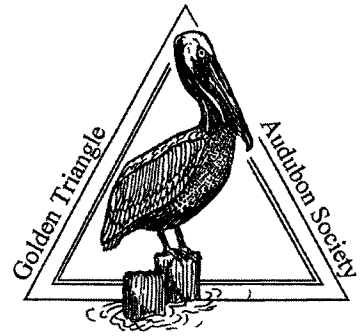


# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 14 No. 3

March 2008

**Membership Meeting  
Thursday, March 20, 2008  
7:00 PM, "The Green Barn"  
Adjacent to the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont  
  
Alaska  
Pat and Don Jeane**

As many of you will know, Pat and Don Jeane spent last summer in Alaska. They will show us some of the birds, other wildlife, scenery and wildflowers that they saw during their trip. Their explorations included St. Paul Island in the Pribilof Group, far out in the Bering Sea and noted for its cliffs with nesting seabirds including Tufted and Horned Puffins, three species of Auklet, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, Red-faced and Pelagic Cormorants, and Black-legged and Red-legged Kittiwakes. They also visited Fairbanks, Denali National Park and Mt. McKinley, the Kenai Peninsula south of Anchorage, and the Valdez area. In these areas there are, of course, Ptarmigans (the state bird of Alaska) as well as many other species unfamiliar on the Texas coast.

One of Don's photographs won the first place ribbon in the State Fair of South Texas. One of the door prizes will be a print of that photograph.

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

## **Sabine Woods — Work Day to Prepare for Spring Migration**

On Saturday, March 15th, the ides of March, we will be holding a work day at Sabine Woods to prepare for the upcoming spring migration season. We will start at about 7:30 a.m., and normally work until about noon. We will provide light refreshments.

The Woods look to be in good shape, with no major problems. We will, as always, need to trim vegetation along the sides of the trails, sweep the boardwalks and do other similar relatively light work. There are a few places where a chainsaw would quickly improve the habitat or the view. How much mowing will be possible will depend on how wet it is, but we hope to be able to do at least the main trails. We would also like to do a little habitat improvement in the newer area of oaks in the west, cutting excess grape vines, and pruning lower limbs off some of the oaks. All will be most welcome. Anyone with plumbing experience involving backflow preventers will be very valuable. The most generally useful tools are long-handled pruning shears, so please bring any you may have, as we have very few. Bow saws are also useful in working on the newer oaks. Sabine Woods is on the north side of Highway 87, 4.1 miles west of the stop sign in Sabine Pass. Contact John Whittle (409-722-4193 or [john.whittle@lamar.edu](mailto:john.whittle@lamar.edu)) for any additional information.

## Bird Sightings – January 2008

**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:** Normally, January is a "quiet" month. Not this month! The listings are much longer normal for three reasons. We received a lot of reports, and we thank everyone for them. The results of two local Christmas Counts are included. And the list contains much of note that we were reluctant to condense. First, we must mention the eagles, following on from last month. Not only the pair of Bald

Eagles that is nesting again this year close to FM105 southeast of Vidor and already has two fast-growing chicks, but several on early January Christmas Counts at Beech Creek and in Orange County, and the continuing presence of Bald and Golden Eagles in west Jefferson County. The focal point for eagle sightings has been the "South China Prairie" (the area either side of South China Road from just south of China to Lawhon Road and along Lawhon Road east and west of South China Road. The immature Golden Eagle has been seen more frequently than the adult, but most of the Bald Eagle sightings this month have been adult birds. With all the attention the South China Prairie has seen as a result of the eagles, it is perhaps not surprising that there are other birds to report from the area. Sandhill Cranes have been fairly regular in the area, although not in the same numbers as in some previous years. As we have noted before, Crested Caracaras are becoming quite common and there is evidence of nesting in that area. Less obvious, but noteworthy none-the-less, have been an unusually high numbers of Vesper Sparrows in the same general area. Were it not for the "Prairie," we would probably be using this space to remark on the continued increase in wintering hummingbirds, the presence of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finches, and the scoters (all three species) off McFaddin Beach

