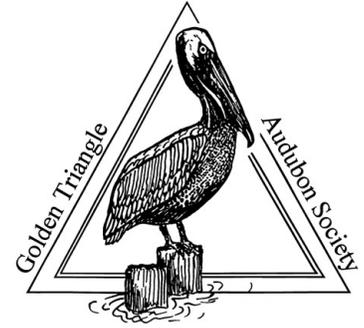


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 22 No. 4

April 2016

Membership Meeting
Thursday April 21, 2016 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

Birds in Trouble
Lynn Barber

"*Birds in Trouble*" is the title of her recently published book. She will discuss some of the birds featured in the book – about the birds themselves, why they are "in trouble", and ideas of what we can do for these birds (if there is anything) that might help their situation. The talk will be illustrated primarily with her paintings, and some of her photos.

Lynn was born in Wisconsin, and has lived in Alaska, Oregon, North Carolina, Texas, South Dakota and now Anchorage, Alaska. She started birding at the age of 7. In 2005, she broke the Texas big year record with 522 species, and in 2008, she tallied 723 bird species in the ABA Area. An account of her ABA Big Year, entitled *Extreme Birder: One Woman's Big Year*, was published in the spring of 2011. Her second book, *Birds in Trouble* was published in 2016 by Texas A&M University Press. While living in North Carolina, Lynn was active in Wake County Audubon and on the board of the Carolina Bird Club. Moving to Texas in 2000, she was active in the Fort Worth Audubon Society, serving as its president for 3 years. She is a life member of the Texas Ornithological Society, and became its president in April 2009.

Other avocations include painting birds, bird-photography, giving bird-related talks, church volunteer activities, playing the hammered dulcimer, and baking cookies. She is married to David Barber, a meteorologist with the US Weather Service in Anchorage.

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. sharp. A light supper will be available from 6:15 p.m.

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Vol. 22, No.4 April 2016
Issue number 227

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 just before the date. Changes will always be posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. Confirmation of the location will also normally be available at the Membership Meeting that is usually, but not always, two days prior to each trip, or by contacting Field Trip Committee chair, Steve Mayes at 409-722-5807 or sgmayes@hotmail.com.

Thursday April 21, 2016. Membership Meeting. Speaker Lynn Barber. See page 1 for details.

Saturday April 23, 2016. Field Trip to Sabine Woods. This trip will look for Neotropical migrants at the height of spring migration. We will assemble at Sabine Woods at 7:30 a.m. (You should be able to find the group if you are unable to be there quite that early.)

At Sabine Woods, there is a small parking area, with additional parking improvised using the roadside verges. Portable toilets are available at the entrance during spring migration.

This trip will seek Neotropical migrants at the height of spring migration, and involves relatively easy walking on the trails at Sabine Woods to look for migrant songbirds, although another option is to sit at the drip and wait for the birds to come to you. However, Hurricane Ike completely destroyed the boardwalks, and the trails may be muddy and slippery if it has rained in the prior day or two. Armadillos have been very active, so there will be holes to avoid! There is a \$5 sanctuary pass donation at Sabine Woods for those who are **not** members of Golden Triangle Audubon or Texas Ornithological Society. This field trip is especially suited for not-very-experienced birders. Often, we break into smaller groups, with an experienced birder in each group.

Bring insect repellent. Most participants will bring lunch. Facilities in Sabine Pass are limited, although gasoline and very limited food are available.

Birding in late April can be exciting. However, we cannot promise anything,

as the number of birds in the coastal woodlots is highly dependent on the weather conditions over the Gulf. Immediately after a cold front passes and the following day are usually considered to be among the most likely days to have a good concentration of migrants at favored coastal locations.

Sabine Woods is on the north side of Highway 87, 4.1 miles west of the stop sign in Sabine Pass. Take Highway 87 from Port Arthur to Sabine Pass, turn right at the stop sign, and go 4.1 miles.

