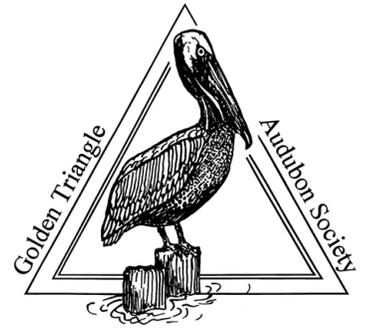


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 19 No. 2

February 2012

**Membership Meeting
Thursday, February 16, 2012
7:00 PM
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont
Fire Management in the Upper Texas Marshes
C. Craig Crenshaw
Assistant Fire Management Officer
Texas Chenier Plains Refuge Complex**

Craig Crenshaw was born and raised in Corpus Christi, TX. and obtained a B.S. at East Texas State University, Commerce and an M.S. at Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas. He started his career with the Fire Management Branch of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 1993, his first duty station being at the Charles M. Russell NWR in the Missouri River Breaks of Montana. During his tenure with the Fish & Wildlife Service, he has been a part of nearly 400 prescribed or wildfires in 15 different states.

Craig is based at the Texas Point/McFaddin headquarters building in Sabine Pass, and was responsible for management of the wildfire in Texas Point NWR last June, and the wildfire in McFaddin NWR in early January.

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

The Brown Pelican

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Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Important Note: Field Trip notices published here should always be regarded as needing confirmation. Between the notices here being prepared and the field trip date, conditions could change. Our ability to access sites could change; and local bird concentrations could change quite rapidly. We want to be able to make changes and adjustments to take advantage of the latter. Changes will always be posted on the website at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. Confirmation of the location will also always be available at the Membership Meeting normally two days prior to each trip, or by contacting Field Trip Committee chair, Steve Mayes at 409-722-5807 or sgmayes@hotmail.com

Thursday February 16, 2012.
Membership Meeting. Details on p. 1.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank all those who brought refreshments for the January meeting. **We need volunteers to bring items for all the remaining spring 2012 meetings.** Dessert for the February meeting is already committed, but we need everything else. 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! Even if you would like to 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!

Saturday February 18, 2012. Field Trip. This trip will be to Sheldon Lake State Park and nearby Harris and Chambers County, looking for wintering passerines, waterfowl but also raptors and sparrows. Sheldon Lake State Park includes a large lake, which attracts many waterfowl, and well as (normally) moist wooded areas and newly restored prairie. The park entrance and

Environmental Learning Center are at 15315 Beaumont Highway (Business 90) at Park Road 138 just outside the northeast section of Houston. We will meet at 8:15 a.m. inside the park outside the Environmental Learning Center. 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 at Sheldon Road and turn north. After just over five miles cross under US 90. Go another half mile or so and turn left on Business 90 (Beaumont Highway) and proceed just over two miles to the park entrance on the right

The narrow park entrance road is inconspicuous and not well signed, and may not be shown on your GPS.. There is an eye-level brown sign right at the entrance road.

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

Saturday March 10, 2010. Sabine Woods Work Day. Please mark your calendars now, as you may not receive the March issue before this date. We plan to get the trails ready for spring migration. There are a number of medium sized, but quite tall, dead trees near trails that we need to take down. Although we hope to be able to bush hog the larger areas, we will need riding and push mowers for several other areas that will need attention. We plan another Work Day for mid-May.



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.

Great Backyard Bird Count Perfect for New Birders

15th annual count takes place Feb. 17-20

The annual Great Backyard Bird Count is the perfect opportunity. The event is hosted by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species.

Anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20, 2012. Enter your results at www.birdcount.org, where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations.

"When thousands of people all tell us what they're seeing, we can detect patterns in how birds are faring from year to year," said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a perfect example of Citizen Science," says Audubon Chief Scientist, Gary Langham. "Like Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, volunteers help us with data year after year, providing scientific support that is the envy of many institutions. It's also a lot of fun."

"We're finding that more people are taking part in our bird count programs every year--and the more that take part, the better it is for the birds," says Richard Cannings, Senior Projects Officer for Bird Studies Canada.

The 2011 GBBC brought in more than 92,000 bird checklists submitted by participants from across the United States and Canada. Altogether, bird watchers identified 596 species with 11.4 million bird observations. Results from the 2011 GBBC included:

- Increased reports of Evening Grosbeaks, a species that has been declining;
- A modest seasonal movement of winter finches farther south in their search for food;
- The Eurasian Collared-Dove was reported from Alaska for the first time, more evidence of an introduced species rapidly expanding its range.

Although it's called the Great "Backyard" Bird Count, the count extends well beyond backyards. Lots of participants choose to head for national parks, nature centers, urban parks, nature trails, or nearby sanctuaries. For more information, including bird-ID tips, instructions, and past results, visit www.birdcount.org.

The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter their bird checklists online.

January Program

Stephan Lorenz did an excellent presentation about his birding trip to New Zealand a few years ago. This is the second time he has spoken to our group. The first time it was on the Bering Sea.

