



**Ornithology Group
Monthly Meeting**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**FIRST MONDAY OF 2013
JANUARY 7th**

The Spoonbill

A Publication of the Ornithology Group
(OG)
of the Houston Outdoor Nature Club

January 2013
Vol. 62 No. 1

**Bayland Community Center
6400 Bissonnet, Houston**

**LEARNING CORNER
6:30 P.M.**

GENERAL MEETING - 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM - 7:30 P.M.

JANUARY EVENING PROGRAM:

PROGRAM: "American Oystercatcher Stewardship in Texas"

Susan A. Heath Ph.D. Avian Conservation Biologist, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Susan has a Ph.D. from George Mason University in Environmental Science and a Masters of Science from the same institution in Biology. Her dissertation dealt with the effects of pesticides on birds that breed in agriculture and her master's thesis documented a previously unknown wintering population of waterfowl on the Virginia Piedmont. At GCBO Susan manages several projects including the Smith Point Hawk Watch and an American Oystercatcher Stewardship Program. She also manages GCBO's Site Partner Network, a group of 70 sites, including all U.S. and Mexican states around the Gulf of Mexico, that work together to preserve habitat for migratory birds. Prior to returning to school to follow her passion of avian conservation, Susan worked as a computer security engineer for several major defense contractors in the Washington D.C. area and served as a Naval Officer for four years.



photo by Harlan Evans

OG NEW YEAR WISH LIST...

LOOKING FOR YOU TO HELP

Seeking Librarian Volunteer

After 4 years of dedicated service as the OG Librarian, Debbie Valdez is ready to close this chapter and move on to other interests. Debbie has kept the OG books circulating, done book sale fund raisers, and just recently she has revised and updated the Library Web site.

***Volunteer needed to help us
begin a new season.***

Seeking Spoonbill Apprentice

The Ornithology Group will need a new Spoonbill Editor next season. Learning in small easy steps would be the best way to tackle the transition and have fun along the way.

Vicki Sims, Spoonbill Editor

Seeking Volunteer to help with web page design

The board would love to ring in the new year with an updated version of the Ornithology Group web site as a goal. If you have the creative skills to help with this item on the wish list please ring up Nina Rach or March Brown.

2013 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

2013 Dues: ONC/OG dues are paid yearly on a calendar basis beginning January 1st. Life Members of ONC still need to pay yearly OG dues used to help pay for Spoonbill expenses, speakers and their travel, OG donations to other organizations, and other OG expenses. Pay by check at the next OG meeting or use the form on page 8 to submit updated information for the ONC Yearbook and database along with your check.

If you have questions about your membership status, contact Margret Simmons at msimmons@compassnet.com or 713-776-2511

NOTES FOR THE NEW YEAR

January 19, 2013
O.G. Field Trip
Bill Godley trip leader

**Brazos Bend State Park's 40 Acre Lake Parking Lot
7:30 am**

**Admission Fee: \$7 or Free with State Park Pass
(Buying a Yearly Pass is a great way to support birding and our Texas State Parks)**

This bulletin updates this month's trip to Brazos Bend State Park and is based on the current conditions at the park and the recent Christmas Bird Count which had record participation and well over 150 species of birds. Birding and outdoor enthusiasts delight in wildlife observation and photography of more than 300 species of birds; 21 species of reptiles and amphibians, including American alligator and 23 species of mammals including bobcat and white-tailed deer.

Bill Godley, who has led hikes and CBC events for well over a decade will guide us around the park. Starting at 40 Acre Lake, we will tour the lake and surrounding areas in the morning. We will have an early lunch at the Elm Lake picnic area followed by tour of that Lake – primarily to view the wide variety of waterfowl present this year. Depending on the timetable, a stop at Old Horseshoe or Creekfield Lakes may also be useful. We do not plan to tour Davis Estates this year due to accessibility and current terrain conditions.

For those who are able to do a full day, the "Bird Blizzard" at dusk at the 40 Acre Lake observation tower is a must. The hundreds of thousands of birds returning to the park each evening to roost is an astonishing sight at sunset. Those interested should be at the tower at 5 p.m. to enjoy the show which lasts about 45 minutes.