Saturday May 14, 2016. North American Migration Count. On International Migratory Bird Day, the Saturday of the second full weekend in May, we undertake an all-Jefferson-County Bird Count. We have been doing these counts since 1995. The count attempts to cover as much of Jefferson County as is reasonably possible. We welcome all participants, especially if you are able to count in the early morning from dawn through about 11:00 a.m. even if you would just like to cover your own neighborhood. It is not necessary to commit to the whole day. If you have special access to any areas within the county, we would appreciate your help! Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com or 409-722-4193) for details or offers to help.

Thursday May 19, 2016. Membership Meeting. Members' favorite bird photos. Following on the success of our program last November, we plan another favorite bird photos program.

Saturday May 28. Field Trip to Hardin County. Our usual trip to the area north of Silsbee to look for breeding warblers and other passerines. Full details next month.



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.

Sponsor our Birdathon

Once again, we will be raising money for Golden Triangle Audubon in our Birdathon. You may be assured that all your contributions will stay close to home as it were. Royce Pendergast and Ross Foreman will again be joining with me in this year's Spring Birdathon.

A Birdathon is very similar to other "athons" you may be familiar with, such as telethons, walkathons, etc. The idea is for us to start birding at the crack of dawn on a day in mid to late April and make a run from the woods of the Southern Big Thicket through to the coast of east Jefferson County. We again plan to restrict our area to Hardin, Jefferson and Orange counties. We're aiming for at least 150 species. We will pick an exact day guided by the weather forecasts. Our preferred date will be around April 20. We're hoping you will sponsor us at \$1.00 or more, \$0.75, \$0.50, (or whatever amount you choose) per bird species. A flat donation is also welcome. Please take the time to make a pledge today -- your donation to our Birdathon will be earmarked to support our mission of protecting our natural heritage in Texas by supporting conservation, education and advocacy. As always, Sabine Woods is high on our list of projects. (If you wish, you may earmark your contributions for a specific use.)

This is our only GTAS-wide fund raising effort. We do not burden your mail or email box with any other appeals. GTAS is financially very healthy, but we are hoping to perhaps purchase a small but important piece of land adjoining Sabine Woods to add to and enhance the value of the Woods as an important migratory stopover in both spring and fall for Neotropical migrant songbirds on their way from their wintering grounds to their breeding

Checks should be made out to Golden Triangle Audubon Society and all contributions are, of course, tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. We appreciate all of you who contributed generously last year, and hope you will consider supporting us again. Please contact me at 3015 Nashville Ave, Nederland, TX 77627 or at johnawhittle@aol.com or 409-722-4193 with your pledges.

John A. Whittle

Golden Triangle Audubon on Facebook

In case you didn't know, Golden Triangle Audubon Society has joined the world of social media with its own Facebook page! Our page was started about two years ago by Kelley Sampeck, and we are grateful to her for doing this because it allows us to post immediate news of bird sightings and events of interest in our area, which includes all of the Golden Triangle and counties north to the lakes. Since Kelley has been out of the country for a while, Jana Whittle and John Mariani have taken over administration of the page. Here are things you can find on our GTAS FB page:

- Information on monthly meeting dates and topics.
- Reports on what happened at the monthly meeting.
- Monthly field trip times and locations.
- Field trip tidbits, including noteworthy bird sightings.
- Notices of upcoming Sabine Woods work days.
- Reports of interesting local bird sightings and rarities.
- Reports from Sabine Woods during migration.
- Reports of unusual birds seen during Christmas Counts.
- Links to Regional Migration Forecasts.
- Links to the website www.goldentriangleaudubon.org, which has our Brown Pelican newsletters and other valuable information.
- A place to put your local bird photos.
- A place for your comments, questions, or to report your own bird sightings.

Please visit our page and "like it" to receive notification whenever new information is posted. The link to our Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/GoldenTriangleAudubon/>

Electronic Delivery of the *Brown Pelican*

As we indicated last month we have been having issues with delays in delivery of printed copies of the *Brown Pelican*. If you are reading this in a copy we sent to you by US mail, you may or may not be reading it in a timely timeframe. We certainly do not want to cut off any members who are unable to receive a copy electronically. At the same time, if you are able to receive an electronic copy, you can also save us both expense and volunteer time.

When we email a copy to a member, we do that by attaching a copy of the Newsletter in pdf format to an email.

