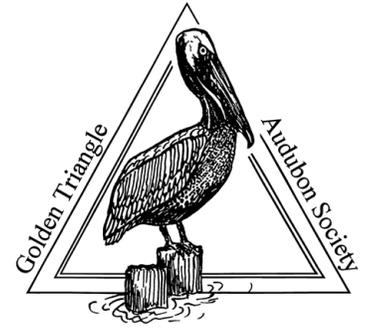


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 17 No. 11

November 2011

**Annual Meeting and Pot-luck Dinner
Thursday, November 17, 2011, 7:00 PM
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

The Winter Hummingbirds of Southeast Texas

**Rose Ann Jordan, Steve Kuritz, John Mariani,
Harlan Stewart and Jana Whittle**

As many of you know, small numbers of mainly "western" hummingbirds winter in Southeast Texas and along the northern Gulf Coast. Several of our members have been watching and feeding these winter hummingbirds for several years now. Five of them have got together and will discuss the species which may be seen, how to identify them, winter flowering plants that can attract and support them, and other aspects of this topic.

This is our annual pot-luck dinner and those who are able are asked to bring a covered dish. Prior to the talk, we will be conducting our annual elections. We plan on having the doors open by about 6:00 PM and the proceedings will start at 7:00 PM sharp.

Reminder: GTAS Elections

We will hold our elections at the November Meeting. As noted last month, President Jim Armacost has appointed a Nominating Committee consisting of himself, Sherry Gibson and Harrison Jordan. Please contact Jim or any of these individuals with your offer to serve or suggestions for others who may be willing.. All offices including President and all board positions are up for election this year. The terms of all officers (except the President) and board members are one year. We are always looking for new blood and fresh ideas. The duties are not onerous! The board typically meets for two hours in the evening about three times a year, and otherwise operates by email and telephone.

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Issue number 179

Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Thursday November 17, 2011.
Membership Meeting. Details on page
1.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our meeting. We thank Sherrie Roden and all others who brought refreshments for the October meeting. The November meeting will be our annual pot luck dinner when we ask those who are able to bring a dish. Please do not wait until the last minute to decide and please call Jennifer Armacost at (409) 790-7222 (or email her at armacostj@yahoo.com) **as far in advance as possible** so we can coordinate! However, we will also need volunteers to bring items for all the spring 2012 meetings.

Saturday November 20. Field Trip to West Jefferson County. Each successive year, the birding in west Jefferson County seems to get better and better. The area is well known for its raptors, its Sandhill Cranes and its sparrows. In wet years, there can be lots of waterfowl also. This year so far has been rather dry, and with a continuing *La Niña* this year, that may continue. However, there are several fields that have been flooded, especially along South China Road.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of FM365 and Johnson Road (on the "north/west" side of Johnson Road at that intersection). From the intersection of Interstate 10 and FM365 in Fannett, proceed along FM365 (towards Nome) for about six miles. Shortly after you emerge out of the woodlands, South China Road goes to the right (east then north) and immediately afterwards, on the left, is Johnson Road. There is a green sign for the G and A Turf Farm on Johnson Road at the intersection. Contact Steve Mayes, sgmayes@hotmail.com, or call 409-722-5807 for further information.

The arrival of the winter resident birds varies from year to year, so if you are out in the area in the days before the field trip, please let us know what you

find. We are always especially interested in knowing where the Sandhill Cranes and other wintering birds can be found!

Christmas Count Dates

The following dates for local Christmas Bird Counts have been set. Full details will be given in the next issue and will be posted on the GTAS web site as they become available.

Saturday December 17. Turkey Creek (Big Thicket area north of Kountze in Hardin and Tyler Counties). This count is sponsored by the Big Thicket National Preserve. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com) or Brian Lockwood (Brian_Lockwood@nps.gov) for more information.

Wednesday December 21. Bolivar Peninsula (High Island and Anahuac NWR areas). Contact Bill Graber (409-866-5452) for more information.

Wednesday December 28. Beech Creek (centered on Steinhagen Lake including Martin Dies State Park) This count is sponsored by the Big Thicket National Preserve. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com) or Brian Lockwood (Brian_Lockwood@nps.gov) for more information

Sunday January 1. Orange County. (This count includes Bridge City, Bessie Heights and surrounding areas. Contact Ken Sztraky (Berrysheepfarm@att.net) for more information

Tuesday January 3. Sea Rim State Park (Sea Rim/J. D. Muphree WMA/Texas Point NWR/McFaddin NWR). This is the count Golden Triangle Audubon sponsors. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com) for more information.



EarthShare of Texas represents Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll contribution programs in workplaces throughout Texas. For more information about how you can support Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society at your workplace, call 1-800-GREENTX, or visit www.earthshare-texas.org.