His New Zealand trip was a few years ago. He rented a car

for 14 dollars a day, put a tent in the back and camped, or slept inside the car. He saw three Kiwis on his trip after very hard work because they are nocturnal and difficult to see. One place he waited for five hours to see one.

He also stressed that most of the birds in New Zealand are seabirds. He was able to see several species of Albatrosses including the Wandering Albatross, and also Flesh-footed Shearwaters. Below is a link to part of his slideshow.

<http://houston.culturemap.com/search/?q=stephan%20lorenz&page=2&sort=&stype=>

Jana Whittle

Winter Hummingbird Mini Field Trip

On January 20th, 14 people decided to take three hours to tour four of our members' yards to view their hummingbirds and plants. We began in our yard at 8:00 AM. The hummers were cooperative. At least three Rufous hummers were seen and a Buff-bellied Hummingbird. We had breakfast snacks then we went to Harlan Stewart's yard about five minutes away. There we viewed his two Calliope Hummingbirds, several Rufous and a different bird that we are not totally sure about. At one time we thought it might be a Broad-tailed, but the jury is still out about that bird now. After viewing his hummers, we drove to Beaumont to Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan's home. There we got to see a hummingbird going to a bird bath, and viewed several Rufous Hummingbirds and a Black-chinned Hummingbird. Many other birds were in the viewing area also such as House Finch, Pine Warbler, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Robin, Orange-crowned Warbler, Carolina Wren, Cardinals, Chickadees, etc. Our last stop was John Mariani's home. We saw several Rufous hummingbirds, and lots of Goldfinch. We saw Cardinals and Chickadees there also. We ended the trip eating at Golden Corral in Beaumont. For the total, we had at least ten Rufous, two Calliope, and one Black-chinned Hummingbird, not to mention the confusing hummer that we can't be sure of at this point. So, since people were able to see 13 hummers, we all now know how important it is to look out for hummers in the winter in our area. It was really a fun day.

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 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.

Bird Sightings – December 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: The December report includes the results of two of the four Christmas Bird Counts in the area we cover, the two in the Big Thicket in Hardin, Tyler and Jasper counties. The two in the southern part of the region in Jefferson and Orange counties are conducted in early January and the sightings will be included in the sightings in next month's report. For whatever reason, apart from the Christmas Counts, birding activity tends to be low in December. It is already clear that things picked up markedly in January, and next month's report will include many exciting finds. If you can't wait, check the Bird Alerts posted on the website www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. Meanwhile, this month's report does show a very good year for wintering hummingbirds, with six species reported, and a year with exceptional numbers of Red-tailed Hawks.