How to request a change to electronic delivery.

Simply send an email to johnawhittle@aol.com giving the name and address that we are using to mail the *Brown Pelican* to you (so we can find your record) and confirm that we may email the *Brown Pelican* to you as an attachment at the email address you are using to send the message to us.

Renewals now Due

Membership in Golden Triangle Audubon is on a calendar year basis, running from January to December each year. Members of National Audubon Society who live in our official chapter territory, Jefferson, Hardin and Orange Counties are automatically members of Golden Triangle Audubon. For members in our territory, we do request a contribution of \$15 per year. Others, including members of National Audubon who live outside our territory, may become members of Golden Triangle Audubon and receive membership benefits by paying the yearly \$15 membership fee.

Membership dues may be paid by mailing a check to Golden Triangle Audubon at PO Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292. A convenient membership blank to provide your name and address is on the back page of each issue of the *Brown Pelican*, or may be included on a separate piece of paper enclosed with your check, (or we will use the name and address on your check).

Field Trip to Bolivar Flats – 19 March 2016

We have a rule regarding Golden Triangle Audubon field trips that we do not attempt to cancel them merely because the weather forecast suggests adverse conditions. And over the years, we have had some excellent trips when the adverse conditions failed to eventuate, at least at the location of the field trip. For this trip, the issue, wind, was one that the forecasters get right more often than not, but that did not make birding essentially impossible, just a little difficult.

So, it was a very windy situation that faced about eight intrepid members who assembled at the vehicle barrier at Bolivar Flats. The March field trip has traditionally been to Bolivar Flats and adjacent areas because it guarantees there will be birds to see. Bolivar is never without birds, and in mid-March, there is always the possibility of finding some shorebird migrants, some early arriving summer residents, while a large fraction of the winter residents are still present. The wind had swung around to have a significant northerly component during the night, following several days of mostly southerly winds. It takes time for the wind to blow the water away from the shore, so there was a helpful amount of mud flat and shallow water, but not enough to spread the birds too far out.

The first birds we became interested in were the smaller terns. There are always lots of Forster's Terns in the area, but it was an unusually high percentage of Common Terns that attracted our attention. In mid-March, separating the two species is easier than later in the year, as most birds have already molted into breeding plumage, and there are no juvenile plumaged birds remaining to confuse the unwary. (The other reasonably numerous North American always-white tern of similar size, the Arctic Tern, outside of breeding season is strictly a coastal and pelagic species, migrating down the east and west coasts of North America, but essentially never found in the Gulf of Mexico, although there has been a handful of records in Texas, mostly inland, in the last thirty or more years.) A Common Tern should, if at all possible, be identified based on several characteristics. In a flying bird, the outer wings show a distinct dark wedge on the primaries, decreasing in high breeding plumage, but never showing the "frosty white" outer wings of the Forster's Tern. Young and winter-plumaged Common Terns show a dark carpal bar, but Forster's Terns can show a trace of a bar, especially in young birds. Common Terns retain a dark nape at all seasons, whereas winter Forster's Terns show a white nape. Perhaps most useful are the shorter and thinner legs of the Common Tern as opposed to the Forster's Terns, especially useful when reviewing a mixed flock resting on a mudflat. The (very narrow) outer webs of the white tails of Common Terns are dark, whereas they are white in the Forster's Terns, but this is not particularly easy to see.

Moving west, we soon identified a couple of Wilson's Plovers, larger than the other "small" plovers, and with an obviously longer and much thicker bill. This plover is a common sight along our beaches in summer, and a good number were seen. Most likely these were recent arrivals, still concentrated on the flats before spreading out to select breeding sites, usually in the vegetation just above the normal high water level along the entire length of local beaches.

Worldwide Wilson's Plover population estimates are in the 8,000 range (4,000 breeding pairs) about the same as Piping Plover (see below) estimates, but the species attracts far less attention. This is partly due to the fact that the Piping Plover populations were decreasing over time, while those of Wilson's Plover appeared to be stable. Piping Plover populations now seem to be increasing, likely reflecting habitat protections in their North American breeding areas. Nevertheless it seems incongruous that Piping Plovers are classified as threatened, while Wilson's Plovers, internationally at least, are indicated to be of least concern.

