which has been the norm for this trip in recent years. But, also the norm for recent years, the weather would eventually clear allowing for great birding. The trip started at Randall's Grocery (as always) so that the cold birders could fuel up on Starbucks Coffee and hot chocolate before venturing into the weather. Caffeine seems to be the fuel of choice for birders worldwide.

After Randall's, the group headed for Bear Creek Park. This wooded island surrounded by suburbia produces a lot of good winter birds every year. This year, as has sometimes been the case in the past, the park was largely flooded and some areas were not accessible. This park is, apparently, also used as a flood control area and all the water from the surrounding neighborhoods drains towards it. Still, many of the common birds were still visible. Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice were evident and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Orange-crowned Warblers put in appearances. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were easily seen while Yellow-rumped Warblers were less numerous. The woodpecker family was well represented with Red-bellied, Downy, Pileated and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker all seen by the birders. Yellow Pine Warblers and azure Eastern Bluebirds were also appreciated as they were numerous in the park.

Certain birds appear in Bear Creek Park year after year and are always worth looking for. Merlins are sometimes numerous in the park but only one was seen on this trip, though it was very cooperative and was well seen. Red-breasted Nuthatch has been seen often this winter but, on this day, none was seen (though a distant bird was heard). Part of this could be because some of the prime locations to look for them were flooded and difficult to access. The group checked all the available Sycamore and Sweetgum trees for Purple Finches (seen recently in the park) but to no avail.

From the park, the birders headed for the Williams residence in a nearby subdivision. Their yard has hosted an amazing variety of hummingbirds this winter and they have been kind enough to allow birders (including us) into their yard to look for them. The group was lucky enough to see the star of the show, an adult male Allen's Hummingbird that has established a winter territory in this back yard. This species is extremely similar to the more common Rufous Hummingbird but has a greener back. But, since some Rufous also have green backs, the only way to tell the two species apart for sure is in the hand and this bird had previously been captured, banded and its identity confirmed. The bird gave several good looks to the group as it fed at a feeder in the back corner of the yard. An immature bird of the Rufous/Allen's complex was also well seen.

Heading out from the land of wintering hummingbirds, the group headed for Longenbaugh Road to look for a couple of other scarce upper Texas coast birds. Again, the group was lucky and scored both species easily. The first was a female Pyrrhuloxia that was feeding in a yard near Bear Creek. This close relative of the more familiar Northern Cardinal is normally a species of the deserts and only rarely shows up in our neck of the woods. The bird was amazingly cooperative and everyone got great looks. The other species looked for at

the spot was Harris's Sparrow and it was also cooperative. Several of these, largest of our sparrows, were hanging out with some White-crowned Sparrows near a wood pile and (eventually) gave good looks to all.

Longenbaugh also has large wetland areas dedicated for waterfowl and fields containing other interesting birds and the group scoped these areas out as well. The wetlands held Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal and American Coot. American Wigeon were surprisingly numerous. Unlike past years, no Bald Eagles were seen haunting the flocks of waterfowl. The fields contained numerous Long-billed Curlew, Brewer's Blackbirds and American Pipits. Other species seen along this road included Sharp-shinned Hawk, Vesper Sparrow and a two distant White-tailed Hawks.

There is a certain spot near Paul Rushing Park that has, over the last few years, hosted several Great Kiskadees. These large, colorful flycatchers are normally thought of as south Texas birds but have begun to spread up toward the upper Texas coast in recent years. Every year, the Golden Triangle birders have looked for these birds and every year they have failed to put in an appearance. But this year, we finally got lucky with, not one, but two excellent species of flycatcher. First to appear was a cooperative Ash-throated Flycatcher. It allowed great looks giving everyone a chance to see the field marks that separate this species from the others in its difficult genus. Then, finally, the Kiskadees were heard and seen. The distinctive call for which they are named allowed the group to quickly track them down and get great looks. The Kiskadees called and dove from perch to perch and put on a nice show.