October Program

John Haynes gave a very informative talk about how to identify ducks. Gerald Duhon introduced him as a "warbler-meister", but claims he is also a "duck-meister." John has watched ducks for over 40 years, and if you have the good fortune of observing ducks while next to him, you will be amazed how he can identify them in flight, on the water, and even in low lighting conditions. He even often can identify them by the sounds of their wing beats and, of course, their vocalizations.

He began by explaining that birds have their own seasons. Almost everyone is aware of spring migration, when there are many active birders. In the hot summer months, there are not as many birds to observe locally, and very few birders are out looking for them. "Winter" is the longest season in southeast Texas, stretching from October to March. Birds of interest in this period are sparrows, birds of prey and, of course, the multitude of waterfowl, ducks and geese, which winter in the area and for which the area is well known. Even though the local habitat was affected by hurricane, Ike especially, things are slowly getting better. Southeast Texas lies in an area where the Mississippi and Central Flyways come together, and as a result, has one of the highest densities of wintering waterfowl in the country. It is well known as an area where duck hunters like to hunt.

First, John pointed out some of the important features of ducks. He explained about the region of the upper wing known in ducks as the speculum, often brightly colored. In many species, the wing coverts also have characteristic field marks. Bill color and especially shape is also a key field mark in the identification of ducks.

John then reviewed the duck species found regularly in the area. Here we present just a few of the species he described. Fulvous Whistling-Ducks ("Mexican Squealers" to hunters) mostly leave the area from October through spring, wintering in Mexico. They are not seen very often in salt marsh. The bright orangish color is characteristic, as is a very broad white U-shaped mark in the rump/tail area, very prominent in flight. They are very goose like in structure, with long legs, which uniquely among ducks, extend behind the tail in flight. This, coupled with the long neck and slower wing beat than most ducks helps identify them.

Not too many years ago, one had to go to South Texas to see Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks but they have expanded their range in recent years and are now present year round, breeding in the area in considerable numbers. They are very reliably found near the Keith Lake boat ramp, where they partake of free food intended for the waterfowl collection there. This species has an all gray face, white eye-ring, and a very prominent broad white stripe on the wing.

Wood Ducks also nest in the area, and are found mostly in wooded swamps near water, and not in salt marshes. Along with Mallards they are the commonest duck in the timber areas of Arkansas. One or two are often found in the "Natural Wetland" in the back of Cattail Marsh. Males are unmistakable. The female is a much drabber gray duck, but the prominent white tear-shaped patch round the eye is diagnostic. They tend to fly in small flocks of up to four or

five, with their bills pointed down at a 30 to 45 degree angle, and look large headed.

John divided most of the rest of the ducks into the "Dabbling" or "Puddle" ducks which are able to feed on the vegetation on the bottom of ponds by merely tilting up, and the diving ducks, which have to dive completely under water to feed. The dabbling ducks are prized more by hunters because they eat tender vegetation and not fish or mollusks, and meat from them is better tasting as a result. Dabbling ducks include most notably the Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shovelers, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mottled Duck and Mallard. Diving ducks include the two species of scaup, the Canvasback, Redhead, Common Goldeneye and the Ring-necked Duck. Three other groups of duck are commonly found in the area. The mergansers, the Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers, both have special serrated bills for catching fish. The scoter group in the area includes three species, the Common, the Surf and the White-winged Scoters found exclusively in salt water, often in mixed flocks in the surf. The Long-tailed Duck, formerly known as the Oldsquaw, is somewhat related to the Scoters. The Common Goldeneye and the Bufflehead are also related, albeit not closely to the scoters. The "stiff-tailed" ducks are so named because they tend to hold their tail in a near vertical manner. The Ruddy Duck is the common one in the area, with Masked Duck being an extreme rarity.

We have given just a sampling of the program as it covered all the local species of duck. John gave a great program. We appreciated his sharing of his knowledge and expertise which will help us identify ducks. Thank you, John.

Jana Whittle

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 such date, please remit your contribution of \$15 to Golden Triangle Audubon Society at P.O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292. We will appreciate your support even if you receive the *Brown Pelican* electronically.

However, we need to make it clear that contribution towards the cost of running the Chapter and producing the *Brown Pelican* is voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the official chapter territory. 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.

We have started to offer electronic delivery of the *Brown Pelican* in lieu of hard copy and now offer four alternatives.

- 1) to receive an email each month with a pdf file attached P.O.;
- 2) to receive an email each month with a link to the Newsletter on the website;
- 3) continue with a mailed copy; or
- 4) check the GTAS website yourself. Please mail us at P.O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292, or email us at GTAudubon@aol.com with your preference. Please include your name and address as it currently appears on your mailing label and, if requesting an email, your preferred email address.

Bird Sightings –September 2011

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 johnawhittle@aol.com or call (409) 722-4193. For "very rare" birds, or very much out-of-season species, 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: As reported elsewhere in this issue, this was an exciting fall migration season for the local birder. The listing also includes the birds seen on the Migration Count described in last month's issue. Unusual species seen this month include a Cassin's Vireo and a Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, unfortunately both seen for a brief period in Sabine Woods and not subsequently relocated.