Proceeding along the beach, the group admired a near-breeding plumaged Horned Lark, crouched in a relatively open area and reluctant to fly in the windy conditions. Sanderlings were everywhere on the drier, but still moist, parts of the Flats. One or two Ruddy Turnstones were mixed in, but most were still in winter plumage. One or two Marbled Godwits were seen, but they soon moved on elsewhere.

A little further on, we came across a fairly large loose group of mostly small plovers, with a few other species, including a number of Dunlins, mixed in. This group contained all of the other three small plovers, Piping, Snowy and Semi-palmated. It was soon apparent that several of the Piping Plovers were adorned with color bands. The wind, officially 30 knots gusting to 39 knots at Galveston Airport, made observing these plovers very difficult, as the wind was blowing over scopes, even those on heavy tripods. So our photographer, Dr. Harlan Stewart, set about taking pictures of as many as he could. His review of the photographs that evening enabled identification of 14 different banded Piping Plovers and one banded Wilson's Plover. We have requested information on where these birds were banded, and will include it somewhere in this issue if it is received in time. For several years now, we have rarely not seen several banded plovers on each field trip to Bolivar, but this was the first color-banded Wilson's Plover we have encountered. A little research suggests it was probably banded in the Corpus Christi area.

Near the high water line, there were several Least Sandpipers while Western Sandpipers were, as usual, nearer the water. Black-bellied Plovers were unusually few. The sandbars that usually form a short distance out were well populated by pelicans, gulls and terns. As always there were good numbers of year-round resident Royal Terns, with one or two Caspian Terns thrown in for good measure. A few Least Terns (summer breeding residents) and, for the relatively early date, a good number of Sandwich Terns (also summer breeding residents) were there along with many Laughing Gulls, some Ring-billed Gulls, and at least six Herring Gulls. A few winter plumaged Bonaparte's Gulls were mixed in with the other gulls. Lots of American White Pelicans and a lesser number of Brown Pelicans were mostly staying firmly on the sand bars. Many of the 250 odd Black Skimmers were resting lying on their sides as only Black Skimmers do. One could scarcely miss the large flock of American Avocets, many well into the molt into their breeding plumage and beautiful tan necks. The estimated 300-odd visible on the day was a small fraction of the flock that is around most years, and may

eventually be this year, assembling just prior to migrating.

Somewhat deeper water can always be found between the Flats and the North Jetty, and as we reached the point at the west edge of the Flats, we surveyed the water. There was a small group (less than 10) of Red-breasted Mergansers. Further review of the channel disclosed a single distant Eared Grebe.

Starting back towards the vehicle barrier, we pondered the question of what had we not seen. We had not yet identified any Short-billed Dowitchers, normally an easy to find winter resident of the wetter area. After a search, two were located, but the rest must have been hiding round the corner.

The complete absence of any Reddish Egrets would have been most unusual. However, we did see one adult dark morph bird, although ten or more would have been normal. The coast from just south of the Rio Grande to just a little east of Bolivar Flats represents the stronghold of this species, with large nesting colonies on a few protected coastal barrier islands. Total population estimates are in the 7,000 bird range, and the species is regarded as "near threatened." Let us hope the poor showing on this trip is not representative of the species range-wide.

As we battled the wind on the way back to our vehicles, a group of perhaps 20 Least Terns, moved ahead of us in short flights, stubbornly refusing to move to our left into the area cordoned off for their nesting use by Houston Audubon, the guardians of the internationally recognized shorebird sanctuary that is Bolivar Flats.

Traditionally, the next stop is at Fort Travis, now a Galveston County Park, (and its facilities) to eat our lunches. There was clear evidence of significant roadway improvements within the park, but, sitting as it does on top of a bluff overlooking some sheltered water and a small marsh, it was apparently too windswept for the birds on this day, and there was little to be seen.