View "Current Bird Sightings" at the park - are updated regularly at www.brazosbend.org. Over 100 species on the current list include American Bittern, most wintering ducks, Bald Eagle, Vermilion Flycatcher and Couch's Kingbird.

Since the entire day will be within the park, you can establish your own schedule to suit your needs. If you are able to do it all, you will certainly not be disappointed. This park is great to bird but is especially wonderful in the winter. We should have a great day.

Directions:

We will meet in the 40 Acre Lake parking lot at 7:30 am. The park is approximately a one-hour drive from downtown Houston. Take Highway 59 South to the Crabb River Road exit. You may also take State Highway 288 south to FM 1462 West. Follow FM 1462 to FM 762 North. From the south follow State Highway 288 North to the FM 1462 exit or take State Highway 36 to FM 1462 East. All routes are marked with brown signs to guide you.

Be sure to bring: Binoculars, a warm coat or jacket in case it is cold, hat, sun block, camera, spotting scope, \$7 for admission into the park, water, and lunch.

~ Adam Wood, OG Field Trip Coordinator, birdsondabrain@earthlink.net, 713-515-1692

WINTER QUARTERLY TRIP

NOTE: DATE CHANGE FROM FIELD TRIP CALENDAR!!

NEW DATES: February 15 - February 24, 2013:

Winter Quarterly Trip to the Panhandle Region, Albuquerque and El Paso Announcement

Meeting Location and Time:

TBD (most likely a hotel in Lubbock, Tx on the night of Feb. 15th)

Price: \$TBD

Limit: 12 People

As stated above I have changed the dates of the winter quarterly trip to February 15 - February 24, 2013. The locations for the winter quarterly trip are going to be the same. The winter quarterly trip will be to the Panhandle Region (Lubbock and Amarillo) and then extend over to Albuquerque, NM and back home through El Paso, Tx.

In the Panhandle Region we will be in search of such goodies as common merganser, Lesser prairie chicken (around Canadian, Tx. if I can get us on a tour or access to lekking areas. FYI this is a little early for them to start lekking so our chances of seeing this bird are going to be fairly low), Ferruginous hawk, Rough-legged hawk, Golden eagle, Long-eared owl (Lubbock - Muleshoe NWR if they get found on the CBC that covers that area), Northern shrike, Mountain bluebird, Sage thrasher, Longspurs (Lapland, McCown's and Chestnut-collared are possible), American tree sparrow, and Cassin's Finch (Lubbock - Muleshoe NWR, Again if found on the CBC).

After spending several days of birding the Panhandle we will move over to Albuquerque to bird the wonderful and majestic Sandia Mountains. Our primary destination will be Sandia Crest, if weather permits and the road is open all the way up. Our main targets here will be the Rosy-finches (all three are regulars here, this is one of the very few spots in the western US where you can see all three Rosy-finches together). Regular Sunday winter banding of the Rosy-finches makes these birds easily drawn in for scattered bird seed.

Other than the Rosy-finches we will be also keeping our eye out for Dusky grouse (rare), Northern goshawk, American three-toed woodpecker, Williamson's sapsucker, Pinyon jay, Pygmy nuthatch, Red crossbill, Evening grosbeak and Pine grosbeak (rare).



**View of Sandia Crest from Elena Gallegos.
Rosy-Finches will be found an hours drive around
and up the back side of the mountain, the road is
frequently plowed for maintaining the route to the
ski run and cell phone towers.**

Photo's / Info: Vicki Sims



While in Albuquerque we will also spend some time birding the lowlands (sagebrush areas) around the city for Gambel's quail, Long-eared owl and Sage sparrow. Numerous Rio Grande bosque parks, trails, and ponds make this city a marvelous location for excellent winter birding.