WHISTLING-DUCK, Blk-bell.	(27-27)	JEF-TX87 12/27(50) JJW
GOOSE, White-fronted	(1-19)	JEF 4 reps(34); TYL 1 rep(1)
GOOSE, Snow	(1-29)	HAI 1 rep(300); JEF 9 reps(4996); TYL 1 rep(100)
GOOSE, Ross's	(10-28)	JEF 12/10(3) RA; JEF-SW 12/27(1) JJW; TYL 12/28(1) BC10
DUCK, Wood	(19-28)	JAS 12/28(2) BC08; JEF 12/19(1) JAW; TYL 12/28(12) BC09
GADWALL	(14-29)	JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 4 reps(33); TYL 1 rep(1)
MALLARD DUCK, Mottled	(28-28)	JAS 12/28(3) BC08
TEAL, Blue-winged	(1-14)	JEF 3 reps(14)
SHOVELER, Northern	(28-29)	JEF 1 rep(10); TYL 1 rep(1)
SHOVELER, Northern	(1-28)	JEF 6 reps(87); TYL 1 rep(10)
PINTAIL, Northern	(29-29)	JEF-MURW 12/29(15) JA
TEAL, Green-winged	(4-19)	JEF 3 reps(36)
CANVASBACK	(18-28)	JAS 12/28(3) BC6/7; JEF-PI 12/18(2) SM; TYL 12/28(30) BC09; TYL 12/28(4) BC10
REDHEAD	(28-28)	TYL 12/28(16) BC09
DUCK, Ring-necked	(28-28)	JAS 12/28(6) BC6/7; TYL 12/28(30) BC09; TYL 12/28(4) BC10
SCAUP, Lesser	(18-18)	JEF-PI 12/18(5) SM
BUFFLEHEAD	(18-19)	JEF-PI 12/18(25) SM; JEF-PI 12/19(3) RHJ
GOLDENEYE, Common	(18-19)	JEF-PI 12/18(1) SM; JEF-PI 12/19(2) RHJ
MERGANSER, Hooded	(18-28)	JAS 12/28(1) BC08; JAS 12/28(1) BC6/7; JEF-PI 12/18(2) SM
MERGANSER, Red-breasted	(17-18)	JEF 2 reps(40)
DUCK species	(4-4)	JEF 1 rep(10)
DUCK, Ruddy	(18-19)	JEF 2 reps(404)
BOBWHITE, Northern	(4-4)	JEF 12/4(2) CSL
LOON, Common	(3-19)	JEF-MCFW 12/3(1) SM; JEF-PI 12/17(2) CK; JEF-PI 12/18(1) SM; JEF-PI 12/19(1) RHJ
GREBE, Pied-billed	(3-28)	JAS 1 rep(3); JEF 3 reps(9); T/H 1 rep(3); TYL 2 reps(329)
GREBE, Horned	(17-18)	JEF-PI 12/17(4) CK; JEF-PI 12/18(9) SM
GREBE, Eared	(18-19)	JEF-PI 12/18(2) SM; JEF-PI 12/19(3) RHJ
CORMORANT, Neotropic	(1-27)	JEF 4 reps(156)
CORMORANT, Double-crest.	(17-28)	HAI 1 rep(3); JAS 2 reps(234); JEF 1 rep(100); TYL 2 reps(59)
CORMORANT, Species	(27-27)	JEF 1 rep(150)
ANHINGA	(3-28)	JAS 12/28(4) BC08; JEF 12/3(3) CSL; JEF 12/27(1) JJW; TYL 12/28(4) BC09
PELICAN, Amer. White	(1-28)	JEF 3 reps(46); TYL 1 rep(2)
PELICAN, Brown	(19-29)	JEF 3 reps(117)
HERON, Great Blue	(4-29)	JAS 2 reps(6); JEF 7 reps(13); TYL 4 reps(14)
EGRET, Great	(1-29)	JAS 2 reps(14); JEF 12 reps(43); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(9)
EGRET, Snowy	(1-29)	JAS 1 rep(1); JEF 6 reps(46); TYL 1 rep(1)
HERON, Little Blue	(19-29)	JEF 2 reps(6)
HERON, Tricolored	(1-29)	JEF 2 reps(9)
HERON, Green	(1-1)	JEF-MURW 12/1(1) JA
NIGHT-HERON, Black-crown.	(28-28)	JAS 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(1)
IBIS, White	(1-29)	JAS 2 reps(8); JEF 5 reps(200); TYL 1 rep(8)
IBIS, White-faced	(1-29)	JEF 2 reps(27)
IBIS, Plegadis	(7-28)	JEF 12/7(35) JAW; JEF 12/10(300) RA; TYL 12/28(2) BC09
SPOONBILL, Roseate	(19-29)	JEF 2 reps(4)
VULTURE, Black	(10-30)	HAI 4 reps(24); JAS 2 reps(20); JEF 2 reps(6); T/H 1 rep(9); TYL 9 reps(63)
VULTURE, Turkey	(3-30)	HAI 5 reps(39); JAS 2 reps(24); JEF 8 reps(46); T/H 1 rep(18); TYL 13 reps(94)
OSPREY	(3-28)	JAS 12/28(8) BC08; JEF 12/3(1) CSL
KITE, White-tailed	(3-19)	JEF 5 reps(6)
EAGLE, Bald	(3-28)	JAS 12/28(1) BC6/7; JEF 12/3(1) CSL; ORA 12/8(1) SBE; TYL 12/28(2) BC09; TYL 12/28(3) BC10
HARRIER, Northern	(4-29)	JEF 9 reps(46); TYL 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	(10-17)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 3 reps(3)
HAWK, Cooper's	(4-15)	HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 1 rep(1)
HAWK, Red-shouldered	(4-28)	HAI 2 reps(2); JAS 2 reps(4); JEF 9 reps(13); TYL 5 reps(6)
HAWK, Red-tailed	(1-30)	HAI 2 reps(2); JAS 2 reps(2); JEF 16 reps(191); TYL 6 reps(12)
HAWK, Red-tailed (Krider's)	(4-4)	JEF 12/4(1) GD
CARACARA, Crested	(17-30)	HAI-SILS 12/30(5) MG; JEF-SW 12/17(1) TF; JEF-PI 12/18(1) SM
KESTREL, American	(4-28)	HAI 4 reps(9); JAS 1 rep(2); JEF 12 reps(126); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 9 reps(15)
MERLIN	(1-30)	HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 1 rep(1); TYL 2 reps(2)
FALCON, Peregrine	(4-17)	JEF 2 reps(2)
RAIL, Clapper	(1-1)	JEF-MURW 12/1(1) JA
GALLINULE, Common	(1-28)	JEF 3 reps(4); TYL 1 rep(2)
COOT, American	(17-28)	JAS 2 reps(3028); T/H 1 rep(7); TYL 2 reps(411)
CRANE, Sandhill	(10-19)	JEF 12/10(100) CSL; JEF 12/10(250) RA; JEF 12/19(156) JAW
PLOVER, Black-bellied	(27-27)	JEF-TX87 12/27(1) JJW
PLOVER, Snowy	(17-17)	JEF-SRSP 12/17(1) TF
PLOVER, Piping	(17-17)	JEF-SRSP 12/17(2) TF
KILLDEER	(1-28)	HAI 2 reps(7); JAS 2 reps(16); JEF 6 reps(33); TYL 5 reps(30)
OYSTERCATCHER, Amer.	(10-10)	JEF-TXPT 12/10(1) SM
STILT, Black-necked	(1-1)	JEF-MURW 12/1(4) JA