A trip along Frenchtown Road and into Port Bolivar can often produce shorebirds, but the high water from the preceding days of south winds left it without any shorebird habitat. Indeed, the most obvious species were ducks – a few Gadwall, and some Red-breasted Mergansers, the latter normally birds of more open water, but sheltering in the protected ponds at Port Bolivar on this day. This is also where many of the American Oystercatchers were hiding, and we counted at least 13 of them.

Proceeding round Loop 108, we found an Osprey perched on a fencepost about three feet above a small pond sheltering from the wind. More Gadwall and both Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal were also present, as well as some Greater Yellowlegs.

En route to the next stop along Highway 87, we passed a Belted Kingfisher, a White-tailed Kite and a Northern Harrier. Two Black-bellied Whistling Ducks were added to our growing day list. Bob's Road, often produces a surprise, and this time it was a dozen Redheads in the first pond. Also in the pond were about 20 Lesser Scaup, the first we had seen on the day. We checked Gregory Park for possible American Golden Plover, but found none.

Rollover Pass as always had lots of birds, many of them fairly far out into the bay. Most of the species seen at Bolivar were also represented at Rollover. More terns, gulls and Black

Skimmers. About 40 Bonaparte's Gulls was a good showing. Included were at least three Black Terns, a species that migrates through each spring and fall. According to the checklist, they are very rare in mid-March, but if they are anywhere, they will be at Rollover Pass, and we suggest that they are not "very rare" there in mid-March.

We always finish this trip with a quick visit to High Island, hoping to perhaps catch a few early Passerine migrants. On this occasion, we were disappointed, as there were almost no birds in Boy Scout Woods, not even any of the Yellow-rumped Warblers that were so obvious at Sabine Woods in mid-March. So, we went across town to Smith Oaks and the rookery. The Neotropic Cormorants, as always, were already well into nesting, while other species, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, and of course Roseate Spoonbills were just preparing to nest. The rookery is well positioned to be sheltered from the wind, and many of the birds were actively courting or gathering nesting material. There were also Common Gallinules seemingly vying for space in the nesting areas used by the larger birds instead of the available reedy areas in Clay Bottom Pond in which they normally nest.

And so ended the field trip, with at least 70 species. It was perhaps a little disappointing not to find any Neotropical migrants, but this spring migration has seemingly started off very slowly. We did not miss any of the usual "true" shorebirds, which were the real target birds for this trip, and we had the bonus of a bumper crop of banded plovers. It is really not expected that we will find many "waders" – the shorebirds usually found at least a little inland – and "grasspipers" such as Golden Plover and Upland Sandpiper are very much hit or miss.

The following species were recorded by the leaders, and this list may well be incomplete.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (2); Gadwall (37); Mottled Duck (2); Blue-winged Teal (10); Green-winged Teal (2); Redhead (12); Lesser Scaup (20); Red-breasted Merganser (14); Pied-billed Grebe (2); Eared Grebe (1); Neotropic Cormorant (85); Double-crested Cormorant (2); American White Pelican (160); Brown Pelican (96); Great Blue Heron (2); Great Egret (67); Snowy Egret (26); Reddish Egret (1); White Ibis (20); Roseate Spoonbill (35); Black Vulture (2); Turkey Vulture (5); Osprey (1); White-tailed Kite (1); Northern Harrier (1); American Kestrel (1); Common Moorhen (15); American Coot (24); Black-bellied Plover (11); Snowy Plover (3); Wilson's Plover (27); Semipalmated Plover (16); Piping Plover (51); Killdeer (2); American Oystercatcher (17); Black-necked Stilt (2); American Avocet (350); Greater Yellowlegs (6); Willet (23); Marbled Godwit (27); Ruddy Turnstone (10); Sanderling (400); Western Sandpiper (50); Least Sandpiper (10); Dunlin (150); Short-billed Dowitcher (4); Bonaparte's Gull (47); Laughing Gull (500); Ring-billed Gull (40); Herring Gull (6); Least Tern (25); Caspian Tern (5); Black Tern (3); Common Tern (15); Forster's Tern (470); Royal Tern (350); Sandwich Tern (70); Black Skimmer (500); Eurasian Collared-Dove (3); Mourning Dove (3); Belted Kingfisher (1); Horned Lark (1); Barn Swallow (7); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1); Northern Mockingbird (1); European Starling (7); Savannah Sparrow (1); Eastern Meadowlark (8); Boat-tailed Grackle (5); Great-tailed Grackle (13). 70 species.