But the day was not yet done as there were several good areas yet to explore. Warren Ranch Lake was a little disappointing as it contained many fewer waterfowl (and subsequently, many fewer raptors hanging around) than in past years. Nevertheless, several duck species including Mallard and Gadwall were seen along with a distant Anhinga. Mathis Road was more productive as the group found Crested Caracara, Chipping Sparrow, a small flock of Sandhill Cranes (flying overhead), hundreds of Brewer's Blackbirds and a covey of a dozen Northern Bobwhite (not that easy to find anymore). Other area roads produced birds like Greater White-fronted Geese, American Pipit, Winter Wren and numerous more Crested Caracaras and Brewer's Blackbirds.

The day ended on Pattison Road with group being serenaded by the calls of King Rails while getting distant looks a probable Short-eared Owl. Even though we missed a few of the interesting birds that had been seen there recently (Prairie Falcon, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk) it was still another successful birding adventure to the Katy Prairie. Unfortunately, with Houston ever expanding in this area, these birding habitats are severely threatened. Any birder who loves exploring this region for its avian riches should consider donating to the Katy Prairie Conservancy to help them with their mission of preserving this special place for generations to come.

The following species were recorded on the trip: Greater White-fronted Goose (111); White Goose (100); Gadwall (27); American Wigeon (50); Mallard (5); Northern

Shoveler (125); Northern Pintail (250); Green-winged Teal (25); Scaup species (1); Northern Bobwhite (12); Pied-billed Grebe (1); Double-crested Cormorant (25); Anhinga (1); Great Blue Heron (5); Great Egret (9); Plegadis species Ibis (36); Black Vulture (6); Turkey Vulture (14); Northern Harrier (8); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Cooper's Hawk (1); Red-shouldered Hawk (2); White-tailed Hawk (3); Red-tailed Hawk (18); Crested Caracara (17); American Kestrel (3); Merlin (2); King Rail (2); American Coot (25); Sandhill Crane (6); Killdeer (29); Greater Yellowlegs (2); Lesser Yellowlegs (20); Long-billed Curlew (70); Dowitcher species (12); Wilson's Snipe (1); Eurasian Collared-Dove (3); White-winged Dove (4); Mourning Dove (1); Short-eared Owl (1); Rufous Hummingbird (1); Allen's Hummingbird (1); *Selasphorus* Hummingbird (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1); Downy Woodpecker (4); Pileated Woodpecker (2); Eastern Phoebe (5); Ash-throated Flycatcher (1); Great Kiskadee (3); Loggerhead Shrike (14); Blue Jay (2); American Crow (2); Carolina Chickadee (3); Tufted Titmouse (2); House Wren (1); Winter Wren (1); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1); Eastern Bluebird (40); Northern Mockingbird (5); European Starling (105); American Pipit (11); Cedar Waxwing (14); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Yellow-rumped Warbler (7); Pine Warbler (12); Chipping Sparrow (50); Vesper Sparrow (3); Savannah Sparrow (57); Lincoln's Sparrow (1); Harris's Sparrow (3); White-crowned Sparrow (10); Northern Cardinal (1); Pyrrhuloxia (1); Eastern Meadowlark (1); Meadowlark species (22); Brewer's Blackbird (610); Great-tailed Grackle (12); Brown-headed Cowbird (3); American Goldfinch (3); House Sparrow (2); 83 species.

## Great Backyard Bird Count February 15–18, 2008

Your chance to take part in the eleventh Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) comes up in a few days. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to have fun and help us find out where the birds are this winter. Read on for new and exciting features of this year's event.

### What's New This Year?

Check out the GBBC website ([www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)) for improved features, including:

- Ability to submit YouTube bird videos. The best videos will be posted on the GBBC website
- Expanded sparrow identification page
- New bird call identification game for kids
- New FAQ section and narrated GBBC overview

### Spread the Word

We hope you'll spread the word this year by encouraging your friends to participate. You can forward this email to them or direct them to visit the website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). Remember: the GBBC is fun, free, and helps birds!

### Submit Photos to the online Gallery and Photo Contest

During the count, take digital photos of birds (and bird watchers!) and submit them to the GBBC website.