Elena Gallegos Park is a favorite Sandia Mountain foothills birding hotspot of Albuquerque birders. This is an example of the tile displays along the handicap accessible walkway. This pathway leads to a pond with birding blind and on to the some of the numerous trails that wander the foothills of the Sandia Mountain foothill system. Photo / Info: Vicki Sims

After we are done birding in Albuquerque we will head down to El Paso to seek out some birds we have already just seen such as Gambel's quail, Golden eagle, Long-eared owl, Crissal thrasher, Sage thrasher, Mountain bluebird, and Red crossbill (this is an invasion year for them so it is a good opportunity to add them to your Texas list if you are keeping a state list). The trip will conclude here but for those that are interested a stop on the way back can be scheduled to the Balmorhea Cemetery for the sage sparrows that are wintering there for those that wish to add sage sparrow to their state lists.

I am still working on setting up the accommodations and arranging for some local leaders with intimate knowledge of the areas we will be birding in to assist us in going to the best places to find our desired species. Therefore, I do not have a price tag for this trip as of this moment but that will be forthcoming. I am shooting to try and keep this trip to somewhere between \$500 - \$600 just to give interested parties a ball park figure.

This is going to be a great trip with loads of great scenery and experiences not to mention great birds that you will not want to miss. The trip is going to be limited to the first 12 members that contact me that they are interested in going on this trip. So if you are interested in participating in this trip please let me know and I will get your name on the list.

Musings on a common bird: Yellow-rumped Warbler Recollections

By Stephan Lorenz

While birding with a group in Alaska several years ago we were combing the mudflats of the salt lagoon on St. Paul Island, checking for shorebirds. Rock Sandpipers were abundant and out in the distance I could barely make out some Dunlins. I trained the scope along the shoreline hoping to pick out something else, straining to find something a bit more exciting, to push the shorebird diversity's past two species. Fifteen minutes into this exercise nothing had changed and a bit disappointed I turned to the group.

One of them really wanted to see the Dunlin and stated that even though he had seen hundreds, thousands possibly. He always enjoyed them and remembered all the places he had seen Dunlins in the past. His recollection would take from an early autumn afternoon on the East Coast, to a day's birding in Europe, and a flock he had observed during that fantastic trip to South America. I liked the idea of comparing sightings, learning more about the birds, and keeping those memories vivid. In addition, it is a great method to stay focused on the common and widespread species. Just think about all the places you have seen cardinals or hundreds of mockingbirds. One widespread species that is an ideal candidate to keep in mind is the Yellow-rumped Warbler.

I stood at the roadside of the Interamericana, the main highway crossing the mountainous spine of Costa Rica, continuing north through four more countries ending at the US border. I was stranded in a lengthy lull of traffic, still hoping to catch a bus north to Cartago, just an hour away. Low mist crept from the valley below, enveloping the epiphyte laden trees. In this cloud forest there was always palpable moisture in the air, condensing on my backpack, which was loaded off balance and had rolled into the grass. That morning I had waited an hour or two for a vehicle leaving the small village of San Gerardo de Dota, anything that would take me up the steep grade out of the valley back to the main road.

photo by Harlan Evans



Yellow-rumped Warbler, Brazos Bend, 11/28/11

Three days earlier I had trekked most of the way down, before catching a ride for the final mile or two to Cabinas Quetzal. I knew the serpentine road climbing steadily and I was hoping I wouldn't have to hoof it. Eventually, I lucked into a foreign couple that let me squeeze onto the backseat of their tiny rental. They dropped me off at the main intersection.

Now I waited. My head was still swirling with a plethora of new birds I have seen during the past three days in the pristine cloud forest of Savegre, from a pair of Resplendent Quetzals near their nest cavity, to tiny Scintillant Hummingbirds, confiding Spotted Wood-Quails, and the master skulker, Wrenthrush in its bamboo element. Along the streams I found a multitude of flycatchers, including the specialized Torrent Tyrannulet. It would take a solid evening just to catch up with notes. The fog thickened and it got cooler. I listened for traffic. Sometimes on the Interamericana a slow moving eighteen wheeler will trap cars and buses for miles and I could have several buses rush past me unable to stop in the tight convoy. I listened again and suddenly picked up a single chip note in the scrubby vegetation across the pavement when the woods around had been utterly silent.