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings – March 2016

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other submitted records for the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review, looking for very rare or vagrant species only, records for Chambers, Galveston (High Island and Bolivar only) and Liberty counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes (west of the Calcasieu River only) in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-more precise location if available – (number) – Observer(s) with sometimes a comment on the reason it is noteworthy other than being a rare species for the area.

Commentary: Often for March sightings, we are faced with a significant list of spring migrants that are early according to the checklists. This year is distinctly different, and there are only two or three sightings below that are there because they are migrants arriving significantly ahead of normal.

Two sightings below stand out as particularly noteworthy. First, chronologically at least, was a beautiful male Western Tanager which was first seen in Sabine Woods on February 27 (too late to be included in last month's column, which had to

go to press before that). This bird was seen again on March 4, and then on the work day on March 5, it spent almost two hours around our lunch break time flycatching from highly visible perches round the entrance area at the Woods.

The second was a Black-capped Vireo, a species never before documented in south-east Texas – the nearest records in eBird are along the eastern edge of its relatively restricted range along IH-35 from Temple to San Antonio. The bird was first found in mid-afternoon March 31 by Gerald Duhon who managed to get three or four others onto the bird, before it flew off never to be seen again that day or the next. It was seen very early on the morning of April 2, and then again in the late afternoon that same day, but again it disappeared after a very few people were able to see it. Fortunately, one birder got a good easily identifiable picture of it. However, now it is established that it has stayed in the woods or vicinity for at least three days, there is some prospect that it might stay longer, although it is of a species that typically is found in much drier habitats than exist at Sabine Woods. On the other hand, vireos eat mostly insects and there are plenty of them on offer at Sabine Woods in April, along with a plentiful supply of caterpillars and other arthropods.

Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Cinnamon Teal	Mar 16	JEF-TP (1) Dylan Winkler
	Mar 19	JEF-TP (2) Cheryl Kelley
	Mar 22	JEF-TP (1) JAW
	Mar 26	JEF-TP (1) HS
	Mar 29	JEF-TP (1) John Berner
	Mar 30	JEF-TP (2) JM
Common Goldeneye	Mar 13	JEF-TP (2) Laura Wilson
	Mar 13	JEF-McFaddin NWR (2) Laura Wilson
Swallow-tailed Kite	Mar 23	HAI-Rose Hill Acres (2) JM
	Mar 27	JEF-Beaumont (1) TH
Bald Eagle	Mar 27	HAI-Old Sour Lake Rd (1) JM (unusual for area)
Baird's Sandpiper	Mar 30	JEF-WJC (2) John Schaub
Groove-billed Ani	Mar 27	JEF-WJC (Lawhon Rd just west of New Bethel) (2) JB, RL
	Mar 30	JEF-WJC (Lawhon Rd just west of New Bethel) John Schaub
Chimney Swift	Mar 12	HAI-Rose Hill Acres (1) JM (early)
Black-chinned Hummingbird	Mar 2-	to 28+JEF-Nederland (1) SM
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird	Mar 1-	to 12 JEF-Nederland (1) JJW, MC, TH
Eastern Kingbird	Mar 19	JEF-SW (1) MC, TH (early)
Black-capped Vireo	Mar 31	JEF-SW (1) Gerald Duhon
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Mar 6-	to 31 JEF-SW (1) multiple obs
White-breasted Nuthatch	Mar 28	ANG-Lufkin (1) John Moore
Prairie Warbler	Mar 26	JEF-SW (1) JB, JHH, TH, RL, Chris Bergman
	Mar 28	JEF-SW (1) MC, JHH
	Mar 30	JEF-SW (1) JHH, John Schaub
Western Tanager	Feb 27 to Mar 8	JEF-SW (1) multiple obs
Pyrrhuloxia	thru Mar 31+	JEF-Old Sabine Cemetery (1) multiple observers
Indigo Bunting	Mar 10	JEF-McFaddin NWR(1) Richard Bunn, Rita Reed (early)