### Your Counting Counts

In 2007, GBBC participants made history, breaking records for the number of birds reported and number of checklists submitted. Participants sent in more than 80,000 checklists tallying over 11 million birds of 613 species. Last year, as a result of your counts, we discovered that many bird species had already started their spring migrations in February—earlier than in decades past. Your counts help us build a long-term record of where people are finding birds and how many birds there are. Although your bird counts need to take place from February 15-18, you can submit data as late as **March 1, 2008**. If you have any questions, please contact [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org) or [cornellbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:cornellbirds@cornell.edu).

### Bird Sightings *(continued from page 5)*

SPARROW, Song	(29-29)	JEF 3 reps(9)
SPARROW, Lincoln's	(29-29)	JEF 3 reps(7)
SPARROW, Swamp	(8-29)	JEF 9 reps(59)
SPARROW, White-throated	(13-31)	HAI 1 rep(14); JEF 9
reps(21); TYL 1 rep(3)		
SPARROW, White-crowned	(15-31)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4
reps(23)		
JUNCO, Dark-eyed	(15-15)	TYL 1 rep(5)
CARDINAL, Northern	(1-31)	HAI 20 reps(509); JEF 9
reps(33); TYL 2 reps(25)		
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	(4-29)	JEF 11 reps(2706)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	(15-29)	HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 3
reps(4)		
MEADOWLARK species	(16-31)	JEF 2 reps(15)
GRACKLE, Common	(16-29)	JEF 4 reps(73)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	(8-29)	JEF 12 reps(448)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed	(8-31)	JEF 5 reps(141)
GRACKLE, Gt./Boat tailed.	(29-29)	JEF 5 reps(680)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	(16-31)	JEF 4 reps(11001)
FINCH, House	(13-31)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 12
reps(15)		
GOLDFINCH, American	(12-31)	HAI 5 reps(77); JEF 15
reps(82); TYL 1 rep(12)		
SPARROW, House	(14-30)	HAI 2 reps(8); JEF 8
reps(57)		
<b>Number of Species</b>		<b>181</b>
<b>Number of Individuals</b>		<b>73886</b>

### County Abbreviations:

HAI — Hardin; JEF — Jefferson; TYL — Tyler

### Location Codes:

BMT — Beaumont; BTTC — Big Thicket NP - Turkey Creek Unit; GROV — Groves; MCFW — McFaddin NWR; MUR — J. D. Murphree WMA; NEDR — Nederland; PI — Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; 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

### Observer Abbreviations:

JAW — John Whittle; JFW — Jana Whittle; JHH — John H. Haynes; JJW — John and Jana Whittle; JP — John Park; MG — Melanie Goetsell; RC — Richard Carey; RHJ — Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SR1 — Sea Rim CBC Area 1; SR2 — Sea Rim CBC Area 2; SR4 — Sea Rim CBC Area 4; SR5 — Sea Rim CBC Area 5; SR5A — Sea Rim CBC Area 5A; SR6 — Sea Rim CBC Area 6; SR7 — Sea Rim CBC Area 7; SR8 — Sea Rim CBC Area 8; SR10 — Sea Rim CBC Area 10; SR10E — Sea Rim CBC Area 10East; SR10X — Sea Rim CBC Area 10 Extra; SR11A — Sea Rim CBC Area 11A; SR11B — Sea Rim CBC Area 11B; SR13N — Sea Rim CBC Area 13N; SM — Steve Mayes; SR — Sherrie Roden; TC01 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 1; TC02 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 2; TC03 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 3; TC04 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 4; TC05 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 5; TC14 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 14; WWW — John and Jana Whittle, Tex Wells.

# NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

## Membership Form

To join the National Audubon Society, please complete this form and return with Introductory Membership fee of \$20 (payable to the National Audubon Society, or indicate you wish to be billed) to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, TX 77627-1292. To use this form to give a membership as a gift, please complete the form and indicate your name in the appropriate space. Payment should accompany gift memberships.

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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/texbirds.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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