WHISTLING-DUCK, Blk-bell.
WHISTLING-DUCK, Blk-bell. (2-21) JEF 7 reps(160)
WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (17-17) JEF-TP 9/17(1) MC05
DUCK, Mottled (9-17) JEF 4 reps(28)
TEAL, Blue-winged (7-17) JEF 5 reps(287)
SHOVELER, Northern (17-17) JEF-SRSP 9/17(5) MC11; JEF-TP 9/17(17) MC05
TEAL, Green-winged (17-17) JEF-TP 9/17(1) MC05
BOBWHITE, Northern (19-19) JEF 9/19(9) JAW
GREBE, Pied-billed (17-17) JEF 3 reps(17)
STORK, Wood (17-17) JEF 9/17(1) MC01; JEF 9/17(2) MC7/8
FRIGATEBIRD, Magnificent (5-5) JEF-TX87 9/5(1) GD
CORMORANT, Neotropic (2-30) JEF 22 reps(332)
CORMORANT, Double-crest (17-17) JEF 2 reps(21)
ANHINGA (3-17) JEF 9/3(1) MHW; JEF 9/17(110) MC02; JEF-BMT 9/17(60) MC03; JEF-TP 9/17(3) MC05
PELICAN, Brown (2-30) JEF 18 reps(265)
HERON, Great Blue (2-27) JEF 16 reps(28)
EGRET, Great (2-30) JEF 31 reps(170)
EGRET, Snowy (2-25) JEF 27 reps(186)
HERON, Little Blue (9-23) JEF 7 reps(22)
HERON, Tricolored (2-25) JEF 14 reps(48)
EGRET, Reddish (17-25) JEF-SRSP 9/17(3) MC11; JEF-SRSP 9/25(1) MW
EGRET, Cattle (2-30) JEF 34 reps(5369)
HERON, Green (6-19) JEF 9 reps(17)
NIGHT-HERON, Black-cr. (17-17) JEF-TP 9/17(2) MC05
NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr. (1-22) JEF 6 reps(11)
IBIS, White (3-30) JEF 23 reps(670)
IBIS, White-faced (17-19) JEF 3 reps(13)
IBIS, Plegadis (17-23) JEF 4 reps(190)
SPOONBILL, Roseate (11-19) JEF 5 reps(52)
VULTURE, Black (5-25) JEF 18 reps(78)
VULTURE, Turkey (2-30) JEF 32 reps(128)
VULTURE species (20-20) JEF 1 rep(2)
OSPREY (17-26) JEF 9/17(1) MC06; JEF-TP 9/17(1) MC05; JEF-TX87 9/20(1) JAW; JEF-SRSP 9/26(1) JFW
KITE, Swallow-tailed (17-18) JEF-SW 9/17(1) MC10; JEF 9/18(1) RA
KITE, White-tailed (2-26) JEF-SRSP 9/2(1) JAW; JEF-SW 9/17(3) MC10; JEF-SRSP 9/26(1) JFW
KITE, Mississippi (5-17) JEF-SW 9/5(2) MW; JEF 9/17(2) MC06; JEF-SW 9/17(7) MC10
HARRIER, Northern (17-30) JEF 9 reps(12)
HAWK, Sharp-shinned (17-25) JEF 5 reps(7)
HAWK, Cooper's (2-20) JEF 10 reps(10)
ACCIPITER species (7-7) JEF-SW 9/7(1) JHW
HAWK, Red-shouldered (5-22) JEF 13 reps(24)
HAWK, Broad-winged (5-20) JEF 16 reps(37)
HAWK, Swainson's (17-30) JEF 7 reps(7)
HAWK, Red-tailed (8-27) JEF 7 reps(8)
CARACARA, Crested (5-17) JEF 7 reps(11)
KESTREL, American (5-23) JEF 13 reps(27)
MERLIN (17-25) JEF 6 reps(8)

