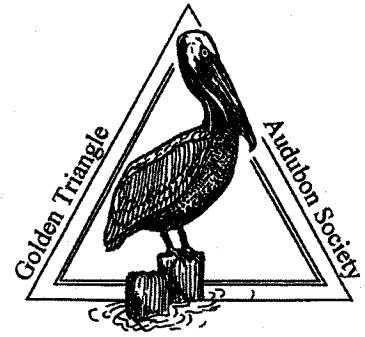


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 15 No. 2

February 2009

**Membership Meeting
Thursday, February 19, 2009
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont
7:00 PM**

**Come Fly with Me
Shirley and Sid Rucker**

Shirley and Sid Rucker are a husband and wife nature photography team, who photograph birds (specializing in hummingbirds), mammals, insects and other nature subjects. They are full time travelers and have traveled the continental United States extensively. Their list of publication credits include national and international magazines, books, and calendars. Frequent publications are: Wildbird magazine, Texas Parks & Wildlife, International Wildlife, Ranger Rick, National Geographic World (cover), National Geographic books, Smithsonian, Donald and Lillian Stokes' "The Hummingbird Book", and Connie Toops' "Hummingbirds: Jewels in Flight".

The slide show will consist of pictures of the birds, stories related to the photography of them, and photographic techniques used. Most of the photography was done in Texas and a lot around where we lived in east Texas (near Rayburn-between Cleveland and Rye) and near Ft. Davis in west Texas. We will show cardinals, woodpeckers, warblers, quail, owls and many more species plus maybe a surprise or two.

We expect the Ruckers will have copies of "Hummingbirds of Texas" available for purchase.

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

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 15, No.2 February 2009

Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

See Web Site for more
information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

**February 13 through February 16.
Great Backyard Bird Count.**

Details on page 3 and at
www.birdcount.org.

Thursday February 19. Membership meeting. Program Shirley and Sid Rucker. "Come Fly with Me" (post-poned from the November meeting).

Saturday February 21. Field Trip to Sheldon Lake. We are planning on repeating this very successful field trip, but check the website or at the February meeting for confirmation.

The park entrance and Environmental Learning Center is at 15315 Beaumont Highway (Business 90) at Park Road 138. We will meet at 8:15 a.m. 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.

If you approach on US 90, 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.

If you prefer IH10, exit on 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.

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

Saturday February 28. Sabine Woods Work Day. We are planning a third work day at Sabine Woods. Please contact us or check our website before setting out for this work day. The woods were badly beaten by the storm surge from Hurricane Ike. Much was accomplished on the first two work days in October and December.

On this work day, we plan to aggressively attack a number of invasive exotic species that are accessible in the absence of underbrush. We will plan on some more trail maintenance, especially in the eastern and western sections of the woods. We have one surviving

bench to reinstall, and perhaps other similar tasks to accomplish.

We will plan to start around 7:30 a.m., and will probably work until noon or later.

Please bring heavy duty work gloves and insect repellent, and tools to do trail maintenance, especially loppers. We do plan to provide refreshments, but please bring water or other liquid refreshments just in case we run out.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. **We need volunteers to bring items for all the remaining spring 2009 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! We thank the following for bringing refreshments for the January meeting: Jean Beavens, Jack Edgar, Carol Lynn and Andy Loker, Debbie and John Park, Paula and Paul Shaw, Gail Slocum, Mary and Herb Stafford, and anyone whose name we have inadvertently omitted. We also thank those who have contributed cash towards refreshments.

Thursday March 19. Membership Meeting. Bird of Costa Rica; Gerald Duhon, Don and Pat Jeane and Sherrie Roden.

Saturday March 21. Field Trip. Traditionally, the March Field trip is to Bolivar Flats. However, at the last Board meeting, we discussed the possibility of a trip to Boykin Springs to see Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow if conditions at Bolivar Flats were not enticing. Bolivar Flats is accessible, and as far as the birds are concerned, conditions are near normal. But from a people perspective, the area is still essentially a disaster area, with very few services of any kind available. Boykin Springs is approxi

mately 80 miles and one and one-half hours from Beaumont and correspondingly further from mid and south-county. This is approximately the same distance at Bolivar Flats, but the best chances of seeing Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Boykin Springs are just after dawn, so an early assembly there will be prudent. Please let us know if you have a strong preference for one destination or the other..

Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on this issue. If the date on your label NOT prefixed by "AU" has passed, or there is no other date, please remit your contribution of \$15 to Golden Triangle Audubon Society at P.O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292. Although this contribution towards the cost of the *Brown Pelican* is voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the official chapter territory, we will appreciate your support. Our official chapter territory is defined by zip codes, but is basically Jefferson, Hardin, and Orange Counties and one or two localities close to those Counties.