<b>GOOSE, Gtr. White-fronted</b>	(1-13)	JEF 4 reps(350); ORA 1 rep(8)
<b>GOOSE, Snow</b>	(1-28)	HAI 2 reps(141); JEF 5 reps(6902); ORA 1 rep(486)
<b>GOOSE, White</b>	(1-13)	JEF 6 reps(15000)
<b>GOOSE, Ross's</b>	(1-12)	JEF 1/6(9) JAW; JEF 1/12(1) JAJW; ORA 1/1(7) OCCB
<b>GOOSE, Cackling</b>	(6-6)	JEF 1/6(12) JAW
<b>GOOSE, Canada</b>	(6-6)	JEF 1 rep(1)
<b>DUCK, Wood</b>	(1-5)	ORA 1/1(23) OCCB; TYL 1/5(16) BECB
<b>GADWALL</b>	(1-6)	JEF 1 rep(20); ORA 1 rep(4); TYL 1 rep(3)
<b>WIGEON, American</b>	(1-5)	ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(2)
<b>MALLARD</b>	(1-12)	JEF 1 rep(8); ORA 1 rep(4); TYL 1 rep(2)
<b>DUCK, Mottled</b>	(1-26)	JEF-MCFW 1/26(2) MCF; ORA 1/1(2) OCCB
<b>TEAL, Blue-winged</b>	(1-6)	JEF 1 rep(5); ORA 1 rep(6)
<b>SHOVELER, Northern</b>	(1-12)	JEF 2 reps(21); ORA 1 rep(12)
<b>PINTAIL, Northern</b>	(6-26)	JEF 6 reps(1439)
<b>TEAL, Green-winged</b>	(5-5)	TYL 1 rep(15)
<b>CANVASBACK</b>	(5-6)	JEF-PI 1/6(200) SM; TYL 1/5(5) BECB
<b>REDHEAD</b>	(6-26)	JEF-PI 1/6(6) SM; JEF-MCFW 1/26(5) MCF
<b>DUCK, Ring-necked</b>	(1-1)	ORA 1 rep(200)
<b>SCAUP, Greater</b>	(26-29)	JEF-MCFW 1/26(14) MCF; JEF-MCFW 1/29(15) RHJ
<b>SCAUP, Lesser</b>	(1-26)	JEF 1 rep(300); ORA 1 rep(8); TYL 1 rep(1)
<b>SCAUP species</b>	(6-6)	JEF 1 rep(20)
<b>SCOTER, Surf</b>	(13-26)	JEF-MCFW 1/13(35) JM; JEF-MCFW 1/22(62) OW; JEF-MCFW 1/26(1) MCF
<b>SCOTER, White-winged</b>	(13-26)	JEF-MCFW 1/13(1) JM; JEF-MCFW 1/22(2) OW; JEF-MCFW 1/26(2) MCF
<b>SCOTER, Black</b>	(13-26)	JEF-MCFW 1/13(15) JM; JEF-MCFW 1/22(13) OW; JEF-MCFW 1/26(32) MCF
<b>BUFFLEHEAD</b>	(1-27)	JEF 2 reps(33); ORA 1 rep(14)
<b>GOLDENEYE, Common</b>	(6-12)	JEF-PI 1/6(1) SM; JEF-PI 1/12(1) HM
<b>MERGANSEr, Hooded</b>	(1-5)	ORA 1/1(18) OCCB; TYL 1/5(1) BECB
<b>MERGANSEr, Red-breasted</b>	(1-6)	JEF 1 rep(300); RA 1 rep(82)

<b>DUCK, Ruddy</b>	(1-1)	ORA 1 rep(4)
<b>LOON, Common</b>	(1-6)	JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 1 rep(1)
<b>GREBE, Pied-billed</b>	(1-5)	JAS 1 rep(13); ORA 1 rep(36); TYL 1 rep(9)
<b>GREBE, Horned</b>	(6-6)	JEF-PI 1/6(8) SM
<b>PELICAN, Amer. White</b>	(1-1)	JEF 1 rep(4); ORA 1 rep(32)
<b>PELICAN, Brown</b>	(1-29)	JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 3 reps(85)
<b>CORMORANT, Neotropic</b>	(1-13)	JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(99)
<b>CORMORANT, Double-crested</b>	(1-5)	JAS 1 rep(9); JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 1 rep(27); TYL 1 rep(59)
<b>CORMORANT, Species</b>	(1-5)	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(1)
<b>ANHINGA</b>	(1-5)	ORA 1/1(1) OCCB; TYL 1/5(1) BECB
<b>HERON, Great Blue</b>	(1-26)	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(15); ORA 1 rep(19); TYL 1 rep(3)
<b>EGRET, Great</b>	(1-31)	HAI 4 reps(5); JAS 1 rep(25); JEF 9 reps(90); ORA 1 rep(42); TYL 1 rep(31)
<b>EGRET, Snowy</b>	(1-15)	JAS 2 reps(11); ORA 1 rep(29)
<b>HERON, Little Blue</b>	(1-5)	ORA 1 rep(10); TYL 1 rep(5)
<b>HERON, Tricolored</b>	(1-1)	ORA 1 rep(4)
<b>EGRET, Cattle</b>	(5-13)	JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(1)
<b>NIGHT-HERON, Black-crown.</b>	(1-1)	ORA 1 rep(19)
<b>IBIS, White</b>	(1-15)	JAS 1 rep(17); JEF 3 reps(310); ORA 1 rep(11); TYL 1 rep(27)
<b>IBIS, Plegadis</b>	(13-20)	JEF 2 reps(100)
<b>SPOONBILL, Roseate</b>	(1-1)	ORA 1/1(6) OCCB
<b>VULTURE, Black</b>	(1-21)	HAI 6 reps(30); JEF 4 reps(12); ORA 1 rep(11); TYL 1 rep(50)
<b>VULTURE, Turkey</b>	(1-28)	HAI 11 reps(32); JAS 1 rep(48); JEF 7 reps(90); ORA 1 rep(37); TYL 1 rep(39)
<b>OSPREY</b>	(1-12)	ORA 1/1(11) OCCB; ORA-TX87 1/12(1) JRP
<b>KITE, White-tailed</b>	(4-16)	JEF 3 reps(5)
<b>EAGLE, Bald</b>	(1-15)	JAS-MDSP 1/5(2) BECB; JAS-MDSP 1/15(3) SG; JEF 1/5(1) GD; JEF 1/12(1) JAJW; JEF 1/15(1) RHJ; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB; ORA 1/14(1) SBE; TYL 1/5(1) BECB
<b>HARRIER, Northern</b>	(1-20)	JEF 9 reps(75); ORA 1 rep(3)
<b>HAWK, Sharp-shinned</b>	(1-2)	JEF-BMT 1/1(1) RHJ; JEF 1/2(1) JJW; ORA 1/1(2) OCCB
<b>HAWK, Cooper's</b>	(5-20)	HAI-SILS 1/6(1) MG; JEF 1/13(1) SM; JEF-BMT 1/13(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/20(1) RHJ; TYL 1/5(1) BECB