FALCON, Peregrine (11-18) JEF-SRSP 9/11(1) TF; JEF-SW 9/18(1) JAW
RAIL, Clapper (11-18) JEF 3 reps(23)
RAIL, King (17-17) JEF-MCFW 9/17(1) MC12
GALLINULE, Common (17-23) JEF 2 reps(56)
PLOVER, Black-bellied (2-26) JEF 5 reps(28)
PLOVER, Snowy (4-25) JEF-SRSP 9/4(1) TF; JEF-SRSP 9/17(9) MC11; JEF-SRSP 9/25(11) MW
PLOVER, Wilson's (17-17) JEF-SRSP 9/17(1) MC11
PLOVER, Semipalmated (17-18) JEF 2 reps(2)
PLOVER, Piping (4-17) JEF-SRSP 9/4(1) TF; JEF-SRSP 9/17(10) MC11
KILLDEER (2-25) JEF 14 reps(54)
OYSTERCATCHER, Amer. (10-10) JEF-TXPT 9/10(1) JFW
STILT, Black-necked (8-19) JEF 10 reps(42)
AVOCET, American (17-17) JEF 3 reps(103)
SANDPIPER, Spotted (9-17) JEF 6 reps(15)
SANDPIPER, Solitary (17-19) JEF-TP 9/17(1) MC05; JEF 9/19(1) JAW
YELLOWLEGS, Greater (17-25) JEF 4 reps(11)
WILLET (3-26) JEF 10 reps(54)
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (7-17) JEF 3 reps(21)
SANDPIPER, Upland (4-17) JEF-SRSP 9/4(8) TF; JEF-SRSP 9/17(1) MC11
GODWIT, Marbled (17-17) JEF 9/17(3) MC09; JEF-SRSP 9/17(2) MC11
TURNSTONE, Ruddy (17-25) JEF 3 reps(13)
SANDERLING (2-26) JEF 4 reps(64)
SANDPIPER, Semipalmated (11-17) JEF-PI 9/11(3) JAW; JEF 9/17(1) MC01; JEF-TP 9/17(10) MC05
SANDPIPER, Western (17-25) JEF 4 reps(19)
SANDPIPER, Least (4-19) JEF 8 reps(332)
SANDPIPER, Pectoral (7-17) JEF 9/7(3) RA; JEF 9/17(1) MC01; JEF-TP 9/17(4) MC05
SANDPIPER, Stilt (7-17) JEF 9/7(2) RA; JEF-TP 9/17(45) MC05
SANDPIPER, Buff-breasted (17-17) JEF 9/17(75) MC01; JEF 9/17(5) MC04
DOWITCHER species (7-17) JEF 3 reps(130)
GULL, Laughing (2-30) JEF 28 reps(645)
GULL, Ring-billed (6-17) JEF 3 reps(4)
TERN, Least (11-17) JEF 2 reps(5)
TERN, Caspian (2-26) JEF 8 reps(134)
TERN, Black (11-17) JEF 3 reps(60)
TERN, Common (17-17) JEF-SRSP 9/17(1) MC11
TERN, Forster's (2-26) JEF 10 reps(194)
TERN, Royal (2-26) JEF 7 reps(357)
TERN, Sandwich (8-8) JEF-MURW 9/8(1) JA
SKIMMER, Black (2-17) JEF 6 reps(209)
PIGEON, Rock (2-30) HAI 3 reps(162); JEF 27 reps(755)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (1-27) JEF 12 reps(50)
DOVE, White-winged (2-30) JEF 40 reps(456)
DOVE, Mourning (2-30) HAI 3 reps(30); JEF 27 reps(656)
DOVE, Inca (6-21) HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 8 reps(24)
GROUND-DOVE, Common (17-17) JEF-TP 9/17(1) MC05

CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (5-21) JEF 12 reps(25)
CUCKOO, species (3-3) JEF-SW 9/3(2) MHW
OWL, Barn (3-30) JEF 6 reps(6)
SCREECH-OWL, Eastern (17-17) JEF-BMT 9/17(1) MC03
OWL, Great Horned (2-29) JEF 12 reps(13)
OWL, Barred (17-17) JEF-BMT 9/17(1) MC03
NIGHTHAWK, Common (3-19) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(4)
WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck- (4-25) JEF 18 reps(49)
SWIFT, Chimney (9-26) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 10 reps(112)
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr. (1-30) HAI 15 reps(515); JEF 69
 reps(1162)
HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tail. (21-29) JEF-BMT 9/21(1) RHJ; JEF-
 BMT 9/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 9/29(1) RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (22-22) JEF-NEDR 9/22(1) JJW
HUMMINGBIRD, Selasph. (6-22) JEF 5 reps(5)
HUMMINGBIRD species (17-25) JEF 7 reps(54)
KINGFISHER, Belted (9-30) JEF 9 reps(14)
WOODPECKER, Red-head. (14-27) JEF 3 reps(6)
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (2-23) HAI 3 reps(7); JEF 23 reps(56)
WOODPECKER, Downy (2-30) JEF 25 reps(55)
WOODPECKER, Pileated (10-23) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 5 reps(15)
FLYCATCHER, Olive-sided (6-17) JEF 9 reps(14)
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (2-30) JEF 24 reps(75)
FLYCATCHER, Yell-bellied (2-23) JEF 21 reps(45)
FLYCATCHER, Acadian (2-17) JEF 6 reps(12)
FLYCATCHER, Alder (11-19) JEF-SW 9/11(1) AFF; JEF-SW
 9/19(1) JAW
FLYCATCHER, Traill's (2-22) JEF 16 reps(44)
FLYCATCHER, Least (2-30) JEF 26 reps(110)
EMPIDONAX species (2-30) JEF 24 reps(176)
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (17-17) JEF 9/17(1) MC01
FLYCATCHER, Gt Crested (2-30) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 29 reps(213)
FLYCATCHER, Sulphur-bell (15-15) JEF-SW 9/15(1) LB
KINGBIRD, Western (19-19) JEF 9/19(1) JAW
KINGBIRD, Eastern (2-25) JEF 33 reps(368)
FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tail. (2-30) JEF 18 reps(103)
SHRIKE, Loggerhead (2-30) JEF 35 reps(223)
VIREO, White-eyed (5-25) HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 20 reps(103)
VIREO, Bell's (10-17) JEF-SW 9/10(1) GTAS; JEF-
 SW 9/17(1) MC10
VIREO, Yellow-throated (17-22) JEF-SW 9/17(1) MC10; JEF-
 SW 9/22(1) JHW
VIREO, Cassin's (9-9) JEF-SW 9/9(1) JHW
VIREO, Blue-headed (6-30) JEF-SW 9/6(1) JHW; JEF-SW
 9/30(1) JHW
VIREO, Warbling (6-21) JEF 10 reps(21)
VIREO, Philadelphia (6-6) JEF-SW 9/6(2) JHW
VIREO, Red-eyed (2-30) JEF 15 reps(41)
JAY, Blue (2-30) HAI 4 reps(26); JEF 26
 reps(207)
CROW, American (8-19) HAI 1 rep(4); JEF 6 reps(15)
CROW, Fish (17-17) JEF 3 reps(20)
CROW, species (5-23) JEF 4 reps(18)
MARTIN, Purple (17-19) JEF 6 reps(3182)
SWALLOW, Tree (8-11) JEF 4 reps(25)
SWALLOW, N. Rough-wing. (17-17) JEF-SW 9/17(1) MC10; JEF-TP
 9/17(35) MC05
SWALLOW, Bank (15-17) JEF-SW 9/15(2) JAW; JEF
 9/17(2) MC09; JEF-SW 9/17(5) MC10
SWALLOW, Cliff (3-23) JEF 12 reps(217)
SWALLOW, Cave (6-6) JEF-SW 9/6(1) JHW
SWALLOW, Barn (3-25) JEF 26 reps(436)
SWALLOW species (11-11) JEF 9/11(10) JJW
CHICKADEE, Carolina (2-30) HAI 5 reps(15); JEF 21 reps(77)
TITMOUSE, Tufted (5-17) HAI 2 reps(4); JEF 3 reps(22)
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (17-17) JEF 9/17(2) MC02
WREN, Carolina (2-30) HAI 3 reps(5); JEF 21 reps(48)
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (2-30) HAI 2 reps(4); JEF 29 reps(401)
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (17-30) JEF 3 reps(4)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern (17-17) JEF 2 reps(27)
VEERY (15-15) JEF-SW 9/15(1) JAW
ROBIN, American (9-23) JEF 6 reps(13)
CATBIRD, Gray (4-30) JEF 14 reps(32)
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (1-30) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 41 reps(425)
THRASHER, Brown (2-30) HAI 5 reps(5); JEF 28 reps(43)
STARLING, European (3-30) JEF 29 reps(746)