Sabine Pass Donations

Rose Ann Jordan spoke with an employee of Sabine Pass ISD and asked what we could do for the residents of Sabine Pass. The needs are great, but this person suggested that some groups are "adopting" different families to help out. Since we are such a small organization, Rose Ann thought that maybe we could handle helping out one of the elderly couples that lost everything. In the February newsletter, we plan to list various items that you can donate because we realize there are some people who would rather purchase specific items rather than donate money, but for now we will accept donations through the mail or at the meeting. Our first donation to one of the Sabine Pass families was very much appreciated and we were so glad that people saw the need and responded quickly. This will be an

ongoing process that will probably last from January until March. The Sabine Pass employee seemed pleasantly surprised that a bird-watching group cared about their community. Please either give your donation to Christine Sliva or mail it to Golden Triangle Audubon at P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627. Thank you.

Jana Whittle

Join the Great Backyard Bird Count

New York, NY and Ithaca, NY— Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), **February 13-16, 2009.**

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this free event is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org.

"The Great Backyard Bird Count benefits both birds and people. It's a great example of citizen science: Anyone who can identify even a few species can contribute to the body of knowledge that is used to inform conservation efforts to protect birds and biodiversity," said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus. "Families, teachers, children and all those who take part in GBBC get a chance to improve their observation skills, enjoy nature, and have a great time counting for fun, counting for the future."

Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Participants can also explore what birds others are finding in their backyards—whether in their own neighborhood or thousands of miles away. Additional online resources include tips to help identify birds, a photo gallery, and special materials for educators.

The data these "citizen scientists" collect helps researchers understand bird population trends, information that is critical for effective conservation. Their efforts enable everyone to see what would otherwise be impossible: a comprehensive picture of where birds are in late winter and how their numbers and distribution compare with previous years. In 2008, participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

"The GBBC has become a vital link in the arsenal of continent-wide bird-monitoring projects," said Cornell Lab of Ornithology director, John Fitzpatrick. "With more than a decade of data now in hand, the GBBC has documented the fine-grained details of late-winter bird distributions better than any project in history, including some truly striking changes just over the past decade."

Rivers and Wildlife Celebration

Audubon Nebraska presents the 39th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, to be held Friday-Sunday, March 20-22, 2009, in Kearney. Timed to coincide with the annual migration of 500,000 Sandhill Cranes and millions of waterfowl through central Nebraska, this annual wildlife festival is for anyone interested in experiencing one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on Earth and learning more about the natural world in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

Featured speakers for this year's event are:

- Pete Dunne – Author and birding expert from Cape May Bird Observatory
- Joel Sartore – National Geographic photographer
- Felipe Chavez-Ramirez – Director, Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust

Field trips to the best birding hotspots in the area are led by local birding experts throughout the festival. The highlight is a full-day birding trip with Pete Dunne on Sunday, March 22. Other full-day and half-day trips will take place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday to the Rainwater Basin and other migration stopovers. Tours may *(continued on page 7)*

Bird Sightings – December 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: Birder activity in December is always unusual. Many of our regular reported do relatively little birding except on Christmas Counts. There are four counts in the counties on which we report. This year the two in the Big Thicket were in December and the other two in January. So the December report is dominated by the "inland" counts in Hardin, Jasper and Tyler counties, and the January report will be dominated by the coastal counts in Jefferson and Orange counties. While we know that many active birders normally instinctively head for the coast much more often than they head inland, we also know that there are many residents in the Big Thicket area who actively watch birds at their feeders, in their gardens and in the nearby wooded areas. We do receive regular reports from a few, but would welcome more. Remember, knowing that common bird common are still common is just as important as knowing about less plentiful species.