**ACCIPITER species** (4-22) HAI-SILS 1/4(1) MG; HAI-VCSP 1/22(1) SG; TYL 1/5(1) BECB  
**HAWK, Red-shouldered** (1-24) HAI 7 reps(12); JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(5); ORA 2 reps(5); TYL 1 rep(17)  
**HAWK, White-tailed** (12-15) JEF 1/12(1) JA; JW; JEF 1/15(1) RHJ  
**HAWK, Red-tailed** (1-29) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 16 reps(151); ORA 1 rep(13); TYL 1 rep(4)  
**EAGLE, Golden** (8-13) JEF 1/8(1 ad) JP; JEF 1/9(1 ad) JHH; JEF 1/11(1 imm) SR; JEF 1/12(1 ad) HM; JEF 1/12(1 imm) JAJW; JEF 1/13(1 imm) JP  
**CARACARA, Crested** (1-13) JEF-BMT 1/1(1) RHJ; JEF 1/2(2) JJW; JEF 1/12(1) HM; JEF-TX87 1/12(1) HM; JEF-TX87 1/13(2) JP  
**KESTREL, American** (1-20) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 10 reps(133); ORA 1 rep(10); TYL 1 rep(10)  
**MERLIN** (1-20) HAI-SILS 1/14(1) MG; HAI-SILS 1/20(1) MG; JEF 1/13(1) SM; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**FALCON, Peregrine** (13-13) JEF 1/13(1) SM  
**RAIL, Virginia** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**SORA** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**MOORHEN, Common** (5-5) TYL 1 rep(1)  
**COOT, American** (1-6) JAS 1 rep(71); JEF 1 rep(100); ORA 1 rep(215); TYL 1 rep(451)  
**CRANE, Sandhill** (6-31) JEF 1/6(35) JAW; JEF 1/7(300) JP; JEF 1/8(300) JP; JEF 1/10(120) JAW; JEF 1/12(280) JAJW; JEF 1/12(300) JP; JEF 1/13(200) SM; JEF 1/31(200) JP  
**PLOVER, Black-bellied** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(1)  
**PLOVER, Semipalmated** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(1)  
**KILLDEER** (1-20) HAI 1 rep(7); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 7 reps(156); ORA 1 rep(126); TYL 1 rep(19)  
**STILT, Black-necked** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(150)  
**SANDPIPER, Spotted** (1-1) JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(1)  
**YELLOWLEGS, Greater** (1-20) JEF 5 reps(242); ORA 1 rep(5)  
**YELLOWLEGS, Lesser** (1-20) JEF 2 reps(27); ORA 1 rep(46)  
**CURLEW, Long-billed** (2-20) JEF 6 reps(282)  
**SANDPIPER, Western** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(10)  
**SANDPIPER, Peep** (12-20) JEF 2 reps(70)  
**SANDPIPER, Least** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(71)  
**DUNLIN** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(2)  
**SANDPIPER, Stilt** (1-1) ORA 1/1(2) OCCB  
**DOWITCHER, Short-billed** (1-1) ORA 1/1(3) OCCB  
**DOWITCHER, Long-billed** (1-12) JEF 3 reps(215); ORA 1 rep(445)  
**DOWITCHER species** (10-20) JEF 2 reps(250)  
**SNIFE, Wilson's** (1-1) JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 1 rep(1)  
**WOODCOCK, American** (22-22) HAI-VCSP 1/22(1) SG  
**GULL, Laughing** (1-1) JEF 1 rep(5); ORA 1 rep(144)  
**GULL, Franklin's** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**GULL, Bonaparte's** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(50)  
**GULL, Ring-billed** (1-20) JEF 4 reps(71); ORA 1 rep(321); TYL 1 rep(2)  
**GULL, California** (13-13) JEF-MCFW 1/13(1) JM  
**GULL, Herring** (1-1) JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(4)  
**TERN, Caspian** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(1)  
**TERN, Common** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**TERN, Forster's** (1-5) JAS 1 rep(4); ORA 1 rep(98); TYL 1 rep(3)  
**TERN, Royal** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(5)  
**PIGEON, Rock** (1-27) HAI 2 reps(7); JEF 4 reps(90); ORA 1 rep(35)  
**COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian** (1-28) HAI 3 reps(15); JEF 3 reps(45); ORA 1 rep(6); TYL 1 rep(7)  
**DOVE, White-winged** (7-18) HAI 1 rep(27); JEF 2 reps(2)  
**DOVE, Mourning** (1-25) HAI 10 reps(54); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 7 reps(98); ORA 1 rep(70); TYL 1 rep(17)  
**DOVE, Inca** (1-29) HAI 10 reps(17); JAS 1 rep(14); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(4)  
**GROUND-DOVE, Common** (13-13) JEF 1/13(6) SM  
**SCREECH-OWL, Eastern** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**OWL, Great Horned** (1-16) JEF-BMT 1/16(1) RHJ; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB

**OWL, Barred** (1-22) HAI-VCSP 1/22(2) SG; JAS 1/5(1) BECB; ORA 1/1(3) OCCB  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr.** (20-20) JEF-NEDR 1/20(1) JAW  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chin.** (1-31) JEF-BMT 1/1(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 1/2(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 1/9(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 1/10(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/12(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 1/12(1) JJW; JEF-BMT 1/14(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/20(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 1/20(2) JAW; JEF-BMT 1/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/26(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/27(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/29(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/30(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/31(1) RHJ  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Anna's ?** (20-20) JEF-BMT 1/20(1) RHJ  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous** (1-31) HAI 1/5(1) JM; JEF-BMT 1/1(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/6(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/20(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/21(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/22(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/26(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/27(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/29(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/30(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/31(2) RHJ; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**HUMMINGBIRD species** (2-23) JEF-NEDR 1/2(1) JJW; JEF-BMT 1/9(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 1/10(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 1/12(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 1/13(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 1/21(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 1/23(1) RHJ  
**KINGFISHER, Belted** (1-29) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 1 rep(4); JEF 5 reps(14); ORA 1 rep(9); TYL 1 rep(4)  
**WOODPECKER, Red-bellied** (1-31) HAI 22 reps(51); JAS 1 rep(20); JEF 1 rep(2); ORA 1 rep(20); TYL 1 rep(56)  
**SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied** (1-28) HAI 5 reps(6); JAS 1 rep(13); ORA 1 rep(4); TYL 1 rep(29)  
**WOODPECKER, Downy** (1-30) HAI 7 reps(15); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(3); ORA 1 rep(11); TYL 1 rep(18)  
**WOODPECKER, Hairy** (5-9) HAI-SILS 1/9(2) MG; TYL 1/5(1) BECB  
**WOODPECKER, Hairy** (5-9) HAI 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(1)  
**FLICKER, Northern** (1-27) HAI 12 reps(32); JAS 1 rep(11); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(18)  
**WOODPECKER, Pileated** (1-22) HAI 6 reps(14); JAS 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(7); TYL 1 rep(19)  
**PHOEBE, Eastern** (1-22) HAI 9 reps(14); JAS 1 rep(21); JEF 8 reps(33); ORA 1 rep(16); TYL 1 rep(30)  
**FLYCATCHER, Vermilion** (13-13) JEF 1/13(1) JAW  
**SHRIKE, Loggerhead** (1-29) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 8 reps(85); ORA 1 rep(9); TYL 1 rep(1)  
**VIREO, White-eyed** (1-5) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB; TYL 1/5(1) BECB; TYL 1/5(1) BECB  
**VIREO, Blue-headed** (1-5) JAS 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(1)  
**JAY, Blue** (1-28) HAI 16 reps(55); JAS 1 rep(13); JEF 2 reps(5); ORA 1 rep(23); TYL 1 rep(67)  
**CROW, American** (1-26) HAI 2 reps(8); JAS 1 rep(10); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(11); TYL 1 rep(67)  
**CROW, Fish** (1-1) ORA 1/1(3) OCCB  
**CROW, species** (6-20) JEF 2 reps(3)  
**SWALLOW, Tree** (1-22) HAI 1 rep(5); JAS 1 rep(54); JEF 7 reps(292); ORA 1 rep(3925); TYL 1 rep(17)  
**SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged** (1-1) ORA 1/1(10) OCCB  
**CHICKADEE, Carolina** (1-28) HAI 20 reps(193); JAS 1 rep(10); ORA 1 rep(49); TYL 1 rep(66)  
**TITMOUSE, Tufted** (1-27) HAI 13 reps(121); JAS 1 rep(8); ORA 1 rep(8); TYL 1 rep(45)  
**NUTHATCH, Red-breasted** (1-22) HAI-SILS 1/1(2) MG; HAI-SILS 1/2(2) MG; HAI 1/5(1) JM; HAI-VCSP 1/22(1) SG  
**NUTHATCH, Brown-headed** (5-22) HAI-VCSP 1/22(6) SG; JAS 1/5(3) BECB; TYL 1/5(2) BECB; TYL 1/5(2) BECB  
**CREEPER, Brown** (1-5) JAS 1/5(1) BECB; ORA 1/1(3) OCCB; TYL 1/5(2) BECB  
**WREN, Carolina** (1-28) HAI 20 reps(71); JAS 1 rep(27); ORA 1 rep(34); TYL 1 rep(53)  
**WREN, House** (1-5) JAS 1/5(3) BECB; ORA 1/1(6) OCCB; TYL 1/5(10) BECB  
**WREN, Winter** (1-5) JAS 1/5(1) BECB; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB; TYL 1/5(1) BECB; TYL 1/5(5) BECB; TYL 1/5(6) BECB  
**WREN, Sedge** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**WREN, Marsh** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB  
**KINGLET, Golden-crowned** (1-5) JAS 1/5(5) BECB; ORA 1/1(4) OCCB; TYL 1/5(3) BECB

