

NOTES ON WATERBIRDS OF THE UPPER TEXAS COAST

BY GEORGE G. WILLIAMS

EXAMINATION of ornithological literature of the last fifty years reveals the surprising fact that except for three or four articles recording observations made during a few days of the year, there has been published no survey of bird life along any part of the Texas coast lying north of the Rio Grande Valley. Yet here is a coast over three hundred miles long, which extends in a north-south direction over two hundred and twenty-five miles. The distance is comparable to that of the entire coastal region between Connecticut and North Carolina. The present paper is an attempt to fill a small part of the gap which exists in our ornithological knowledge of the Texas coast. It is based on observations made from June 18, 1932, to November 8, 1937. These observations centered about Bolivar Peninsula (a strip of land lying at the entrance of Galveston Bay), Galveston Island, and Freeport, Texas (a town about forty miles southwest of Galveston). Unless otherwise noted, all references apply to this forty-mile stretch of coastal country. All waterbirds except the ducks and geese have been included in this survey if they were noted in the region mentioned. Two species,—the Eastern Glossy Ibis and the Pomarine Jaeger,—have not heretofore been recorded (so far as I can learn) from Texas.

In connection with the theory that migrations are influenced by changes in day-lengths, I have been especially interested in observing birds and in recording observations made near June 20–21 and December 20–21 each year. I have likewise been interested in observing and recording seasonal fluctuations in numbers of birds present and in the ages (where distinguishable) of the bird population. Somewhat as an aside, it might be added that these observations apparently point toward the following generalizations:

1. At least some waterbirds may migrate north or south irrespective of the mid-summer change in day-lengths.
2. They may retire southward *after* the winter solstice.
3. Species which have bred in the region may often practically disappear after the breeding season, and then reappear in greater numbers than ever in the autumn.
4. Mature birds linger farther north in winter than do immature birds.
5. The only time of the year when waterbirds of the region do not seem to be migrating is in the period from about January 15 to February 15.

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer immer*).—A rare bird in the Galveston region, though it is a common winter visitor farther down the coast. About fifty birds were observed on Aransas and Copano Bays, near Rockport, Texas, November 29, 1935. Two birds near Galveston, March 8, 1936.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps podiceps*).—Observed in every month

of the year except January, July, August, and September. Earliest record February 19, 1933; latest record December 16, 1935. Female with downy young observed on Galveston Island, June 25, 1934.

WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*).—During winter months occasionally present in small numbers about Galveston; common in large flocks in spring and autumn. It is interesting that the species occurs so far east during migration when both the winter home and the breeding grounds lie considerably west of Galveston. Earliest record January 8, 1933, when nine were seen together on Bolivar Peninsula. This flock apparently remained there until February 19, 1933, after which there was a period of cold weather and the birds were seen no more. Latest spring record April 16, 1933. Earliest autumn record July 11, 1933, when a flock of twenty-two birds (some of them young of the year) was observed on a fresh-water pond about twenty miles from the nearest salt water at Freeport.

EASTERN BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*).—Common the year round, but most numerous in autumn, except at nesting places. A visit on July 1, 1934, to a small island near Galveston revealed a nesting colony of several hundred individuals. A few nests contained eggs in process of incubation, a few contained young apparently only a day or two old; but most contained young about the size of a large chicken.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*).—Common in every month of the year, but most numerous in May and June.

WATER-TURKEY (*Anhinga anhinga*).—Fairly common throughout the Galveston and Houston region except in winter, but seen once only near salt water, on October 6, 1934, on Galveston Island. Earliest spring record March 19, 1933, fifteen miles from the coast.

MAN-O'-WAR-BIRD (*Fregata magnificens*).—Not uncommon during late summer. Earliest record May 19, 1935, when a flock of five males and two females, all mature, flew over Galveston. Latest record August 12, 1933, at Freeport; but a reliable observer reported them as rather common at Port Lavaca, farther down the coast, September 4, 1934.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*).—Ward's Heron nests commonly along the coast, and is joined in winter by the Great Blue Heron; but since the two birds are indistinguishable in the field, autumn and winter records may apply to either. The species is most numerous in October and in February, a circumstance doubtless due to the passing of transient Great Blues on the way to and from regions farther south. No young have been observed in nests after June 15.

AMERICAN EGRET (*Casmerodius albus egretta*).—Observed during every month of the year, but in much reduced numbers during the three winter months. Many hundreds feed together on the coastal flats during August and September, but only isolated individuals appear from December to March.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula thula*).—Observed in every month of the year, but in much reduced numbers during the winter months. Nesting occurs commonly in many places along the coast.

REDDISH EGRET (*Dichromanassa rufescens rufescens*).—Nests just to the west of Galveston Island, and appears in the Galveston region after the breeding season only. One was observed, however, on March 12, 1933, on Bolivar Peninsula. The next earliest dates for the Galveston region are April 19 and May 31, 1936; the latest record is October 28, 1933, but five were observed on Aransas Bay, near Rockport, November 30, 1935.