GOOSE, White-fronted 12/24(200) JAW	(14-24)	JEF 12/14(20) JAW; JEF		
GOOSE, Snow reps(5469)	(6-30)	JAS/TYL 1 rep(3); JEF 5		
GOOSE, White	(14-14)	JEF 12/14(500) JAW		
GOOSE, White	(14-14)	JEF 1 rep(500)		
GOOSE, Ross's 12/24(3) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/24(7) JAW; JEF-TX87 12/24(30) JAW	(14-24)	JEF 12/14(9) JAW; JEF		
DUCK, Wood 6-7; JAS/TYL 12/27(2) BECBC8-9; TYL 12/15(2) TCCBC13; TYL 12/27(2) BECBC10	(15-27)	JAS 12/27(2) BECBC5-6-7; JAS/TYL 12/27(2) BECBC8-9; TYL 12/15(2) TCCBC13; TYL 12/27(2) BECBC10		
GADWALL	(24-24)	JEF 12/24(10) JAW		
WIGEON, American BECBC8-9; JEF 12/24(1) JAW	(24-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(13)		
MALLARD BECBC8-9	(27-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(2)		
SHOVELER, Northern	(24-24)	JEF 12/24(220) JAW		
GREBE, Pied-billed BECBC8-9; JEF 12/13(4) JAW; JEF 12/14(1) JAW; TYL 12/15(2) TCCBC1-9-11; TYL 12/27(5) BECBC10	(13-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(14)		
PELICAN, Amer. White BECBC8-9	(27-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(51)		
PELICAN, Brown	(6-13)	JEF 2 reps(6)		
CORMORANT, Dble-crest BECBC8-9; JEF 12/13(1) JAW; TYL 12/27(7) BECBC10	(13-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(1)		
CORMORANT, Species	(27-27)	JAS/TYL 1 rep(83)		
ANHINGA BECBC8-9; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JAW	(27-31)	JAS/TYL 12/27(4)		
HERON, Great Blue reps(1); JAS/TYL 1 rep(2); JEF 4 reps(5); TYL 2 reps(2)	(6-29)	HAI 2 reps(2); JAS 1		
EGRET, Great reps(1); JAS/TYL 1 rep(18); JEF 4 reps(105); TYL 3 reps(4)	(13-30)	HAI 3 reps(3); JAS 1		
EGRET, Snowy rep(6); JEF 3 reps(11); TYL 1 rep(2)	(6-27)	HAI 1 rep(1); JAS/TYL 1		
HERON, Tricolored	(27-27)	TYL 12/27(1) BECBC10		
EGRET, Cattle	(13-13)	JEF 12/13(1) JAW		
IBIS, White 6-7	(27-27)	JAS 12/27(4) BECBC5-6-7		
IBIS, Plegadis	(13-13)	JEF 12/13(50) JAW		
VULTURE, Black reps(23); JAS/TYL 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(15); TYL 3 reps(31)	(6-27)	HAI 4 reps(13); JAS 1		
VULTURE, Turkey reps(25); JAS 1 rep(19); JEF 4 reps(30); TYL 7 reps(70)	(8-31)	HAI 8 reps(35); JAS 1		
OSPREY TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC1-9-11	(15-15)	HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC8;		
EAGLE, Bald 6-7; JEF 12/24(1) JAW; TYL 12/27(1) BECBC10	(24-27)	JAS 12/27(1) BECBC5-6-7; JEF 12/24(1) JAW; TYL 12/27(1) BECBC10		
HARRIER, Northern BECBC8-9; JEF 12/14(11) JAW; JEF-BMT 12/22(1) RHJ; JEF 12/24(5) JAW; TYL 12/27(1) BECBC2-3-4	(14-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(1)		
HAWK, Cooper's	(6-6)	JEF-BMT 12/6(1) RHJ		
HAWK, Red-shouldered reps(4); TYL 3 reps(5)	(6-27)	HAI 6 reps(8); JEF 4		
HAWK, Red-tailed rep(1)	(6-27)	JEF 6 reps(27); TYL 1		
CARACARA, Crested	(14-14)	JEF 12/14(1) JAW		
KESTREL, American 1 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(39); TYL 5 reps(12)	(13-29)	HAI 3 reps(5); JAS/TYL		
MERLIN	(14-14)	JEF 12/14(1) JAW		
FALCON, Peregrine	(24-24)	JEF 12/24(1) JAW		
MOORHEN, Common BECBC8-9	(27-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(7)		
COOT, American 1 rep(3760); TYL 2 reps(17)	(15-27)	JAS 1 reps(6); JAS/TYL		
CRANE, Sandhill	(14-14)	JEF 12/14(14) JAW		
KILLDEER rep(6); JEF 2 reps(7); TYL 6 reps(27)	(14-27)	HAI 2 reps(48); JAS 1		
STILT, Black-necked	(24-24)	JEF 12/24(20) JAW		
SANDPIPER, Spotted	(27-27)	TYL 12/27(2) BECBC10		
YELLOWLEGS, Greater JEF-TX87 12/24(20) JAW	(14-24)	JEF 12/14(41) JAW;		
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser	(14-14)	JEF 12/14(1) JAW		
SANDPIPER, Peep	(24-24)	JEF 12/24(50) JAW		
DUNLIN	(14-14)	JEF 12/14(50) JAW		
DOWITCHER species	(24-24)	JEF 12/24(500) JAW		
SNIPE, Wilson's	(27-27)	TYL 12/27(1) BECBC10		
GULL, Laughing	(6-13)	JEF 2 reps(303)		
GULL, Ring-billed	(24-24)	JEF 1 rep(1)		
PIGEON, Rock reps(575)	(5-24)	HAI 4 reps(168); JEF 3		
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian reps(15); TYL 2 reps(12)	(3-27)	HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 4		
DOVE, White-winged reps(10)	(4-31)	HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 5		
DOVE, Mourning reps(120); TYL 6 reps(55)	(5-31)	HAI 13 reps(75); JEF 5		
DOVE, Inca rep(2); TYL 1 rep(2)	(1-31)	HAI 18 reps(42); JEF 1		
HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chinned JEF-NEDR 12/22(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 12/23(1) JAW	(18-23)	JEF-BMT 12/18(1) RHJ;		
HUMMINGBIRD, Archilochus JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JAW	(14-31)	JEF-NEDR 12/14(1)		
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/22(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 12/23(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/24(2) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JAW	(14-31)	JEF-NEDR 12/14(1)		
HUMMINGBIRD species	(3-30)	JEF 12 reps(13)		
KINGFISHER, Belted rep(5); JEF 4 reps(6); TYL 1 rep(1)	(6-27)	HAI 1 rep(2); JAS 1		
WOODPECKER, Red-headed BECBC8-9; TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC1-9-11	(15-27)	JAS/TYL 12/27(1)		
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied reps(15); JAS/TYL 1 rep(15); JEF 2 reps(4); TYL 7 reps(55)	(1-31)	HAI 22 reps(57); JAS 1		

SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (15-27) HAI 4 reps(11); JAS/TYL
WOODPECKER, Downy (1-31) HAI 10 reps(30); JAS 1
reps(2); JAS/TYL 1 rep(9); JEF 16 reps(18); TYL 5 reps(20)
WOODPECKER, Hairy (15-15) TYL 12/15(4) TCCBC2-
3-12; TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC10; TYL 12/15(2) TCCBC13
FLICKER, Northern (3-27) HAI 6 reps(11); JAS/TYL
1 rep(5); JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(7)
WOODPECKER, Pileated (2-31) HAI 7 reps(9); JAS 1
rep(8); JEF 5 reps(5); TYL 6 reps(13)
PHOEBE, Eastern (8-28) HAI 7 reps(12); JAS 1
reps(20); JAS/TYL 1 rep(8); JEF 3 reps(11); TYL 5 reps(17)
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (14-14) JEF 12/14(1) JAW
KINGBIRD, Couch's (27-27) TYL 12/27(1) BECBC1
SHRIKE, Loggerhead (12-24) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4
reps(17)
VIREO, White-eyed (12-12) HAI-SILS 12/12(1) MG
VIREO, Blue-headed (6-27) HAI 3 reps(6); JAS/TYL
1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 2 reps(3)
JAY, Blue (4-30) HAI 10 reps(55); JAS 1
reps(14); JAS/TYL 1 rep(10); JEF 2 reps(2); TYL 6 reps(66)
CROW, American (15-27) HAI 4 reps(63); JAS 1
reps(31); JAS/TYL 1 rep(8); JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 7 reps(120)
SWALLOW, Tree (3-24) HAI 12/15(5) TCCBC5-6-
7; JEF-BMT 12/3(1) JAW; JEF-SW 12/6(1) JAW; JEF 12/13(1)
JAW; JEF 12/14(1) JAW; JEF 12/24(19) JAW
CHICKADEE, Carolina (3-31) HAI 19 reps(152);
JAS/TYL 1 rep(23); JEF 1 rep(2); TYL 5 reps(65)
TITMOUSE, Tufted (3-31) HAI 15 reps(55); JAS 1
rep(5); JAS/TYL 1 rep(9); TYL 5 reps(30)
NUTHATCH, White-breasted (15-15) TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC2-
3-12
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (15-27) HAI 12/15(5) TCCBC5-6-
7; JAS/TYL 12/27(3) BECBC8-9
CREEPER, Brown (15-27) HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC4;
HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC8; JAS/TYL 12/27(3) BECBC8-9; TYL
12/15(1) TCCBC1-9-11; TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC10
WREN, Carolina (3-31) HAI 8 reps(20); JAS 1
reps(49); JAS/TYL 1 rep(3); TYL 6 reps(41)
WREN, House (15-27) HAI 2 reps(6); JAS/TYL
1 rep(2); TYL 3 reps(4)
WREN, Winter (15-27) HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC4;
HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC8; JAS 12/27(1) BECBC5-6-7; TYL
12/15(1) TCCBC2-3-12; TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC10
WREN, Sedge (15-27) HAI 12/15(12) TCCBC5-
6-7; JAS 12/27(2) BECBC5-6-7; JAS/TYL 12/27(1) BECBC8-9
KINGLET, Golden-crown (15-27) HAI 12/15(3) TCCBC8;
JAS/TYL 12/27(13) BECBC8-9; TYL 12/15(2) TCCBC2-3-12;
TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC10; TYL 12/27(1) BECBC2-3-4
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (2-30) HAI 8 reps(28); JAS 1
rep(12); JAS/TYL 1 rep(74); JEF 5 reps(11); TYL 6 reps(48)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (6-27) HAI 3 reps(10); JAS/TYL
1 rep(8); JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(2)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern (6-30) HAI 9 reps(29); JAS 1
rep(35); JAS/TYL 1 rep(13); JEF 2 reps(3); TYL 7 reps(82)
THRUSH, Hermit (6-15) HAI-SILS 12/14(1) MG;
HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC4; HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC8; JEF-SW 12/6(1)
JAW; TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC2-3-12; TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC10
ROBIN, American (15-27) HAI 6 reps(671); JAS 1
rep(103); JAS/TYL 1 rep(339); TYL 7 reps(1203)
CATBIRD, Gray (9-27) HAI-SILS 12/9(1) MG;
HAI 12/15(3) TCCBC5-6-7; HAI-SILS 12/16(1) MG; JAS
12/27(1) BECBC5-6-7; JAS/TYL 12/27(1) BECBC8-9; TYL
12/15(1) TCCBC2-3-12
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (6-30) HAI 10 reps(16); JAS 1
rep(4); JAS/TYL 1 rep(3); JEF 4 reps(13); TYL 5 reps(24)
THRASHER, Brown (1-31) HAI 8 reps(9); JAS 1
rep(2); JAS/TYL 1 rep(1); JEF 2 reps(2); TYL 4 reps(6)
STARLING, European (6-27) HAI 3 reps(144); JAS 1
rep(2); JEF 5 reps(115); TYL 2 reps(14)
PIPIT, American (14-24) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 2
reps(4)
WAXWING, Cedar (15-27) HAI 2 reps(92); JAS 1
rep(40); TYL 5 reps(145)
WARBLER, Orange-crowned (3-31) HAI 6 reps(12); JAS/TYL
1 rep(1); JEF 18 reps(20); TYL 2 reps(2)