**KINGLET, Ruby-crowned** (1-31) HAI 8 reps(11); JAS 1 rep(37); JEF 18 reps(19); ORA 1 rep(34); TYL 1 rep(27)

**GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray** (1-12) JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(2); ORA 1 rep(9); TYL 1 rep(4)

**BLUEBIRD, Eastern** (1-31) HAI 19 reps(54); JAS 1 rep(27); JEF 4 reps(10); ORA 1 rep(122); TYL 1 rep(90)

**THRUSH, Hermit** (1-23) HAI 3 reps(4); JAS 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(2)

**ROBIN, American** (1-27) HAI 3 reps(68); JAS 1 rep(175); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(1087); TYL 1 rep(1212)

**CATBIRD, Gray** (1-25) HAI-SILS 1/6(6) MG; HAI-SILS 1/7(1) MG; HAI-SILS 1/21(1) MG; HAI-SILS 1/25(1) MG; JAS 1/5(1) BECB; JAS 1/5(3) BECB; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB; TYL 1/5(1) BECB; TYL 1/5(4) BECB

**MOCKINGBIRD, Northern** (1-28) HAI 10 reps(14); JAS 1 rep(5); JEF 7 reps(34); ORA 1 rep(19); TYL 1 rep(13)

**THRASHER, Brown** (1-24) HAI 2 reps(2); JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(3); TYL 1 rep(2)

**STARLING, European** (1-27) HAI 4 reps(97); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 7 reps(361); ORA 1 rep(277); TYL 1 rep(2)