SANDPIPER, Spotted (28-28) TYL 12/28(1) BC10
YELLOWLEGS, Greater (1-29) JEF-MURW 12/1(10) JA;
 JEF 12/10(25) RA; JEF 12/27(1) JJW; JEF-MURW 12/29(1) JA
YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (10-10) JEF 12/10(2) RA
CURLEW, Long-billed (10-10) JEF 12/10(27) RA
SANDPIPER, Western (29-29) JEF-MURW 12/29(20) JA
SANDPIPER, Least (29-29) JEF-MURW 12/29(15) JA
DUNLIN (10-29) JEF 12/10(30) RA; JEF-
 MURW 12/29(6) JA
DOWITCHER, Short-billed (18-18) JEF-PI 12/18(5) SM
DOWITCHER, Long-billed (7-19) JEF 12/7(100) JAW; JEF
 12/10(100) RA; JEF 12/19(200) JAW
SNIPE, Wilson's (14-28) JEF 12/14(3) JAW; JEF
 12/19(2) JAW; TYL 12/28(1) BC09; TYL 12/28(25) BC10
WOODCOCK, American (10-17) HAI 12/17(2) TC5/6/7; HAI
 12/17(1) TC04; JEF-SW 12/10(1) TF
GULL, Bonaparte's (17-17) JEF-SRSP 12/17(10) TF
GULL, Laughing (3-17) JEF 3 reps(86)
GULL, Ring-billed (4-28) JEF 3 reps(305); TYL 2
 reps(20)
GULL, Herring (1-29) JEF 3 reps(14)
TERN, Caspian (17-17) JEF-SRSP 12/17(1) TF
TERN, Forster's (10-29) JEF 4 reps(9); TYL 2
 reps(76)
TERN, Royal (17-27) JEF 2 reps(16)
PIGEON, Rock (7-31) HAI 2 reps(60); JEF 5
 reps(222)
COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (4-28) JEF 6 reps(107); T/H 1
 rep(3); TYL 1 rep(6)
DOVE, White-winged (4-27) JEF 11 reps(228)
DOVE, Mourning (1-28) HAI 7 reps(82); JAS 2
 reps(16); JEF 7 reps(150); T/H 1 rep(41); TYL 4 reps(49)
DOVE, Inca (17-28) HAI 12/17(9) TC5/6/7; JAS
 12/28(2) BC6/7; T/H 12/17(7) TC8/10; TYL 12/28(4) BC09
ROADRUNNER, Greater (17-17) TYL 12/17(1) TC01
OWL, Barn (3-27) JEF-SW 12/3(1) SM; JEF
 12/4(2) CSL; JEF 12/10(4) CSL; JEF-SW 12/27(4) JJW
SCREECH-OWL, Eastern (17-17) HAI 12/17(3) TC5/6/7
OWL, Great Horned (3-28) JEF 7 reps(10); TYL 1
 rep(2)
OWL, Barred (11-28) HAI 12/17(1) TC5/6/7; JAS
 12/28(1) BC08; JEF-BTNB 12/11(1) SM
HUMMINGBIRD, Buff-bellied (6-31) JEF-NEDR 12/6 thru
 12/31(1) JJW
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr. (5-17) JEF-NEDR 12/5(1) JJW;
 JEF-NEDR 12/6(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR 12/9(1) JJW; JEF-NEDR
 12/17(1) JFW
HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chin. (1-20) JEF-NEDR 12/1(1) JAW;
 JEF-BMT 12/9(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/11(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR
 12/18(1) JJW; JEF-BMT 12/19(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/20(1) RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD, Archilochus (7-7) JEF-NEDR 12/7(1) JAW
HUMMINGBIRD, Calliope (5-27) JEF-BMT 12/5(1) RHJ; JEF-
 BMT 12/7(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/19(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 12/27(1)
 RHJ
HUMMINGBIRD, Broad-tailed (4-31) JEF-BMT 12/4 thru 12/26(1)
 RHJ; JEF-NEDR 12/31(1) JJW
HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (1-31) JEF 30 reps(35)
HUMMINGBIRD species (2-28) JEF 12 reps(15)
KINGFISHER, Belted (1-29) HAI 1 rep(1); JAS 2 reps(4);
 JEF 9 reps(19); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 2 reps(4)
WOODPECKER, Red-headed (10-28) HAI 12/17(5) TC5/6/7; HAI
 12/17(1) TC04; T/H 12/17(2) TC8/10; TYL-BTTC 12/10(1) JAW;
 TYL 12/17(1) TC09; TYL 12/28(1) BC02; TYL 12/28(23) BC09
WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (4-28) HAI 6 reps(28); JAS 2
 reps(38); JEF 2 reps(2); T/H 1 rep(12); TYL 7 reps(39)
SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (6-30) HAI 4 reps(14); JAS 2
 reps(6); JEF 1 rep(1); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 9 reps(18)
WOODPECKER, Downy (1-29) HAI 3 reps(10); JAS 1
 rep(19); JEF 12 reps(12); T/H 1 rep(4); TYL 7 reps(16)
WOODPECKER, Hairy (28-28) JAS 12/28(1) BC08
WOODPECKER, Hairy (28-28) JAS 1 rep(1)
FLICKER, Northern (1-28) HAI 4 reps(29); JAS 1
 rep(5); JEF 3 reps(7); T/H 1 rep(4); TYL 6 reps(40)
WOODPECKER, Pileated (7-30) HAI 8 reps(15); JAS 2
 reps(15); TYL 7 reps(20)