OVENBIRD (2-22) JEF 18 reps(31)
WARBLER, Worm-eating (6-17) JEF-SW 9/6(1) DGS; JEF-SW
 9/17(1) MC10
WATERTHRUSH, Northern (2-30) JEF 20 reps(42)
WARBLER, Golden-winged (5-9) JEF-SW 9/5(1) MW; JEF-SW
 9/8(1) JHH; JEF-SW 9/8(1) KSA; JEF-SW 9/9(1) JHW
WARBLER, Blue-winged (3-20) JEF 15 reps(25)
WARBLER, Black-and-wh. (2-30) JEF 27 reps(209)
WARBLER, Prothonotary (2-17) JEF 10 reps(28)
WARBLER, Tennessee (30-30) JEF-SW 9/30(8) JHW
WARBLER, Orange-crown. (17-17) JEF-BMT 9/17(1) MC03
WARBLER, Nashville (6-30) JEF 11 reps(17)
WARBLER, Mourning (2-23) JEF 25 reps(60)
WARBLER, Kentucky (3-10) JEF 5 reps(6)
YELLOWTHROAT, Common (2-30) JEF 24 reps(52)
WARBLER, Hooded (2-30) JEF 22 reps(31)
REDSTART, American (5-30) JEF 25 reps(117)
WARBLER, Cerulean (3-6) JEF-SW 9/3(1) MHW; JEF-SW
 9/6(1) JHW
PARULA, Northern (3-30) JEF 16 reps(33)
WARBLER, Magnolia (5-30) JEF 12 reps(24)
WARBLER, Bay-breasted (11-30) JEF-SW 9/11(1) AFF; JEF
 9/17(1) MC78; JEF-SW 9/17(1) MC10; JEF-SW 9/23(1) JAW;
 JEF-SW 9/30(1) JHW
WARBLER, Blackburnian (5-20) JEF 8 reps(9)
WARBLER, Yellow (2-20) JEF 25 reps(109)
WARBLER, Chestnut-sided (5-20) JEF-SW 9/5(1) MW; JEF-SW
 9/20(1) JAW
WARBLER, Palm (17-17) JEF 9/17(1) MC09
WARBLER, Pine (17-17) JEF 2 reps(4)
WARBLER, Yellow-throated (6-22) JEF 7 reps(8)
WARBLER, Prairie (3-21) JEF 10 reps(16)
WARBLER, Black-thr. Green (7-30) JEF 11 reps(14)
WARBLER, Canada (2-30) JEF 23 reps(106)
WARBLER, Wilson's (6-30) JEF 21 reps(80)
CHAT, Yellow-breasted (2-30) JEF 23 reps(44)
SPARROW, Lark (18-19) JEF-BMT 9/18(1) RA; JEF
 9/19(2) JAW
SPARROW, Seaside (11-17) JEF 4 reps(60)
SPARROW, Lincoln's (16-17) JEF-SW 9/16(1) JHW; JEF-SW
 9/17(1) MC10
SPARROW, Swamp (15-15) JEF-SW 9/15(1) JAW
TANAGER, Summer (4-23) JEF 12 reps(14)
TANAGER, Scarlet (9-30) JEF-SW 9/9(1) JHW; JEF-SW
 9/17(1) MC10; JEF-SW 9/21(2) JAW; JEF-SW 9/30(1) JHW
TANAGER, Western (15-17) JEF-SW 9/15(1) JAW; JEF-SW
 9/17(1) MC10
CARDINAL, Northern (3-27) HAI 7 reps(480); JEF 20
 reps(155)
GROSBEEK, Blue (10-23) JEF 12 reps(128)
BUNTING, Indigo (5-30) HAI 3 reps(3); JEF 15 reps(67)
BUNTING, Painted (2-22) JEF 15 reps(38)
DICKCISSEL (17-17) JEF 4 reps(267)
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (7-30) JEF 18 reps(190)
MEADOWLARK, Eastern (17-20) JEF 9/17(3) MC01; JEF 9/17(1)
 MC02; JEF 9/20(1) JAW
GRACKLE, Common (3-23) JEF 13 reps(401)
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (2-30) JEF 26 reps(256)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed (2-30) JEF 30 reps(1191)
GRACKLE, Gt./Boat tailed (5-23) JEF 12 reps(307)
COWBIRD, Brown-headed (17-22) JEF 7 reps(417)
BLACKBIRD species (19-22) JEF 3 reps(180)
ORIOLE, Orchard (7-21) JEF 9 reps(15)
ORIOLE, Baltimore (5-30) JEF 26 reps(120)
FINCH, House (2-21) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 10 reps(21)
SPARROW, House (5-25) JEF 14 reps(309)

Number of Species 213
Number of Individuals 57774

County Abbreviations:
 HAI — Hardin; JEF — Jefferson

Location Codes:
 BMT — Beaumont; MCFW — McFaddin NWR; MURW — J. D. Murphree WMA, NEDR — Nederland; PI — Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SILS — Silsbee; SRSP — Sea Rim State Park;
continued on page 7

Sabine Woods Work Day -- October 1, 2011

We had an excellent turnout of volunteers (19) for our work day on Saturday October 1st. The weather could not have been better, a nice sunny day with moderate temperatures, low humidity – well by Southeast Texas standards, anyway – and a relatively low insect population.

Probably nobody in Texas reading this will need to be reminded that this was an exceptionally dry year. Southeast Texas has fared better than the rest of the state, and from mid-August, there have been several significant rainfall events at strategically satisfactory intervals and the Woods are now in much better shape. There is a little water in the deepest part of the large pond again. The small pond has had a little water in it all summer fed by the drip and also some leaks in the drip feed line. The feed line has been replaced, using plastic rather than copper tubing this time. We planted approximately 50 one to two inch live oaks in November/December 2009 using the grant from the Birding Classic, and over 100 mulberry seedlings grown for us by Jim Anding also during the winter of 2009/10. We knew we were going to have to water them during the summer of 2010, but we did not expect to have to do it again in summer 2011! This year, the trees were able to tolerate a two week watering interval, but it was not pleasant work in mid summer, and we are extremely grateful for those volunteers who suffered through the heat of May, June and July to help. Given almost the worst possible conditions that could have happened, we are very gratified that probably more than two-thirds of the oak trees and the vast majority of the mulberries have survived. The mulberries look very healthy, and soon will be taller than the slower growing oaks. Last winter, we planted a large number of willow trees around the large pond, and watered these after the pond dried up in early summer. They have responded magnificently, and most are approximately 10 feet tall already! Our biggest need now is for hackberries. Hackberries are fast growing trees and we want to transplant fairly small ones as these seem to establish themselves much faster than larger trees, which necessarily suffer more root damage in the transplanting process.