**PIPIT, American** (1-20) JEF 2 reps(43); ORA 1 rep(24); TYL 1 rep(1)

**WAXWING, Cedar** (1-27) HAI 4 reps(79); JAS 1 rep(69); JEF 3 reps(13); ORA 1 rep(13); TYL 1 rep(113)

**WARBLER, Orange-crowned** (1-31) HAI 21 reps(29); JAS 1 rep(7); JEF 20 reps(20); ORA 1 rep(12); TYL 1 rep(1)

**WARBLER, Yellow-rumped** (1-27) HAI 12 reps(28); JAS 1 rep(67); JEF 7 reps(48); ORA 1 rep(575); TYL 1 rep(134)

**WARBLER, Pine** (1-31) HAI 25 reps(51); JAS 1 rep(49); JEF 8 reps(15); ORA 1 rep(146); TYL 1 rep(119)

**WARBLER, Palm** (15-15) JEF 1/15(1) RHJ

**YELLOWTHROAT, Common** (1-22) HAI 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(1)

**SPARROW, Chipping** (1-31) HAI 26 reps(1362); JAS 1 rep(194); JEF 1 rep(1); ORA 1 rep(67); TYL 1 rep(458)

**SPARROW, Vesper** (10-20) JEF 1/10(3) JAW; JEF 1/12(2) JAJW; JEF 1/13(2) JAW; JEF 1/20(9) JAW

**SPARROW, Savannah** (1-20) JAS 1 rep(9); JEF 8 reps(591); ORA 1 rep(56)

**SPARROW, LeConte's** (13-13) JEF 1/13(3) SM

**SPARROW, Seaside** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(2)

**SPARROW, Song** (5-12) JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(16)

**SPARROW, Swamp** (1-5) JAS 1 rep(10); ORA 1 rep(17); TYL 1 rep(25)

**SPARROW, White-throated** (1-30) HAI 5 reps(11); JAS 1 rep(55); JEF 15 reps(38); ORA 1 rep(34); TYL 1 rep(78)

**SPARROW, White-crowned** (1-20) JEF 7 reps(44)

**JUNCO, Dark-eyed** (1-15) JAS 2 reps(19); ORA 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(2)

**CARDINAL, Northern** (1-31) HAI 25 reps(1304); JAS 1 rep(81); JEF 5 reps(8); ORA 1 rep(61); TYL 1 rep(154)

**BUNTING, Painted** (1-1) ORA 1/1(1) OCCB

**BLACKBIRD, Red-winged** (1-13) JAS 1 rep(18); JEF 2 reps(2024); ORA 1 rep(437); TYL 1 rep(166)

**MEADOWLARK, Eastern** (1-12) JEF 3 reps(15); ORA 1 rep(21); TYL 1 rep(26)

**MEADOWLARK species** (6-20) JEF 4 reps(40)

**BLACKBIRD, Brewer's** (13-13) JEF 1/13(4) JAW

**GRACKLE, Common** (1-20) JEF 2 reps(384); ORA 1 rep(94); TYL 1 rep(39)

**GRACKLE, Boat-tailed** (1-1) ORA 1 rep(14)

**GRACKLE, Great-tailed** (1-20) JEF 5 reps(1048); ORA 1 rep(252)

**GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed.** (20-20) JEF 1 rep(5)

**COWBIRD, Brown-headed** (1-20) JEF 5 reps(707); ORA 1 rep(3)

**BLACKBIRD species** (2-20) JEF 4 reps(12400)

**FINCH, Purple** (1-19) JEF-BMT 1/19(1) RHJ; ORA 1/1(1) OCCB; TYL 1/5(4) BECB

**FINCH, House** (1-31) HAI 3 reps(17); JEF 15 reps(27)

**GOLDFINCH, American** (1-31) HAI 30 reps(321); JAS 1 rep(45); JEF 31 reps(2376); ORA 1 rep(186); TYL 1 rep(254)

**SPARROW, House** (1-27) HAI 1 rep(20); JEF 2 reps(11); ORA 1 rep(13); TYL 1 rep(7)

**Number of Species** 176  
**Number of Individuals** 78589

**County Abbreviations:**

HAI — Hardin; JAS — Jasper; JEF — Jefferson; ORA — Orange; TYL — Tyler

**Location Codes:;** BMT — Beaumont; MCFW — McFaddin NWR; MDSP — Martin Dies State Park; NEDR — Nederland; ORG — Orange; PI — Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SILS — Silsbee; SRSP — Sea Rim State Park; TX87 — Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP; VCSP — Village Creek State Park

**Observer Abbreviations;** BECB — Beech Creek CBC; GD — Gerald Duhon; HM — John Haynes and Steve Mayes; JAJW — Jim Armacost and John Whittle; JAW — John Whittle; JHH — John H. Haynes; JJW — John and Jana Whittle; JM — John Mariani; JP — John Park; JRP — John and Rebecca Phelps; MCF — McFaddin and Texas Pt NWRs (Patrick Walther); MG — Melanie Goetsell; OCCB — Orange County CBC; OW — Orion Weldon; RHJ — Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SBE — Sheri Bethard; SG — Sherry Gibson; SM — Steve Mayes; SR — Sherrie Roden;

## Bird Alerts

As this is being written, we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of spring and the wonders of spring migration. As of yet, there is little to report other than an increasing number of Purple Martins. However, shorebird migration will be in full swing very shortly, and the early Neotropical migrants will also begin showing up by the time you receive this.

There have not been any recent reports of eagle sightings from the South China Prairie (see page 3 for details of earlier sightings) and they may well have begun their journeys back north.

In past years, we have emailed new Bird Alerts to those who requested to be on the email distribution list. There are increasing difficulties in sending emails to large lists, and this year, we will only email reports that contain significant rarities as opposed to expected species. We will post all reports on the recently revamped web-site at [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org). The new site is not yet fully developed, but the Bird Alerts will be prominent in the News Items.

## Field Trip *(continued from page 4)*

Blue Heron (2); Great Egret (20); Little Blue Heron (2); Black-crowned Night-Heron (2); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (3); White Ibis (144); Plegadis species Ibis (50); Black Vulture (2); Turkey Vulture (2); Osprey (1); Bald Eagle (1); Cooper's Hawk (2); Red-shouldered Hawk (2); White-tailed Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (8); *Buteo* species (1); American Kestrel (3); Common Moorhen (20); American Coot (2001); Greater Yellowlegs (1); Laughing Gull (1); Ring-billed Gull (1); Forster's Tern (1); Rock Pigeon (25); Eurasian Collared-Dove (1); Mourning Dove (2); Belted Kingfisher (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (5); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (3); Downy Woodpecker (5); Eastern Phoebe (8); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue-headed Vireo (2); Blue Jay (10); American Crow (4); Crow species (5); Purple Martin (6); Tree Swallow (45); Carolina Chickadee (12); Carolina Wren (5); House Wren (4); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (8); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (15); Eastern Bluebird (1); Hermit Thrush (2); American Robin (12); Gray Catbird (1); Northern Mockingbird (6); Brown Thrasher (2); European Starling (2); Cedar Waxwing (103); Orange-crowned Warbler (4); Yellow-rumped Warbler (30); Pine Warbler (2); Common Yellowthroat (1); Wilson's Warbler (1); Vesper Sparrow (6); Savannah Sparrow (13); Swamp Sparrow (3); White-throated Sparrow (11); Northern Cardinal (15); Red-winged Blackbird (13); Common Grackle (2); House Sparrow (1).

*Steve Mayes*

## 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.

-8-

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## The Brown Pelican

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## Calendar of Events

**Saturday March 15, 2008. Sabine  
Woods Work Day.** See page 1 for  
details.

**Thursday March 20, 2008.  
Membership Meeting.** See page 1 for  
details.

**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.*

This trip occurs as shorebird  
migration is in full swing. Bolivar Flats  
is a hemispherically important shore-  
bird location. We know that a lot of  
birders are intimidated by shorebirds.  
This trip offers an opportunity to  
compare many of the "true" shorebirds  
with lots of help in identifying them.

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  
Rettillon 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. This trip

will look for Neotropical migrants.

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

## Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to  
provide the refreshments at our  
membership meeting. We thank Bob  
Collier, Sherry Gibson, Ann Harder,  
and Pat Jeane for providing the  
refreshments at the February 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 Jennifer Armacost at (409)  
790-7222 (or email her at  
armacostj@yahoo.com) **as far in  
advance as possible.** Please help if you  
can!

## Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on  
this issue. If the date on your label  
NOT prefixed by "AU" has passed, 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.



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# Eagles

The highlight of this winter in the Golden Triangle so far has been the occurrence of multiple eagles of both species, Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle. Here we present a summary of the various sightings and some comments on the normal ranges and life histories of both species.