Nearby Counties (very rare species only)

Cinnamon Teal	Mar 26	CHA-ANWR (1) Ryan Shaw (no details given)
Swallow-tailed Kite	Mar 26	GAL-HI (1) Will Thompson
Ferruginous Hawk	Mar 10	CHA-ANWR-Shoveler Pond (1) Chuck Dunaj (no further details given)
Heerman's Gull	Mar 25	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Paul and Janice Sweet (relocated Mar 29-31 at Texas City Dike)
Lsr Black-backed Gull	Mar 28	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Dennis Shepler
	Mar 30	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Janet Crawford
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Mar 25	GAL-HI (Boy Scout Woods) (1) BB Oros, Kathie Schroeck (no details)
Least Flycatcher	Mar 4	CHA-ANWR (1) Chris Harrison (no details)
Great Kiskadee	thru Mar 31	CAL-Hidden Ponds RV Park off LA27 in Sulphur (2) multiple obs
Warbling Vireo	Mar 26	GAL-HI (Boy Scout Woods) (1) BB Oros, Kathie Schroeck (no details)
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Mar 11	CHA-IH-10 at rest area nr. Hankamer (2) Daniel Perales, Glenda Barrera (no details)
Gray-cheeked Thrush	Mar 27	GAL-HI (Hooks Woods) (1) Chris Bergmann (no details)
Black-headed Grosbeak	Jan 5 to Mar 15	CHA-Magnolia Bend, Baytown (1) David Hanson

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; BTNP – Big Thicket National Preserve; CAL – Calcasieu Parish; CAM – Cameron Parish, LA; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County;; HI – High Island; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAW – John Whittle; JB – Jessica Barry, JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle; JM – John Mariani; MC – Michael Cooper;; RL – Randy Lewis; SM – Steve Mayes, SW – Sabine Woods; TH – Thomas Hellweg TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; WJC – West Jefferson County.

Golden Triangle Audubon seeks members' input on which candidate the Chapter should vote for in the election for Central-South regionally nominated director of National Audubon Society. The candidates' statements are reproduced below. Input must be received at PO Box 1292, Nederland, TX 77627 or gtaudubon@aol.com by April 21.

Stephen E. Gast

Stephen (Steve) Gast resides in Houston Texas, and is recently retired from ConocoPhillips Petroleum (COP). He held various geoscience positions in exploration and technology until retiring in 2011 from his final posting as General Manager of COP's Peruvian subsidiary in Lima, Peru. While working in South America, Steve was able to direct significant COP grants to help threatened and little known birds, including the Long-whiskered Owllet, Iquitos Gnatcatcher and Cerulean Warbler.

Steve started birding at age 13, and by age 18 was leading his own section of the Three Rivers Chapter Christmas Bird Count near St Louis. He spent much of his professional career working internationally where he was involved in many different conservation and bird-oriented organizations around the world. While employed at ConocoPhillips, Steve co-authored COP's Spirit of Conservation grant program in collaboration with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Steve co-chaired this grant committee from its inception until 2008 and continued to advise until his retirement.

He moved to Houston in 1985 and soon was leading birding trips for Houston organizations. He served on Houston Audubon's (HAS) Board of Directors for four terms, including one term as VP Finance and one term as VP Science. He served as a founding board member of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO). During his tenure at HAS he led the High Island Initiative which significantly increased Audubon's presence and holdings in that world-famous bird sanctuary in the 1990s and which also led to the creation of GCBO. He continues in advisory capacities to both boards: at HAS, he is recently active on staff search and board nominating committees, and currently involved in the sanctuary development and the land acquisition committee; at GCBO he co-chairs an annual golf tournament fundraiser.