We are still working through the legacy of Hurricane Ike (2008) as it becomes necessary to deal with dead trees. While the majority of such trees are in locations where they pose no threat to birders on the trails, we are carefully watching some others. We are more concerned about the possibility of large waterlogged limbs falling off these trees than with the possibility of an entire tree falling. With several volunteers highly experienced in dealing with large trees, we were able to take down the largest tree that had the potential to fall over a trail. We then cleared the trail, leaving nature to take care of the debris as it provides cover for birds in the interim. Several other smaller trees that were leaning were felled, and some large low branches cut off others. Birders will need to stay on established trails at all times and to stay out of the woods during thunderstorms or other storm force winds, probably for several years to come.

The very welcome rains of August and September, although very modest in terms of inches, did cause amazing growth in the meadow areas and trails, but these were mowed during the work day. The proximity of the Gulf of Mexico and

the resulting higher humidity apparently also gives the grasses and shrubs an opportunity to absorb the morning dew. Our volunteers also cut low the small low hanging branches that intrude into the trail each year. It should be easy birding on the trails through to early spring.

We are over the hump as far as control of invasive exotics is concerned. Only a very small number of tallow seedlings have needed to be dealt with over the last two years. There was essentially no water in the pond so no water hyacinth problem this year. We have dealt with a few chinaberry trees, and this leaves the McCartney rose as perhaps the worst remaining problem. We have dealt with almost all the rose that was inside the woods, so most of the remaining rose is on the periphery of the sanctuary, although there is quite a lot in some areas around the newly planted trees in the east. Thanks to Howard Davis and his tractor and brushhog we have been able to regularly mow the open areas around the new trees, both to control this rose, and to reduce competition for water. We should be able to spot treat this rose in the next year or two.

Fall migration birding this year has been exceptional. For almost all of September, with light, often north, winds, it appears that usually one day's good selection of birds continued migration in the late evening to be replaced by another good variety of birds from the north. It has been a rare day that less than ten species of warbler have been seen, and several days produced 18 or more species.

In addition to the contributions of Jim Anding and Howard Davis already mentioned, we need to thank Gary Kelley, who has put in a lot of time and effort dealing with water issues, including a very troublesome backflow preventer that we are required to have before the city will supply us with water. The following volunteers helped on the October 1 work day: Andy Allen, Richard Atkins, Linda and Howard Davis, Terry Ferguson, Margaret Fontaine, John Haynes, Denise and Gary Kelley, Steve Kuritz, Steve Mayes, Wendy Mires, Sally and Chuck Moffet, Sherrie Roden, Phil Rogers, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart.

John A. Whittle

Can You Help us Find Hackberry Trees for Sabine Woods?

As you know, the storm surge of Hurricane Ike killed a lot of trees in Sabine Woods. We have been working to replace these, and to expand the motte in an easterly direction. One of the species that we are now most in need of is hackberry. Hackberries are favored by many bird species, but unfortunately, many were destroyed by Ike. On the plus side, they are fast growing. What we are looking for is a supply of young hackberry trees, no more than perhaps two or three feet tall, that are currently growing somewhere locally that we can dig up and transplant. In all probability these will be trees that have grown naturally from seed that the landowner either does not want or will need to thin out. Please contact me at johnawhittle@aol.com or 409-722-4193 if you can help. We will provide the labor to dig them up and the means to transport them to Sabine Woods.

John A. Whittle

The Fall 2011 Migration Season

We have in the past provided extensive summaries of spring migration, but have never done the same for fall migration. Fall migration as compared to spring migration is a much more drawn out affair. The number of birders who bird extensively in the fall and report to us is very much smaller. However, this fall has produced, from a birding perspective, the best fall we have ever experienced. We do not have space to reproduce the entire tabular summary here, but by the time you read this, we will have posted it on the Golden Triangle Audubon website at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org as a pdf file for easy viewing and downloading. This table includes only the migrant species where a more or less complete picture can be presented. Several groups were excluded because we do not have enough data. Swallows are perhaps the most notable. Nor have we included wintering species, such as sparrows, or other species expected to overwinter.

What was different this year was the weather. Not so much the drought per se, but the weather patterns that contributed to it. During the entire migration period from about August 20 through the middle of October, winds were generally light and often with a northerly component. This gave rise to day after day of mostly favorable conditions for migration. There were very few times when migrants collected and increased in numbers waiting for unfavorable conditions for the long Gulf of Mexico crossing to abate. Night after night, migrants arrived from the north to replace those that had continued south. Day after day, birders could find at least ten species of warbler, sometimes as many as 19. Numbers of each species were not always high, but the variety was great.