1 rep(5); TYL 4 reps(8)
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (6-29) HAI 6 reps(152); JAS 1
rep(26); JAS/TYL 1 rep(45); JEF 5 reps(15); TYL 7 reps(194)
WARBLER, Pine (3-31) HAI 12 reps(62);
JAS/TYL 1 rep(23); JEF 24 reps(38); TYL 6 reps(66)
WARBLER, Palm (15-15) TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC13
TOWHEE, Eastern (6-15) HAI 12/15(2) TCCBC8;
SPARROW, Chipping (1-31) HAI 26 reps(526); JAS 1
rep(75); JAS/TYL 1 rep(59); JEF 2 reps(2); TYL 7 reps(241)
SPARROW, Savannah (14-27) JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 2
reps(147); TYL 2 reps(5)
SPARROW, LeConte's (15-15) TYL 12/15(1) TCCBC10
SPARROW, Song (14-27) HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC5-6-
7; JEF 12/14(2) JAW; TYL 12/27(9) BECBC10
SPARROW, Lincoln's (15-27) HAI 12/15(1) TCCBC5-6-
7; JAS/TYL 12/27(9) BECBC8-9; JEF 12/24(1) JAW; TYL
12/27(2) BECBC10
SPARROW, Swamp (13-27) HAI 12/15(10) TCCBC5-
6-7; JAS 12/27(1) BECBC8-9; JEF-SW 12/13(1) JAW; TYL
12/27(8) BECBC10
SPARROW, White-throated (1-31) HAI 12 reps(49); JAS 1
rep(15); JAS/TYL 1 rep(11); JEF 21 reps(73); TYL 6 reps(95)
SPARROW, White-crowned (14-14) JEF 12/14(3) JAW
JUNCO, Dark-eyed (12-27) HAI-SILS 12/12(1) MG;
HAI 12/15(8) TCCBC5-6-7; HAI 12/15(17) TCCBC8; JAS
12/27(10) BECBC5-6-7; JAS/TYL 12/27(2) BECBC8-9; TYL
12/27(9) BECBC2-3-4; TYL 12/27(1) BECBC10
CARDINAL, Northern (4-31) HAI 23 reps(591); JAS 1
reps(48); JAS/TYL 1 rep(23); JEF 2 reps(8); TYL 7 reps(142)
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (6-27) JAS/TYL 1 rep(250); JEF
3 reps(621); TYL 1 rep(4)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern (14-27) JEF 2 reps(22); TYL 2
reps(22)
MEADOWLARK species (14-14) JEF 12/14(7) JAW
GRACKLE, Common (4-27) JAS 1 rep(60); JEF 2
reps(15); TYL 2 reps(379)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (6-6) JEF-TX87 12/6(1) JAW
GRACKLE, Great-tailed (5-24) JEF 6 reps(249)
BLACKBIRD species (3-3) JEF-BMT 12/3(10000)
JAW
FINCH, House (4-31) HAI 3 reps(10); JEF 20
reps(83)
SISKIN, Pine (12-31) HAI 12/12(15) RHJ; HAI
12/21(5) RHJ; HAI-SILS 12/22(2) SG; HAI-SILS 12/30(6) SG;
HAI-SILS 12/31(6) SG; JEF-BMT 12/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT
12/18(5) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/20(5) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/26(1) RHJ
GOLDFINCH, American (4-31) HAI 25 reps(280);
JAS/TYL 1 rep(3); JEF 31 reps(842); TYL 6 reps(118)
SPARROW, House (6-31) JEF 3 reps(8); TYL 2
reps(12)
Number of Species 121
Number of Individuals 67702