PHOEBE, Eastern (1-29) HAI 4 reps(12); JAS 2
 reps(10); JEF 9 reps(19); T/H 1 rep(3); TYL 12 reps(42)
FLYCATCHER, Vermilion (4-28) JAS 12/28(1) BC08; JEF
 12/4(1) JAW; JEF 12/4(1) SM; JEF 12/10(1) CSL; JEF 12/19(2)
 JAW
SHRIKE, Loggerhead (1-27) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 8
 reps(102)
VIREO, Blue-headed (10-28) JEF-SW 12/27(2) JJW; TYL-
 BTHC 12/10(1) JAW; TYL 12/28(1) BC09
JAY, Blue (4-28) HAI 4 reps(21); JAS 2
 reps(33); JEF 7 reps(12); T/H 1 rep(10); TYL 8 reps(32)
CROW, American (3-28) HAI 4 reps(64); JAS 2
 reps(62); JEF 1 rep(5); T/H 1 rep(60); TYL 13 reps(162)
SWALLOW, Tree (1-29) JAS 12/28(5) BC08; JEF-
 MURW 12/1(15) JA; JEF 12/14(29) JAW; JEF-NEDR 12/18(4)
 JJW; JEF 12/19(8) JAW; JEF-MURW 12/29(8) JA
SWALLOW species (10-14) JEF 2 reps(6)
CHICKADEE, Carolina (3-29) HAI 8 reps(44); JAS 2
 reps(80); JEF 1 rep(2); T/H 1 rep(23); TYL 11 reps(48)
TITMOUSE, Tufted (5-28) HAI 4 reps(29); JAS 2
 reps(32); T/H 1 rep(12); TYL 8 reps(28)
NUTHATCH, Brown-headed (10-28) HAI 1 rep(5); T/H 1 rep(10);
 TYL 3 reps(16)
CREEPER, Brown (3-28) HAI 12/17(2) TC5/6/7; JEF-
 SW 12/3(1) SM; JEF-SW 12/10(1) SM; JEF-BTNB 12/11(2) SM;
 TYL 12/28(5) BC09
WREN, House (1-28) HAI 2 reps(8); JEF 2
 reps(2); T/H 1 rep(2); TYL 4 reps(7)
WREN, Winter (11-31) HAI 4 reps(4); JEF 2
 reps(2); TYL 1 rep(3)
WREN, Sedge (28-28) JAS 1 rep(1); TYL 1 rep(1)
WREN, Marsh (1-29) JAS 12/28(1) BC08; JEF-
 MURW 12/1(3) JA; JEF-MURW 12/29(8) JA
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (17-28) JAS 12/28(11) BC08; JEF-
 SW 12/27(1) JJW; TYL 12/17(1) TC12; TYL 12/28(2) BC09
KINGLET, Golden-crowned (3-28) HAI 2 reps(5); JEF 4
 reps(15); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(12)
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (1-29) HAI 4 reps(25); JAS 2
 reps(12); JEF 3 reps(19); T/H 1 rep(6); TYL 9 reps(22)
BLUEBIRD, Eastern (7-28) HAI 5 reps(22); JAS 2
 reps(31); JEF 5 reps(28); T/H 1 rep(36); TYL 11 reps(123)
THRUSH, Hermit (10-28) HAI 4 reps(27); JAS 2
 reps(6); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 4 reps(7)
ROBIN, American (1-29) HAI 8 reps(241); JAS 2
 reps(292); JEF 8 reps(299); T/H 1 rep(5); TYL 10 reps(384)
CATBIRD, Gray (1-29) HAI 12/17(1) TC14; JAS
 12/28(5) BC08; JEF-MURW 12/1(1) JA; JEF-MURW 12/29(3) JA;
 TYL 12/17(1) TC03; TYL 12/28(1) BC09
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (1-29) HAI 4 reps(18); JAS 2
 reps(15); JEF 10 reps(56); T/H 1 rep(6); TYL 8 reps(31)
THRASHER, Brown (3-28) HAI 1 rep(4); JAS 1 rep(3);
 JEF 2 reps(3); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(3)
STARLING, European (4-28) HAI 1 rep(5); JAS 1 rep(6);
 JEF 6 reps(944); TYL 2 reps(21)
PIPIT, American (10-19) HAI 12/10(25) JAW; JEF-PI
 12/17(11) CK; JEF-PI 12/19(7) RHJ
WAXWING, Cedar (10-28) HAI 4 reps(169); JAS 2
 reps(45); JEF 1 rep(6); TYL 5 reps(161)
WARBLER, Orange-crowned (1-31) HAI 9 reps(13); JAS 1
 rep(2); JEF 3 reps(12); T/H 1 rep(2); TYL 1 rep(2)
YELLOWTHROAT, Common (17-28) HAI 12/17(1) TC14; JEF-SW
 12/27(1) JJW; TYL 12/28(1) BC10
WARBLER, Pine (3-28) HAI 7 reps(39); JAS 1
 rep(5); JEF 7 reps(8); T/H 1 rep(2); TYL 8 reps(64)
WARBLER, Yellow-rumped (1-29) HAI 6 reps(74); JAS 2
 reps(129); JEF 6 reps(67); T/H 1 rep(58); TYL 11 reps(155)
WARBLER, Wilson's (3-28) JEF-SW 12/3(1) GD; JEF-
 SW 12/17(1) TF; TYL 12/28(1) BC09
TOWHEE, Eastern (17-28) HAI 12/17(3) TC5/6/7; TYL
 12/28(1) BC09; TYL 12/28(1) BC3/4
SPARROW, Chipping (1-31) HAI 18 reps(567); JAS 2
 reps(415); T/H 1 rep(67); TYL 10 reps(696)
SPARROW, Clay-colored (10-10) JEF-SW 12/10(1) TF
SPARROW, Field (3-28) HAI 2 reps(22); JAS 1
 rep(7); JEF 4 reps(18); T/H 1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(26)