Warblers are not the only birds of interest in the fall. Flycatchers come through rather late in the spring. In the fall, flycatchers are among the earliest of migrants, many passing through in August. However, the migration window for many species does extend through most of September. There were plenty of opportunities this year to study the subtle differences among the *Empidonax* flycatchers. Olive-sided Flycatchers are often only seen on a few days in our area, and usually singly, but this year they were relatively common, with four birds being seen simultaneously on a couple of occasions.

Vireos were somewhat of a disappointment, with relatively low numbers, particularly of Yellow-throated Vireos. Finding an almost certain Cassin's Vireo on September 9 and Bell's Vireos on September 10 and 17 made up for the lack of numbers of the more common species.

Although thrush numbers in the fall are always much lower than in the spring, thrush migration was even more disappointing. We don't know what happened to Swainson's and Wood Thrushes this fall. We have only one report of a Gray-cheeked Thrush.

Warblers on the other hand showed up in very good numbers, with only a few exceptions. Ovenbirds were found often, usually one to three birds on any given day. Worm-eating Warblers were perhaps the biggest disappointment, with single birds only on only four days. Northern Waterthrushes were present in modest numbers the first half of September, but this may be one species that our ability to find was hampered by the dry conditions in Sabine Woods. We are lucky to find Golden-winged Warblers in the fall, so birds on

three days in early September were encouraging for this species of concern. Blue-winged Warblers were seen in modest numbers through the first half of September. Female and young Black-and-white Warblers were plentiful through the middle of October, but adult males were not to be found. Prothonotary Warblers were numerous in the first half of September. Towards the end of the period Nashville Warblers became plentiful, but large concentrations of Tennessee Warblers never materialized. This season will be remembered for the number of Mourning Warblers that were seen and the prolonged period involved. Every day that we have reports for from September 7 to 23 – we only lack a report from the 13th – there were Mourning Warblers, often three or four and even eight on one occasion. Birds of this species were seen from August 21 to October 9! On the other hand, Kentucky Warblers were very scarce. Hooded Warblers were certainly present over the normal period, but there just weren't days with lots of them. American Redstarts are always conspicuous in migration and this year was no exception from September 6 through the end of the period. Cerulean Warblers are rare finds in the fall, so two females on September 3 and 6 were appreciated. Northern Parulas for the most part lived up to their reputation as late migrants. Magnolia Warblers were probably normal after a slow start, while Bay-breasted Warblers, difficult to identify in the fall and possibly overlooked, were reported on only five days. Several Blackburnian Warblers were seen in September. Yellow Warblers seemed to peak very early this year, but numbers were good. Chestnut-sided Warbler numbers were disappointing, but those of Prairie Warblers were not. Black-throated Green Warblers were spread thinly over the entire period. Canada Warbler numbers were very high through the end of September. Wilson's Warblers were present in high numbers starting very early for the species around September 10, and continuing throughout the period. Yellow-breasted Chats were seen in numbers in September, welcome after a poor spring showing.

Summer Tanager numbers seemed low, while Scarlet Tanagers were seen on the usual four or five occasions. Indigo Buntings came through late as usual, but in good numbers.

Sightings *(continued from page 5)*

SW — Sabine Woods; TP — Tyrrell Park incl. Cattail Marsh; TX87 — Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP; TXPT — Road to Pilot Station at Texas Point

Observer Abbreviations

AFF — Mike Austin, Tony and Phyllis Frank; CSL — Christine Sliva; DGS — Dottie and Gene Schulz; GD — Gerald Duhon; GTAS — Golden Triangle Audubon Meeting, Tyrrell Park; JA — Jim Armacost; JAW — John Whittle; JFW — Jana Whittle; JHH — John H. Haynes; JHW — John Haynes and John Whittle; JJW — John and Jana Whittle; KSA — Kelley Sampeck; LB — Lynn Barber; MC01 — Migration Count Area 1; MC02 — Migration Count Area 2; MC03 — Migration Count Area 3; MC04 — Migration Count Area 4; MC05 — Migration Count Area 5; MC06 — Migration Count Area 6; MC7/8 — Migration Count Area 7 & 8; MC09 — Migration Count Area 9; MC10 — Migration Count Area 10; MC11 — Migration Count Area 11; MC12 — Migration Count Area 12; MG — Melanie Goetsell; MHW — Steve Mayes, John Haynes, John Whittle; MW — Steve Mayes and John Whittle; RA — Richard Atkins; RHJ — Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; RSWW — Sherrie Roden, Harlan Stewart, Jana and John Whittle; SAAS — San Antonio Audubon Society Group; TF — Terry Ferguson.

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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 fee. Most rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at <http://lists.texbirds.org/texbirds.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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