County Abbreviations:

HAI - Hardin; JAS - Jasper; JEF - Jefferson; TYL - Tyler

Location Codes:

BMT - Beaumont; NEDR - Nederland; SILS - Silsbee; SW - Sabine
Woods; TX87 - Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP

Observer Abbreviations

BECBC1 - Beech Creek CBC Sector 1 (John and Jana Whittle);
BECBC2-3-4 - Sectors 2,3,4 (Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan) ;
BECBC5-6-7 - Sectors 5,6,7 (Bruce Bishop and Bill Bailey); ;
BECBC8-9 - Sectors 8,9 (Sherry Gibson and Dave Roemer);
BECBC10 - Sector 10 (John and Jana Whittle, Kathleen Brown); JAW
- John Whittle; JJW - John and Jana Whittle; MG - Melanie Goetsell;
RHJ - Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SG - Sherry Gibson; TCCBC1-
9-11 - Turkey Creek CBC Sectors 1,9,11 (Rose Ann and Harrison
Jordan); TCCBC2-3-12 - Sectors 2,3,12 (Stephanie Burgess and
Bruce Bishop); TCCBC4 - Sector 4 (Steve Mayes and John Whittle) ;
TCCBC5-6-7 - Sectors 5,6,7(Sherry Gibson and Ken Sztraky);
TCCBC8 - Sector 8 (Amy and Dave Roemer); ; TCCBC10 - Sector 10
(Amy and Dave Roemer); TCCBC13 - Sector 13 (Steve Mayes and
John Whittle); TCCBC14 - Sector 14 (Steve Mayes and John Whittle)

Field Trip to Katy Prairie – 17 January 2009

The January Katy Prairie trip has become a tradition with the Golden Triangle Audubon Society even though the weather has not always cooperated with us. Cold, rain and wind have often been hallmarks of the trip and yet, the birders keep coming back. Why? For the birds, of course! Whatever the weather the fields, forests and lakes of the Katy Prairie produce good birds every year and that is why, on a cool, very windy day, another group of Golden Triangle birders made the two hour drive for this trip.

As has become the norm in recent years, the birding started in Bear Creek Park. Always good for woodland birds not easily found elsewhere on the trip, the park did not disappoint. Eastern Phoebes, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers were all easily found and a Brown Thrasher was eventually seen. Tufted Titmice seemed particularly abundant and Carolina Chickadees were also seen. Pine Warblers seemed a little sparse but a nice flock of Chipping Sparrows was located. Beautiful Eastern Bluebirds were conspicuous and seen well by the whole group. A pair of Brown Creepers made their way up tree trunks in front of the birders while American Crows called overhead. Woodpeckers put in a good showing with Downy and Red-bellied seen and heard and numbers. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was also located and the group got good looks at a young Red-headed Woodpecker (unfortunately no adults were found). A spectacular Pileated Woodpecker gave great looks from a nearby tree. One of the best birds from the park was an amazingly cooperative Winter Wren who felt the need to fuss at the birders from a series of open perches along the creek. As usual, a couple of Merlins were located, as this park seems to be a hotspot for these feisty little raptors. As the group was preparing to move on, they noticed another birding group had something pinned down along the edge of the golf course. It was a male Vermilion Flycatcher! A terrific bird to exit the park on!