SPARROW, Vesper	(4-14)	JEF 12/4(1) JAW; JEF
SPARROW, Savannah	(4-29)	HAI 1 rep(30); JEF 7
reps(106); TYL 1 rep(100)		
SPARROW, LeConte's	(28-28)	JAS 12/28(1) BC6/7
SPARROW, Song	(1-28)	HAI 2 reps(12); JAS 1
rep(6); JEF 2 reps(3); T/H	1 rep(1); TYL 3 reps(15)	
SPARROW, Lincoln's	(17-17)	HAI 12/17(2) TC14
SPARROW, Swamp	(17-28)	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(6);
TYL 2 reps(38)		
SPARROW, White-throated	(3-28)	HAI 7 reps(231); JAS 2
reps(115); JEF 6 reps(18); T/H	1 rep(201); TYL 9 reps(242)	
SPARROW, Harris's	(1-1)	JEF-SRSP 12/1(TF)
SPARROW, White-crowned	(14-19)	JEF 12/14(2) JAW; JEF
12/19(4) JAW		
JUNCO, Dark-eyed	(3-28)	HAI 2 reps(33); JAS 2
reps(70); JEF 4 reps(10); T/H	1 rep(38); TYL 10 reps(164)	
CARDINAL, Northern	(1-31)	HAI 12 reps(249); JAS 2
reps(40); JEF 7 reps(14); T/H	1 rep(23); TYL 12 reps(87)	
BUNTING, Indigo	(27-27)	JEF-SW 12/27(1) JJW
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	(1-29)	HAI 1 rep(25); JAS 2
reps(95); JEF 6 reps(169); TYL	4 reps(105)	
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	(4-28)	HAI 2 reps(20); JAS 1
rep(14); JEF 4 reps(27); TYL	2 reps(16)	
MEADOWLARK species	(4-19)	JEF 4 reps(82)
BLACKBIRD, Yellow-headed	(4-4)	JEF 12/4(1) SM
BLACKBIRD, Brewer's	(4-19)	JEF 12/4(70) JAW; JEF
12/4(50) SM; JEF 12/10(100) RA;	JEF 12/14(5) JAW; JEF	
12/19(20) JAW		
GRACKLE, Common	(4-28)	HAI 2 reps(76); JAS 1
rep(40); JEF 3 reps(151); TYL	3 reps(102)	
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	(1-7)	JEF 2 reps(23)
GRACKLE, Great-tailed	(4-27)	HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6
reps(177)		
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	(4-19)	JEF 4 reps(7480)
BLACKBIRD species	(7-14)	JEF 2 reps(330)
FINCH, Purple	(28-28)	JAS 12/28(1) BC08
FINCH, House	(5-27)	HAI 3 reps(6); JEF 7
reps(30)		

GOLDFINCH, American	(1-28)	HAI 9 reps(76); JAS 2
reps(30); JEF 12 reps(47); T/H	1 rep(18); TYL 9 reps(139)	
SPARROW, House	(19-29)	JEF 3 reps(26); TYL 1
rep(6)		

Number of Species 168
Number of Individuals 68,228

County Abbreviations:

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

Location Codes; BMT — Beaumont; BTHC — Big Thicket NP - Hickory Creek Savannah; BTNB — Big Thicket NP - Neches Bottom and Jack Gore; BTTC — Big Thicket NP - Turkey Creek Unit; MCFW — McFaddin NWR; MURW — J. D. Murphree WMA, west of Taylor Bayou; NEDR — Nederland; PI — Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SILS — Silsbee; SRSP — Sea Rim State Park; SW — Sabine Woods; TX87 — Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP; TXPT — Road to Pilot Station at Texas Point