Steve also serves on the Board of Directors of the Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) which protects over 20,000 acres to the west of Houston. The Katy Prairie was recently awarded IBA status by Audubon. He serves as chairman of the stewardship committee, and is actively involved in monitoring the KPC Preserves System, as well as participating in prairie protection advocacy. As part of its landholdings, KPC is majority owner/manager of Harris County's (Houston's) largest active cattle ranch. Through his role at KPC Steve has been fostering KPC's commitment to joining Audubon's initiative as an early adopter and promoter of Audubon-sanctioned bird-friendly range management and grass-fed beef program. Steve served previously on Texas Audubon's Board of Directors in the 1990s and led a search committee for Executive Director of the organization during this period. He currently serves on Texas Audubon's Advisory Board and as chairman of the Texas Audubon's Science and Conservation Committee.

"With climate change virtually inevitable in our lifetimes, it is imperative to broaden Audubon's relevance and impact at all levels, from chapter individuals conducting targeted citizen-science to major actors on the landscape, and to recognize and foster everyone's ability, and responsibility, to contribute as each can to preserve what biodiversity that still remains. I want to leverage my experiences in conservation at the chapter, state and international organizational levels to progress the Audubon mission through science and bird-friendly programs."

R Cynthia Pruett

As members, chapters large and small, state offices, headquarters and directors, our common desire is to see a world where birds not only survive but thrive. The urgency created by increasing loss of habitat overlain by climate change makes it imperative that we find ways to move forward in a balanced and cohesive way. The regional director is in a key position to facilitate this by helping to communicate information and ideas, challenges and successes and impacts and opportunities both up and down the chain of the organization. As a new regional director, my first order of business would be to get to know chapter presidents (who represent membership), boards, executive directors, councils, and state staff in order to open effective channels of communication and understand perspectives. Taking this information, the next priority would be to develop an in depth knowledge of NAS goals and plans in order to understand how they impact chapters of all sizes, to be able to communicate these changes and ideas effectively between chapters and NAS, and be instrumental in reconciling chapter direction with NAS objectives. The strategic vision of flyways creates incredible opportunities for birds and bird habitat; I would like to be a part of creating a more effective partnership within Audubon in order to maximize that potential.

Chapters are the keystone, the frontline, and the grassroots of NAS. Chapter issues, because of their local nature, lie at the heart of Audubon's work. Their challenges, constraints and opportunities are each unique and yet cumulatively have the power to achieve significant progress for birds and their habitat. I can think of no other environmental organization that has this strength. I would serve as an advocate for chapters and their needs to the board and staff and be an honest broker on issues of concern for both chapters and NAS. As a past board member and president of two different chapters over the years, I understand the need to have meaningful dialogue on NAS strategies and plans in order to be able to support and implement programs that serve our goal of helping birds to not just survive, but thrive. Having started my career at a large business at an entry level and ended it at an executive level, one of my strengths is the ability to see each segment of the organizational chain, understand its relationship and value relative to the others, and to help organizations focus strategically to achieve results. I believe this ability can be instrumental in representing Audubon interests at every level.

As an Audubon member of over 20 years and a volunteer, I have firsthand experience helping organizations coalesce to achieve meaningful objectives. Among the many things I have done in my volunteer life I have served as chair of a citizens committee for the ecological restoration of an army base in conjunction with the Army Corp of Engineers, developed a program for Girl Scouts with Fairfax Audubon and the National Capital Area Girl Scouts, worked in partnership with multiple organizations to establish the Occoquan National Wildlife Refuge (a former military base) and served in leadership roles and as president of Fairfax Audubon (now Northern Virginia) and Tucson Audubon. Providing leadership during this critical time for birds and for Audubon would not only utilize the skills and abilities I have developed over a lifetime, it would provide me with a personally meaningful contribution to a cause and organization about which I am passionate.

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NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Golden Triangle Audubon C6ZW250Z

Brown Pelican

SUBSCRIPTION/ MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete this form or include the information on or with your check. Mail to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292 or bring to any Membership Meeting. Subscriptions from National Audubon members with mailing addresses outside our official territory, and others wishing to subscribe are \$15 per year (Jan-Dec). Members with addresses within our official territory are also asked to contribute \$15 if they are able.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

RARE BIRD ALERTS

Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various Internet 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 www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds. It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives, which include all recent postings. Postings for the last two weeks are also available at <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/TX>.

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..>