Moving on to Longenbaugh Road, more good birds were found though the habitat was not what it has been in the past. Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow were all located though Harris's Sparrows did not show up. Some distant Long-billed Curlews were seen feeding in a field while American Pipits flew over the road. A few Brewer's Blackbirds feed nearby while Northern Harriers cruised low over the fields. Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons worked the edges of nearby ponds and an Orange-crowned Warbler was seen in a roadside thicket. A distant White-tailed hawk was seen soaring high in the sky. After several attempts, the group finally got decent looks at the female Pyrrhuloxia that is spending its second straight winter at the creek crossing on Longenbaugh. Although the bird was less cooperative than last year, seeing this "desert cardinal" on the upper Texas coast was still a great experience.

Unfortunately, the wet areas that normally harbor hundreds or thousands of waterfowl on Longenbaugh are currently bone dry. Whether this is the result of weather or changing land practices is unclear but the group had to look elsewhere for its duck and goose fix. One of those spots was Warren Ranch Lake. This spot had fewer birds than normal but still produced some good finds. Green-winged Teal and

Northern Pintail were probably the most abundant ducks seen on the lake but other species, including Gadwall, Mallard and Ring-necked Duck. Scarcer species included lone a lone Canvasback and Common Goldeneye along with a few Hooded Mergansers. Northern Shovelers and Mottled Duck were a little more common. A highlight was an adult Bald Eagle that perched for nice scope views for the group. Although this species has been much easier to find closer to home in recent years, it is still always nice to find one on a day out birding. The same could be said of Crested Caracara and three of these odd scavengers were located at Warren Ranch Lake. A small flock of flyby Sandhill Cranes was a nice bonus.

Other spots in the area also produced good birds though the group had its share of misses as well. A creek crossing on Sharp Road gave us a nice flock of Harris's Sparrows though a previously reported Fox Sparrow did not appear. The corner that has held a pair of Great Kiskadees in past years has been drastically altered and may no longer be suitable for the noisy flycatchers as they were nowhere to be found. Eastern Meadowlarks were easily seen but only one Wilson's Snipe was found. Late in the day, after seeing very few all day, a couple of large concentrations of geese were located. Snow Geese were the major component of these flocks but Greater White-fronted Geese were numerous and a few Ross's Geese were also picked out. A few Cackling Geese, the small version of the Canada Goose, were also located here.

The birding ended back at our meeting spot (a Randall's grocery store) with a few flocks of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks flying over and giving their characteristic calls. It was a nice end to a windy but still birdy day on the Katy Prairie. Over ninety species were located on this date including several hard to find species. Some may not see the point of driving over two hours to bird habitat that seems very similar to our own birding spots but with birds like Harris's Sparrow, Vermilion Flycatcher and Pyrrhuloxia, the birders on this date know the reason!

The following species were located on this date:

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (70); Greater White-fronted Goose (141); Snow Goose (2613); Ross's Goose (3); Cackling Goose (7); Gadwall (35); Mallard (20); Mottled Duck (15); Blue-winged Teal (2); Northern Shoveler (50); Northern Pintail (75); Green-winged Teal (220); Canvasback (1); Ring-necked Duck (23); Lesser Scaup (4); Common Goldeneye (1); Hooded Merganser (10); Ruddy Duck (15); Pied-billed Grebe (29); Eared Grebe (3); American White Pelican (30); Neotropic Cormorant (1); Double-crested Cormorant (1); Cormorant species (20); Great Blue Heron (6); Great Egret (6); Snowy Egret (3); Plegadis species Ibis (25); Black Vulture (42); Turkey Vulture (15); Bald Eagle (1); Northern Harrier (10); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Red-shouldered Hawk (3); White-tailed Hawk (6); Red-tailed Hawk (15); Crested Caracara (8); American Kestrel (8); Merlin (2); American Coot (50); Sandhill Crane (5); Killdeer (6); Greater Yellowlegs (2); Lesser Yellowlegs (1); Long-billed Curlew (63); Wilson's Snipe (1); Rock Pigeon (55); Eurasian Collared-Dove (1); White-winged Dove (10); Mourning Dove (41); Inca Dove (2); Belted Kingfisher (1); Red-bellied

Woodpecker (12); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1); Downy Woodpecker (8); Northern Flicker (1); Pileated Woodpecker (1); Eastern Phoebe (4); Vermilion Flycatcher (1); Loggerhead Shrike (15); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue Jay (6); American Crow (6); Carolina Chickadee (10); Tufted Titmouse (10); Brown Creeper (2); Winter Wren (1); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (8); Eastern Bluebird (5); American Robin (1); Northern Mockingbird (8); Brown Thrasher (2); European Starling (73); American Pipit (50); Orange-crowned Warbler (5); Yellow-rumped Warbler (30); Pine Warbler (15); Chipping Sparrow (25); Vesper Sparrow (1); Savannah Sparrow (12); Song Sparrow (2); Lincoln's Sparrow (1); White-throated Sparrow (7); Harris's Sparrow (12); White-crowned Sparrow (3); Northern Cardinal (26); Pyrrhuloxia (1); Red-winged Blackbird (511); Eastern Meadowlark (40); Meadowlark species (6); Brewer's Blackbird (10); Great-tailed Grackle (19); Brown-headed Cowbird (10); American Goldfinch (2); House Sparrow (23)