The call was so familiar, so entrenched. I didn't need to raise my binoculars, but just to double check, I did. Moving quickly in the chilly mist, foraging along branches clad with orchids and ferns was a single Yellow-rumped Warbler. There was no feeding flock nearby, and no other migrant in sight, just a single Yellow-rump. Usually an uncommon species in Costa Rica, Yellow-rumped Warblers can be common during certain years. During the past weeks I had not encountered a single one yet here. It was flying between low branches somewhere in the Talamanca Mountains. It vanished as quickly as it had appeared, drifting into the vast and untrammelled oak forests that still cover much of the Sierra de Talamanca. Within minutes a bus, heading the right direction, did come around the corner and I was able to flag it down. Despite the multitude of exotic birds I would see over the coming days in Tapanti and places beyond, I clearly will remember that bird. This remains the only Yellow-rumped Warbler I have ever seen in Costa Rica.

I yelled at my companions to get closer. I had just seen a small bird flit through the grass and scurry out of sight. Five of us were combing the tussocks near Webster Lake on St. Paul Island, in the middle of the Bering Sea, looking for vagrant birds from Asia. The northeastern point of the island is famous for producing the largest number of migrant birds. The list of avian treasures from overseas which have graced this Alaska outpost is long. Any passerine that is clearly not one of the residents, which are limited to four species, quickens the pulse.

We formed a tight line. Everyone was a bit out of breath from catching up through dense tangles of decaying grass. I explained that I had only had a brief glimpse and that the bird was pipit sized. We advanced slowly, hoping for a pipit, the mind racing with possibilities. St. Paul Island is a true outpost, nearly equidistant between the Alaskan and Russian mainland. The list of birds recorded here reveals a slight bias towards the North American mainland as it is in fact several hundred miles closer. Yet nearly any bird can show up and it is not unusual to be surprised. I kept a close eye on the grass ahead. Nothing is worse than a promising looking bird flying off unidentified leaving everyone wondering what may have been missed. The majority of times it turns out to be a Dark-eyed Junco or other North American species, but on other occasions that small brown bird turns into a Taiga Flycatcher or Rufous-tailed Robin. Then it appeared from a dip in the grass, fluttering briefly onto a tussock and anticipation turned to surprise, a Yellow-rumped Warbler?

While this visitor from the North American mainland has been found on the island many times, it usually turns up during Fall migration and was a genuine surprise to see on that cold late May day. I had seen and heard many in the scattered trees around Anchorage during a balmy mid-May afternoon. Breeding Yellow-rumped Warblers were definitely arriving en mass, but this lost bird bouncing among the tussocks and quickly disappearing behind a dune was the only one I would find in the Bering Sea, where it is surprisingly uncommon.

The heat did not relent. The fierce sun burnt down on desert slopes of rock, cacti, and scattered shrubs. Amazingly the Black-throated and Black-chinned Sparrows remained vocal, defying the harsh climate. We schlepped on, one foot in front of the other, constantly looking ahead, hoping for the top. A false summit lured us further, but disappointed, when we saw that the path kept rising. Eventually, the grade softened and we marched over the crest as the trail dropped into the wooded area of the Bowl in the Guadalupe Mountains.

Birders from all over Texas trek into these mountains during spring and summer to see several high elevation specialties, difficult or impossible to find in other parts of the state. We had high hopes to catch up with Pygmy Nuthatches, Mountain Chickadees, breeding Grace's Warblers and more. We took a rest in the prodigious shadow of a stately pine and listened. The first sound we picked up was the soft whistled warbler of a Yellow-rumped Warbler.



Driving into the Guadalupe

photo by Vicki Sims

The western “Audubon” subspecies breeds in the Guadalupe, the only place where these birds, during the summer in Texas, are at high elevations, including the Davis Mountains. We watched birds methodically forage in the tall conifers, where the males clearly are defending and advertising territories and the females most likely are incubating eggs. The birds were not as numerous as they are during the winter in other parts of Texas, but spread out on their territories. We managed to catch up with most of the species we had come to see and ended the day hiking down the rough track through Bear Canyon, leaving the Yellow-rumped Warbler to their island of altitude.