The chronology of eagle sightings in the Golden Triangle proper – Jefferson, Orange and Hardin counties – will be described with respect to the last two winter seasons. Prior to that, there were occasional Bald Eagle sightings, often in places where there were large concentrations of waterfowl such as Cattail Marsh. In November 2006, an adult Golden Eagle was discovered in west Jefferson County, on McDermand Road. This bird was on a levee within a rice field feeding on a Mallard. This bird was seen one, possibly two, times in the week following, but not subsequently. Bald Eagles were seen a few times during the winter at Cattail Marsh. But more attention was focused on a pair of Bald Eagles that nested in a tall pine tree close to FM105 just east of FM1132, a location that is south and east of Vidor in Orange County. The nesting began sometime in December 2006. The nest was readily visible from the road and eventually received widespread publicity and the birds were seen by a large number of people. Fortunately, the birds were tolerant of the spectators – often not the case with Bald Eagles – and the pair succeeded in fledging two chicks. (In less favorable circumstances, the smaller of two chicks is often killed by the stronger one in order to reduce the competition for food.) It is reported that a pair has nested in that general vicinity for several years without publicity.

In the late fall and early winter of 2006/07, there were a few scattered reports of Bald Eagles, especially at Cattail Marsh. On December 31st, a Golden Eagle was seen in the "South China Prairie", an area of rice fields, some of which are fallow, on either side of South China Road between the town of China and Lawhon Road and east and west along Lawhon Road. This bird was perched on top of one of the poles of a high power line. Those trying to relocate this bird later the same day found three immature Bald Eagles a little further north in association with a flock of Snow Geese and Northern Pintail. The Golden Eagle was seen again on January 8th and 9th. Incredibly enough, an immature (first year) Golden Eagle was seen in the same area on January 11th. This immature bird was seen again on January 12th, and an adult Bald Eagle was seen in the distance at the same time. It was seen (and photographed) again the following day. The next known sighting of a Golden Eagle was a bird seen on February 3rd on Walden Road near Major Drive in Beaumont. Then on February 9th, Sheri and David Bethard were fortunate to find the immature Golden Eagle and an adult Bald Eagle apparently both looking for a meal in a large flock of ibis near South China Road. David was able to take some incredible pictures of the two eagles in close proximity to each other and interacting with each other. These can be seen at <http://dbethard.zenfolio.com/>. Bald Eagles usually stay near water, Golden Eagles inhabit mountainous areas, and we doubt that the two species come into close proximity to each other very often!

During the time these eagles were being seen on the South China Prairie, the FM105 Bald Eagles returned to the same nest, added more sticks to it, and nested again. Two chicks are now being fed by the parents, although it is much harder to see them this year because of the added nest structure. They have been seen to bring both a muskrat and a large red drum to the nest.

Bald Eagles are divided into two sub-species, the slightly smaller Southern Bald Eagle, nesting in Florida particularly and in smaller numbers in other southern states and from central California south, and the Northern Bald Eagle, breeding across most of Canada and Alaska, and also Oregon and northern California, and the Rocky Mountains. Southern Bald Eagles nest typically in "winter" from late October to early May with many, including juveniles, wandering north even as far as Canada in summer. Northern Bald Eagles nest in summer and many migrate south, some as far as the Gulf coast states. They are resident year-round, however, along the Pacific coast of Canada and Alaska. Eagle populations have steadily increased from the lows caused by DDT. In the past two or three decades, there have been increasing numbers of wintering Bald Eagles on lakes in the southern U.S., most notably in our area on Toledo Bend, Sam Rayburn, and Lake Livingston. Most of the Bald Eagles that are being seen increasingly in winter in southeast Texas are likely migratory Northern Bald Eagles, although obviously the pair in Vidor is of the Southern subspecies.

Golden Eagles are much more birds of the west, breeding from the Sierra Madre in Mexico through the mountainous west of the U.S. (including Big Bend) and Canada into Alaska, but also in a crescent more or less round Hudson Bay. They withdraw in winter from northern Canada and Alaska and winter in most of the rest of the breeding range and also across the southern tier of Canada and the northern tier of the U.S.

Bald Eagles primary food is fish, but in winter, they will take waterfowl, rabbits and rodents. There is some evidence that local birds find hunter-crippled waterfowl an easy source of food, but the eagles are capable of capturing birds in pursuit. Bald Eagles tend to concentrate where food sources, especially fish and notably salmon, are plentiful, and seem to be reasonably tolerant of each other. The Golden Eagle hunts mammals and birds from the air, and is generally intolerant of other raptors in its territory.

*(With thanks to those who have regularly reported their eagle sightings: Sheri and David Bethard, Gerald Duhon, Sherry Gibson, John Haynes, Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan, Steve Mayes, John Park, Sherrie Roden, Jana Whittle, Marsha Williams and anyone we have inadvertently omitted.)*

*John A. Whittle*

## Refreshments Arrangements

We are grateful to Jennifer Armacost for volunteering to take over the task of arranging for refreshments and door prizes (and also our Audubon Adventures program). Please give Jennifer your wholehearted support. She can be contacted at (409) 790-7222 or by email at [armacostj@yahoo.com](mailto:armacostj@yahoo.com).