Steve Mayes

Conditions in Cameron Parish

Posted to LABIRD 18 December 2008 as observations after the Sabine Christmas Count. Presented here slightly abridged.

The effects of Ike were quite evident. Some were predictable, some not so much. Why would a hurricane in September suppress tern numbers in December? Small fish mortality? We had NO terns. Egrets were also absent, though apparently not in the fresher marshes behind the front ridge.

The salt marsh is thriving – it responds well to the influx of new sediment. I was gratified to see good numbers of both Sharp-tailed, and, especially, presumably resident Seaside Sparrows. However, we heard only one Clapper Rail (wind noise could have been a problem).

On the whole I'd say that the trees came out better from Ike than from Rita. After Rita even live oaks were bare or nearly so in December, but they are fully leafed now. In addition, many species, such as hackberry, seemed to have re-leafed after Ike, so they are greener this year than in a normal winter. Since surge heights were comparable, I expect it was the lower wind speeds that far east that made the difference--less direct trauma and less salt spray.

As after Rita there is yet another new layer of sediment everywhere. I'm not sure what effect all this has on birds, but the general scarcity of usually common winter birds suggests that the prey base has been reduced, despite the general greenery. Still, the devastation to the old east jetty woods, begun by land clearing in the late nineties, and accelerated by two devastating hurricanes and the destructive post Rita clean up has taken its toll. The eastern cheniers are pathetic, and even the so-called "round woods" of east Jetty west are woods no more--though they remain thickly overgrown.

Of wintering landbirds only Sedge Wrens seemed near normal. Note however that Downy and Hairy are doing fine--apparently the dead trees of Rita have helped produce good crops of offspring.

Maybe the new mud layer explains the dearth of ground feeding doves.

The former beach-mudflat has been swept inland. Much of the beachfront is exposed marsh organic subsoils. There is little that qualifies as beach, though much new sand is exposed as bars in the marsh. This means that the formerly reliable plover habitat there is gone, though we did find 2 Snowy Plovers. However, the Wilson's Plovers that usually winter on the East Jetty east beach seem to have moved west.

Most interesting bird was a Sprague's Pipit flushed from perfect looking ankle high bermuda grass (or bermuda-like) pasture just north of the old Townsend's/Red-faced warbler chenier.

David Muth, New Orleans

Rivers *(continued from page 2)*

also include stops at local prairie-chicken booming grounds and prairie dog towns.

There will also be trips to viewing blinds along the Platte River at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary at sunrise and sunset. Witnessing Sandhill cranes leave from and return to the River up close is an event no birder should miss. Field trips have limited space, so participants are encouraged to register early.

Other conference highlights include Brian "Fox" Ellis, who portrays John James Audubon; a photography workshop with Randy Hampton and Joel Sartore; a free crane behavior class; and lots more.

To obtain a registration brochure, call or write Audubon Nebraska, P.O. Box 117, Denton, NE 68339; 402/797-2301; Nebraska@audubon.org. Brochures can also be downloaded at www.Nebraska.audubon.org.


Additional crane viewing information can be obtained from Rowe Sanctuary, www.rowesanctuary.org or 308/468-5282;.

Bird Alert

The core of birding interest again this winter has been west Jefferson County, and specifically the area south of US 90, east of FM1406/FM365 as east far as the community of New Bethel and as far as IH-10 to the southeast.

The best place to start has been the intersection of South China Road and Lawhon Road. The flooded fields in that area have been attracting flocks of ducks and geese. At least five Bald Eagles (two adults and three immature birds) and one Golden Eagle has been attending the flocks, and are often seen on the levies feeding on a goose or pintail carcass, or perched on the tall power poles. There are also at least two Crested Caracaras, one Peregrine Falcon, and more than two Merlins in addition to many Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and American Kestrels.

Sandhill Cranes – at least 1000 were present early in the season – are still being seen both on Lawhon near New Bethel and north of IH-10 near Smith Road.



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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/> Email alerts are also available for a small fee. Most rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. The archives of this listserv are at <http://listserv.uh.edu/archives/tebirds.html> It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives, which include postings up to the most recent..

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..>

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