The mornings were cold, but the southern California sun would rise above the brown hills and throw welcome warmth into the canyon. Inevitable the first sounds of the morning were the chips of little flocks of Yellow-rumped Warblers, first feeding in the oaks and then moving one by one into the grove of introduced eucalyptus. With the first sunspot flecking the chaparral covered slopes a few Wrentits would call and a pair of Western Scrub-Jays would pass through. I had woken well before sunrise to open up a dozen mist nets. The bird banding effort here was part of a larger effort collecting data from stations throughout the southern United States and location further south, in order to understand demographics of wintering birds.

One of the focal species at this banding station was the Yellow-rumped Warbler, of which several would eventually fly into the lower riparian vegetation of willows and shrubs and a few would end up in the nets. Yellow-rumped Warblers along with several species of sparrows comprised the most numerous birds banded at the station. In addition, we captured and collected data on several individual Yellow-rumped Warblers which had returned to their wintering site year after year. I learned a lot about this common species during the five months of our banding efforts. For example, that the distribution of white in the tail is the key to determining whether the bird is a male or female and it can also be used to age the individual.



A Yellow-rumped “Audubon’s” Warbler being released after being banded and measured in southern California during a study estimating winter survival of songbirds.

After every cold front that passes through Texas, I hear the familiar chips of Yellow-rumped Warblers in the parking lot on my way to work. Infallibly, stepping outside anywhere in the Houston area during a cold snap, Yellow-rumped Warblers will not be far afield. Noisy flocks accompany Houston birders at all hotspots for nearly eight months out of the year. So, next time you come across a Yellow-rumped Warbler think about a place or two where you observed this species in the past. Take a prolonged look and observe their foraging habits, try to determine the age of the bird, or look for an “Audubon’s” among the many “Myrtles”.

[January 19, 2013 OG Field Trip](#)

[a perfect chance for musing on Yellow-rumps or other fine Texas birds](#)

**Brazos Bend State Park & Davis Estates
Bill Godley trip leader**



Little Blue Heron, Brazos Bend, 6/1/12



Yellow-rumped Warbler, Brazos Bend, 2/28/11



Purple Gallinules, Brazos Bend SP, 7/26/12

OGee START THE
NEW YEAR OFF
RIGHT

!

WORTH WHOOPING ABOUT

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE
seeking citizen science help to
document Whooper migration sites

Texas Whooper Watch

While the traditional wintering grounds on and near Aransas National Wildlife Refuge are well known, biologists have much less information about locations used by Whooping Cranes in migration. In addition, as the Whooping Crane population continues to grow, whoopers are beginning to explore new wintering habitat away from traditional areas.

Texas Whooper Watch seeks the help of citizen scientists in identifying Whooping Crane migration stopover sites and non-traditional wintering areas, in assessing whether any hazards exist to whoopers at these sites, and in learning more about behavior and habitat use at these sites.

Reporting Sightings

If you spot a Whooping Crane, submit your observations and any photos to Texas Whooper Watch in one of the following ways:

WEB: whoopingcrane.com/report-a-sighting/
EMAIL: whoopingcranes@tpwd.state.tx.us
PHONE: (512) 389-TXWW (8999)

Sighting Data

Make note of the following to submit with your report:

1. Date
2. Time
3. Number of whooping cranes - adult and juvenile
4. Are any bands present on the legs?
5. Behavior (feeding, flying, resting, etc.) including any food items observed
6. Distance you were from the bird(s)
7. Any binoculars or scopes used
8. Location, including any of the following available:
 - a. Roads
 - b. Distance and direction from the nearest town
 - c. County
 - d. GPS coordinates
 - e. Site name (park, reservoir, etc.)
9. Habitat description
10. Any other bird species present
11. Any hazards present

FOR MANY PEOPLE, A GLIMPSE OF A WHOOPING CRANE IS THE THRILL OF A LIFETIME.

TEXAS WHOOPER WATCH
IS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO REPORT
SIGHTINGS OF ONE OF THE STATE'S MOST
FAMOUS WINTER TEXANS-
THE ENDANGERED WHOOPING CRANE.

If Whooping Cranes remain in an area for an extended period of time, then you can also help Texas Whooper Watch by gathering data on Whooping Crane movements and behavior. Texas Whooper Watch will provide you with a behavior checklist and data form. You can also capture behavior info using video cameras and submit the files. Let Texas Parks & Wildlife know if you'd like to be a "Whooper Watcher".