## Field Trip to Sheldon Lake State Park – 23 February 2008

Sheldon Lake State Park has a number of attractions for visitors. These include ponds and a lake for fishing, trails for hiking and education and outdoor programs that cater to many Houston area kids every year. But what brought members of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society to Sheldon Lake State Park on a chilly February morning were the birds. The park and its surroundings host good numbers of birds (including some rarities) every year. The groups' second trip to this destination would prove fruitful in the birders never ending quest for those sometimes elusive feathered creatures.

Meeting at the park headquarters, the group soon headed down the trails bordering the small ponds in search of birds. Among the first noted was a male Purple Martin pecking his head out of a house provided by the park. These colorful swallows are always among the first migrants to return in the spring and are a welcome harbinger of more wonderful birds to come. A female Purple Martin was soon located nearby. A large flock of Cedar Waxwings was also noted among the trees. This species is usually first located by its constant high-pitched call and this was certainly true on this date. Other birds common to winter in southeast Texas were also noted. These included such species as Orange-crowned Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and House Wren. White-throated Sparrows (hard to find this winter) were seen along with Eastern Phoebe and a vocal Blue-headed Vireo. A Wilson's Warbler played hide and seek with the group (mostly hide) but was seen by some. Yellow-rumped Warblers were more accommodating.

But spring migrants and wintering species were not the only birds present. Plenty of bird species are permanent residents in our region and these were well represented on the day. Singing Northern Mockingbirds were common as they were getting geared up for the nesting season. Carolina Chickadees were easily seen and a few Carolina Wrens were located. One thicket provided both Brown Thrasher and Gray Catbird. Woodpeckers put in a good showing with Red-bellied being the most obvious (and the most vocal). Downy Woodpeckers and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker would also make themselves known to the birders.

Perhaps the highlight of the day came as the group exited the wooded area and came back near the headquarters. A group was having a work day for the park and as the birders stood among them, they noticed something. Flocks of geese were flying about in an animated fashion from nearby fields. This kind of excitable behavior usually means a predator is near! As the birders stood watching, the culprit appeared: Bald Eagle! A young bird, without the familiar pure white head and tail, sailed overhead to the delight of the gathered birders. Even some of the non-birding volunteers stopped to gaze as this bird flew by!

Soon the birders headed out to the wet prairies of the park. These areas were formerly farm and ranch land and are currently being restored with native grasses. The work is definitely paying off as the grassy areas mixed with several ponds attract waterfowl and shorebirds by the hundreds. On this trip, Snow Geese were the big attraction as a large flock congregated on the ground with more birds joining in now and

then. Soon, a flock of Greater White-fronted Geese dropped in showing the group why the hunters call them "Speckle-bellies". Many Ross's Geese were also seen among the more numerous Snows. Very similar to Snow Geese in most respects, Ross's Geese are smaller with proportionately smaller bills. Like Snows, Ross's Geese come in two color morphs: the more common white and the rarer (especially in Ross's) blue. Many blue Snow Geese were seen on the day but among this group there were a few suspicious birds with the "blue" (really more of a dark gray) extending to the top of the head. This is often seen in blue-morph Ross's Geese. Were these birds Blue-morph Ross's Geese? Even with spotting scopes the birds were distant enough to make definitive identification difficult but this is certainly an intriguing possibility.

But geese were not the only birds on the prairie. Savannah Sparrows were pretty common and a half dozen Vesper Sparrows were noted. Crows flew by calling enough to identify themselves as American. Ducks including Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon and good numbers of Mallards were on the ponds. A beautiful male American Kestrel was seen as was a Red-tailed Hawk. A distant soaring raptor might have been a White-tailed Hawk but was too distant to be sure about.

Visiting Sheldon Lake itself also gave the group plenty of birds to look at. The fact that 90% of them were American Coots just meant that the birders had to sort through them to find the more interesting birds. Some of these species included Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Common Moorhen and Eared Grebe. Great Egret and Little Blue Heron were also seen well here as some of the wading birds appeared to already be nesting. Anhingas seem to be abundant in the Sheldon Lake area and this trip certainly demonstrated that. Anhingas in good numbers were seen sunning themselves on the lake (and other bodies of water in the park). A distant drake Wood Duck was a treat and a Belted Kingfisher was appreciated.

All good things must end, even birding trips. The last areas visited on the day produced such nice birds as Black-crowned Night-Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Hermit Thrush and Eastern Bluebird. With birds like that to see you off, it's awful hard to leave but the birders from the Golden Triangle Audubon Society will no doubt be back to Sheldon Lake again to see more wonderful birds! Thanks again to Nancy Fisher for being an excellent tour guide!

The following species were recorded on the trip:

Greater White-fronted Goose (78); "White" Goose (mostly Snow Geese) (1500); Ross's Goose (58); Wood Duck (2); Gadwall (38); American Wigeon (8); Mallard (50); Blue-winged Teal (4); Northern Shoveler (3); Northern Pintail (11); Green-winged Teal (60); Ring-necked Duck (19); Lesser Scaup (1); Ruddy Duck (2); Pied-billed Grebe (8); Eared Grebe (1); Neotropic Cormorant (1); Double-crested Cormorant (2); Cormorant species (4); Anhinga (30); Great  
*(continued on page 7)*