Observer Abbreviations ; BC01 — Beech Creek CBC Area 1; BC02 — Beech Creek CBC Area 2; BC3/4 — Beech Creek CBC Area 3/4; BC05 — Beech Creek CBC Area 5; BC6/7 — Beech Creek CBC Area 6/7; BC08 — Beech Creek CBC Area 8; BC09 — Beech Creek CBC Area 9; BC10 — Beech Creek CBC Area 10; CK — Cody Conway and Kelley Sampeck; CSL — Christine Sliva; FWW — Terry Ferguson, John and Jana Whittle; GD — Gerald Duhon; JA — Jim Armacost; JAW — John Whittle; JFW — Jana Whittle; JJW — John and Jana Whittle; JP — John Park; MG — Melanie Goetsell; RA — Richard Atkins; RHJ — Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; SBE — Sheri Bethard; SG — Sherry Gibson; SM — Steve Mayes; TC01 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 1; TC02 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 2; TC03 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 3; TC04 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 4; TC5/6/7 — Turkey Creek CBC Areas 5,6,7; TC8/10 — Turkey Creek CBC Areas 8,10; TC09 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 9; TC11 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 11; TC12 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 12; TC13 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 13; TC14 — Turkey Creek CBC Area 14; TF — Terry Ferguson.

Field Trip – 21 January 2012

The January field trip of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society was a little bit of a question mark right from the start. Where to schedule it? Should the group head to the Katy Prairie for what would be a long trip but might include some rare species difficult to get closer to home? How about Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge? There were lots of good birds being seen there but construction projects might make them unreachable. How about Cattail Marsh? Recent sighting had turned up several good species out there but some birders might not like all the walking required. What to do? The decision was: Anahuac with a back-up plan for Cattail Marsh in case construction prevented real birding at Anahuac. The back-up would prove to be a good idea for the trip!

Starting at the under construction visitor's center for Anahuac NWR, everyone was pleased at what a great turnout there was. It's always gratifying to see lots of birders coming to a field trip and several of the participants were on their first field trip ever. A nice cooperative flock of White-crowned Sparrows greeted the group and provided many good looks although the hoped for Harris's Sparrow was not so accommodating. Flyover Snow Geese are always nice though the conditions in the early morning were quite foggy making

viewing difficult. An *Ammodramus* sparrow popped up onto a nearby structure generating quite a discussion until closer views revealed it to be a Grasshopper Sparrow. A Common Yellowthroat and a House Wren played hide and seek with the birders in the nearby underbrush. A walk to what used to be "the willows" (before Hurricane Ike) did not provide much more. Construction work convinced the group to head toward the Skillern track to look for an unusual bird.

The entrance to the Skillern tract of Anahuac NWR had, for some weeks now, hosted a stray Say's Phoebe. The Say's Phoebe is a western bird not normally found on the upper Texas coast and part of an invasion of western birds into the area this winter. Perhaps in is due to the continuing drought in Texas but, for whatever reason, numerous western birds had been popping up for weeks now. Unfortunately, like the Harris's Sparrow before it, the Say's was a no-show. Worse, work on the roads at the Skillern tract left the group unable to enter it at all! This is where the back-up plan came into play!

The group decided at this point to head toward Cattail Marsh via Pear Orchard Road. This proved to be a good route. A large flock of Snow Geese were on the ground near the road with some Greater White-fronted Geese mixed in. A number

of different raptors were seen here including plenty of American Kestrels and Red-tailed Hawks, both present in abnormally high numbers in the region this winter. Several of the birders got looks at a Merlin cruising low over a nearby field probably searching for prey. Best of all, a large bird soaring over the road proved to be a young Bald Eagle! Most of the group were able to get looks at this bird as it flew overhead and slowly disappeared into the distance.

But the next stop was Tyrrell Park in Beaumont. A quick lunch in the picnic area provided some common woodland birds like Red-bellied Woodpecker and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Some of the birders ventured along a trail into the thicker woods near the entrance to Cattail Marsh and got a look at the first rarity of the day: Harris's Hawk! This is another western or southwestern stray that was recently discovered in the park. Unfortunately, this attractive raptor proved quite shy and did not put in an appearance for the rest of the group. But another western vagrant was much more cooperative. A couple of Green-tailed Towhees were found in the woods near the Cattail Marsh parking lot recently and one bird gave good looks to all. This bird was one of at least six Green-tailed Towhees that have been seen in Jefferson County this season – an incredible number! But this same species has turned up all over the upper Texas coast (and into Louisiana) this winter.