HEIGHT - 5 feet tall

COLOR - Adult birds have bodies that are pure white except for a red patch on the head and a black "mustache." Juvenile birds will have rusty feathers with the white.

WINGS - The wingtips (primary feathers) are black in Whooping Cranes, but black does not extend all the way along the wing edge to the body.

FLIGHT - Whooping Cranes usually travel and feed in small groups - from one to eight or ten birds. They may sometimes travel with Sandhill Cranes, but never as a large flock of Whooping Cranes.

VOICE - Whoopers are known for their loud, bugling call. In flight they may produce a deep trill, similar to Sandhill Cranes.

WHEN - Whooping Cranes do not arrive in Texas until mid-October and are gone from the state by late April.

WHERE - It is not necessary to report cranes that are seen while visiting Aransas National Wildlife Refuge or while participating in whooping crane tours.

The Nature Conservancy this summer protected 80 acres of critical habitat for endangered Whooping Cranes. The land, purchased with the first batch of payments from the Gulf Coast oil spill settlements, will be donated to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as an addition to Goose Island State Park near Rockport.

Ornithology Group Houston Outdoor Nature Club
Minutes of Meeting Monday,
December 3, 2012
Bayland Community Center
Number of Attendees: 62

Learning Corner: Instead of a Learning Corner, we had a Holiday Social and Silent Auction. Raised \$162.00

Sightings: Varied Thrush, Red Crossbills, and Sage Sparrow in the Trans Pecos; Sandhill Cranes near Brazoria Prison; Juvenile Golden Eagle (1st year) in Brookshire, Texas; 2 Bald Eagles in Richmond on FM 760; Calliope, Rufous, and Broad-billed Hummingbirds, Red-breasted Nuthatch & Wilson's Warbler at Russ Pittman Park; Harris's Hawk at San Jacinto Monument; Ferruginous Hawk on Longenbaugh Road at the big tower; Ladder-backed Woodpecker; Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Black-throated Gray Warbler at Don's Drip in High Island; Northern Bald Ibis in SE Turkey.

Minutes: No Comments.

Library: Looking for someone to take over the Library.

Treasurer's Report: \$8,488.00

Membership: Margret Simmons said that it is time to pay the dues. Please sign in.

The Spoonbill: Marcy Brown stated that the Deadline is December 12th.

Announcements: It is Christmas Bird Count Season!!!
Bird Counts are listed on the Houston Audubon web site.

The Buffalo Bayou Bird Count is Sunday, December 30th.

The Houston Bird Count and the Armand Bayou Bird Count are both on Saturday, December 15th.

The Freeport Bird Count is Sunday, December 16th.

The Cypress Creek Bird Count will be on New Year's Day.

The ONC will take care of the Sanctuary. There will be no visitors weekend in December.

On December 11th, M. Warner will speak about Bumblebees at the OG Entomology meeting.

Nature Discovery Center will have MONTHLY bird walks at noon.

The Texas Ornithology Society will have their Winter Meeting Jan 17 to 20, 2013 (Katy Prairie). There will be a Sparrow Workshop at the TOS Winter Meeting.

FeatherFest will be held April 12 to 14, 2013. You can sign up online now.

Future Field Trips:

Jan. 19, 2013 -- Scheduled OG Field Trip

Brazos Bend State Park & Davis Estates Bill Godley trip leader

The Quarterly OG Trip will be February 15 to 24 to the Panhandle with option to go on to Albuquerque to see the three species of Rosy-Finches that winter in the Sandia Mountains there. The trip is open to the first 12 to sign up.

Program: Whooping Cranes was presented by Dr. Felipe Chavez.

In 2012, there are less than 300 wild individuals. Currently Whooping Cranes breed in Canada and winter in Texas. In 1941, their population numbered 16 individuals. Their breeding grounds were discovered to be Wood Buffalo National Park in 1954. In 1967, they were listed as endangered. In the 1970's, eggs were put under Sandhill Crane parents.

In the 1990's, a Whooping Crane Recovery Team was formed. It consists of 5 U.S. and 5 Canadian officials who meet annually.