But on to Cattail Marsh! This trip was originally inspired by John Mariani's discovery of Least Grebes at this man-made wetland. Birders looking for the grebes soon discovered the Harris's Hawk, Green-tailed Towhees, a wintering Baltimore Oriole and other goodies in a classic example of the "Patagonia picnic table effect". The birders on this day ventured onto the levees surrounding the cells in the marsh and were quickly rewarded. Hundreds of Northern Pintails, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall and Blue-winged Teal filled the flooded cell at the front of the marsh. Sorting through the flock produced more species. American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and best of all Cinnamon Teal! This brilliant rusty-colored dabbler is not always easy to find as far east as the Golden Triangle but they have been a practical guarantee at Cattail Marsh recently. The trip to other cells in the marsh would turn up Black-bellied Whistling Duck (in very high numbers), Wood Duck (hiding among the reeds and a good distance away from trees), Mallard (also in unusually high numbers for this species), Mottled Duck, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck and Redhead (another sometimes hard to get bird). But we can't forget the species that started it all! Least Grebe was pretty easy to see on the day and at least seven of these rare water birds were discovered. The numbers of Least Grebes in Cattail Marsh are almost unprecedented as even one at this location would be a great find!

But water birds were not the only things to be seen (or heard) on the day. Rails are often more likely to be heard than seen and that proved true on this trip. King Rail, Virginia Rail and Sora were all heard on this trip but only a couple of birders got quick looks at any of these birds. Luckily, some of the raptors were easier to see. Beautiful Red-shouldered Hawks were along the edges of the marsh while numerous Red-tailed Hawks soared overhead. Nice views were had of both a dark "Harlan's" type Red-tail and an unusual "Rufous

morph" – a bird somewhere in between a dark and light morph. An adult Bald Eagle was also found at the marsh (a nice compliment to the immature bird seen earlier). A couple of other nice finds were at least one Glossy Ibis among the much more numerous White-faced and a leucistic (almost all white) American Coot. That bird really stood out from the crowd!

Most of those who started out at Anahuac stayed with the group on this 3 1/2 mile leisurely walk that enabled at least the open water parts of all the cells to be viewed. It was quite late afternoon before the birders reluctantly began to drift out of the marsh and back to their vehicles.

A day that started out with uncertain prospects for birding and some missed rarities finished up with hundreds of birds and easy rarities! That is the way of birding sometimes; it can be a boom or bust enterprise. But I think all the participants of this trip would agree that the boom (Least Grebes, Bald Eagles, Green-tailed Towhees, etc.) outweighed any bust that might have happened earlier! If only all field trips could turn out this well!

The following birds were recorded by the trip leaders:

Black-bellied Whistling Duck (500), Greater White-fronted Goose (10), Snow Goose (140), Wood Duck (2), Gadwall (210), American Wigeon (15), Mallard (150), Mottled Duck (50), Blue-winged Teal (254), Cinnamon Teal (2), Northern Shoveler (345), Northern Pintail (502), Green-winged Teal (1500), Canvasback (15), Redhead (30), Ring-necked Duck (150), Lesser Scaup (4), Bufflehead (1), Ruddy Duck (50), Least Grebe (7), Pied-billed Grebe (10), Neotropic Cormorant (11), Double-crested Cormorant (4), Anhinga (7), Brown Pelican (1), Great Blue Heron (6), Great Egret (11), Snowy Egret (36), Little Blue Heron (3), Tricolored Heron (5), Black-crowned Night-Heron (50), White Ibis (44), Glossy Ibis (1), White-faced Ibis (20), Roseate Spoonbill (16), Turkey Vulture (21), Osprey (1), White-tailed Kite (2), Bald Eagle (2), Northern Harrier (7), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1), Harris's Hawk (1), Red-shouldered Hawk (3), Red-tailed Hawk (22), Red-tailed (Rufous morph) Hawk (1), Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk (1), American Kestrel (2), Merlin (1), King Rail (1), Virginia Rail (1), Sora (5), Common Gallinule (10), American Coot (404), Killdeer (8), Black-necked Stilt (35), American Avocet (1), Greater Yellowlegs (6), Willet (5), Stilt Sandpiper (3), Long-billed Dowitcher (20), Wilson's Snipe (2), Laughing Gull (350), Ring-billed Gull (10), Herring Gull (1), Caspian Tern (1), Forster's Tern (1), Belted Kingfisher (1), Red-bellied Woodpecker (3), Downy Woodpecker (3), Northern Flicker (1), Eastern Phoebe (5), Loggerhead Shrike (5), White-eyed Vireo (1), Tree Swallow (25), House Wren (1), Carolina Wren (1), Marsh Wren (2), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (4), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2), Eastern Bluebird (3), American Robin (10), Gray Catbird (1), Northern Mockingbird (3), Brown Thrasher (1), European Starling (14), American Pipit (3), Orange-crowned Warbler (2), Common Yellowthroat (5), Yellow-rumped Warbler (5), Wilson's Warbler (1), Green-tailed Towhee (1), Savannah Sparrow (25), Vesper Sparrow (4), Grasshopper Sparrow (1), Swamp Sparrow (5), Song Sparrow (1), White-crowned Sparrow (30), Northern Cardinal (5), Red-winged Blackbird (25), Eastern Meadowlark (5), Boat-tailed Grackle (5), Great-tailed Grackle (50), Baltimore Oriole (1) – 101 species.

Steve Mayes

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Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various Internet based means of distribution.

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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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