The Florida Experimental Population has only 30 birds alive now. About 80% of the birds released there were killed by bobcats.

The Eastern Migratory Experimental Population had a lot of mortality. Ninety one birds are alive (69 adults and 22 juveniles). They are doing well, but have extremely low reproduction. There is nest abandonment due to black flies. There are also problems due to food availability, weather, inexperienced pairs, poor body condition, and human disturbance.

Usually two eggs are laid (rarely 3 or 1). Usually one chick will kill the other one.

The fall staging area is in the Saskatchewan Prairies. We need to do more to protect the Migratory Route along the way.

Three Whooping Cranes were shot during the past year. They have had power line collisions; diseases; habitat loss; wind farms are an unknown factor.

Sandhill Cranes can eat corn and it is broken up fine in the feces. When Whooping Cranes eat corn, it is broken up in big chunks. (It is not digested well.)

Aransas NWR has only territory for 142 pairs.

Whooping Cranes like to eat Blue Crab, Wolfberries, Snails, Clams, and Insects. Blue Crab gives the most energy levels. (Blue Crabs like intermediate levels of salinity.) Whooping Cranes eat more Wolfberries in November, December, and March.

Major threats to Whooping Cranes at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge are:

- Human development

- Increased human disturbance

- Potential sea level rise

- Potential changes in rainfall patterns

- Reduction of river inflows at Aransas

- Chemical spills

Future needs of Whooping Cranes include:

- Detecting the presence of disease in the central flyway

- Evaluation of the effects of wind power farms

- Protecting critical stopover and staging areas

The oldest Whooping Crane is 32 years old. They migrate with the thermals six to seven hours a day. It takes them 10 days to migrate from Saskatchewan to Aransas NWR in Texas. They travel 200 to 400 miles per day during migration.

Marie Asscherick/Ornithology Group Secretary

TO START OR RENEW A MEMBERSHIP:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

**CHECK BOX ONLY
IF UNABLE TO VIEW
THE NEWSLETTER
ONLINE**

☐

	Individual	Family
ONC Annual Dues:	\$ 8.00	\$ 15.00
OG Annual Dues:	\$ 12.00	\$ 15.00
Dues Total:	\$ 20.00	\$ 30.00

Additional contributions are welcome in any amount.

Send to:

Outdoor Nature Club
PO Box 270894
Houston, Tx. 77277-0894

Membership questions?
Contact Margret Simmons
Phone 713-776-2511
msimmons@compassnet.com

About the Ornithology Group

The Ornithology Group (OG) is a division of the Outdoor Nature Club (ONC), a non-profit organization dedicated to greater knowledge about the environment and wildlife of the Upper Texas Coast. The OG is a club of individuals interested in all aspects of birding, including bird identification, listing bird sightings, competing in birding events, and preserving bird habitat. Some members study bird behavior, biology, distribution and migration, while others just enjoy watching birds. The organization is designed to accommodate these diverse birding interests. Monthly meetings and field trips provide an opportunity to interact with and learn from experts in local and international birding.

Chair:	Marcy Brown	713-664-5206	marcydbrown@gmail.com
Vice-Chair:	Nina Rach	281-433-0651	NRach@autreVie.com
Vice-Chair Asst:	Stennie Meadors		stenmead@aol.com
Secretary:	Marie Asscherick	832-721-8140	birdswelove4ever@aol.com
Treasurer:	Harlan Evans	713-797-6468	harlanj42@sbcglobal.net
Clearing House:	David Sarkozi	713-412-4409	david@sarkozi.net
Library:	Debbie Valdez	832-794-3314	xxijumpstreet@sbcglobal.net
Membership:	Margret Simmons	713-776-2511	msimmons@compassnet.com
Membership CoChair:	JoAnn Raine	832-567-7310	rainejoann@gmail.com
Field Trips:	Adam Woods	713-515-1692	birdsondabrain@earthlink.net
The Spoonbill:	Vicki Sims	713-779-7609	oncspoon@gmail.com

OG website: <http://www.ornithologygroup.org/>

ONC website: <http://www.outdoornatureclub.org/>