LOUISIANA HERON (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*).—Observed during every month

of the year, but not commonly in January, February, and early March. Nesting occurs commonly in many places along the coast, and is normally completed by the end of June.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Florida caerulea caerulea*).—Common inland, but not common along the coast except in late summer and autumn. From about the first of June (earliest record May 29, 1934) the immature birds begin to collect together with Snowy Egrets in the flat grassy coastal swamps, where with a very small number of adult birds, they remain until about the first of November (latest date October 28, 1933).

EASTERN GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens virescens*).—Very common coastwise in May and June, though it disappears from the immediate coastal region very early in autumn. Earliest spring record April 15, 1934; latest autumn record September 13, 1933.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*).—Nests commonly in the region. Earliest spring record April 15, 1934, when two immatures with their mother were noted on Galveston Island. Latest autumn record for the coast October 6, 1934, but the species may be found inland in sheltered places until December.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea violacea*).—Never observed near the coast; but in a great heronry near Waller, Texas, and a smaller one near Houston, most of the young were out of the nest and on the wing by June 1, 1933 and 1934. Yet a few small fledglings remained in the nests at that date.

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*).—Uncommon migrant in spring and autumn. Earliest spring record February 29, 1936; latest spring record May 6, 1934. Only autumn record October 12, 1934.

EASTERN LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis exilis*).—Nests commonly in the marshes about Galveston Bay, but seldom near the coast. Earliest record for the coast May 19, 1935; latest record for the coast June 16, 1933.

WOOD IBIS (*Mycteria americana*).—Common about Galveston Bay in late summer and early autumn, but never observed near the coast.

EASTERN GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus falcinellus*).—Observed on Galveston Island, June 25, 1934, where a bird was examined long and closely three different times from a distance of about twenty yards, with eight-power field-glasses.

WHITE-FACED GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis guarana*).—Mostly a bird of the bays, but not uncommon along the coast during summer. All birds observed in the coastal region were seen between June 16 and July 1.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Ajaia ajaja*).—Nests on an island in Galveston Bay. Young leave the nest in late June, scatter over the country in the vicinity of the coast, and then quickly disappear. My latest autumn date is July 17, 1934.

SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis tabida*).—Two individuals passed over Houston, flying southwest, September 5, 1933. A reliable observer reported five passing over Houston, December 19, 1935.

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans elegans*).—Not common in the immediate coastal region, though three adults and two sets of downy young were observed on Galveston Island, May 29, 1934, and an adult was feeding with Clapper Rails in a salt marsh near Galveston, July 1, 1934.

CLAPPER RAIL (*Rallus longirostris*).—No individuals were examined during the period, but all were probably Louisiana Clapper Rails (*Rallus l. saturatus*). Common during summer months in salt marshes near the shore. My earliest date is June 8, 1934, when a mature bird and a half-grown young were seen near Freeport. Another small downy young was seen at the same place, June 30, 1934, and two

half-grown young were seen on Galveston Island, August 6, 1935. My latest date for the Galveston region is October 27, 1935; but about twenty were seen farther down the coast at Rockport on November 30, 1935.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Ionornis martinica*).—Common in summer in the upper region of Galveston Bay, but observed only twice near the coast, April 29, 1934, and December 1, 1933.

FLORIDA GALLINULE (*Gallinula chloropus cachinnans*).—Common in summer near the coast but not in the bays. Earliest record April 19, 1936; latest October 12, 1933, on the upper shore of Galveston Bay. Numerous downy young observed June 16 and June 27, 1933.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana americana*).—Common throughout the winter months and occasional in the summer. A small flock was reported as an "early fall record" in the upper part of Galveston Bay on August 30, 1935; but my earliest record for the coast is October 12, 1933. Five individuals were observed on June 16, 1933, and two on June 27, 1933, in a pond on Galveston Island. Two were seen on Galveston Island, May 19, 1935.

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*).—Common during spring and autumn, and occasional during winter. Small flocks were seen January 27, 1937, and January 15, 1933; but the next-earliest time the bird was observed within this region was February 19, 1933. It becomes common about March 1, and remains until late April (latest date May 2, 1937, near Freeport). My earliest autumn date is August 12, when six were seen at Freeport. A straggler was noted near Freeport, June 25, 1934.

CUBAN SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus tenuirostris*).—Noted during every month of the year, though it is not common during December and January. It is most numerous during late February and March. Downy young are fairly common along the beaches during June.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*).—Noted during every month of the year except July. It is remarkable that birds are present in some numbers both before and after the summer solstice, and yet disappear for a month after this. Thirty individuals were seen on Bolivar Peninsula, June 18 and June 19, 1932; one was seen there June 16, and four June 27, 1933; three were seen on Galveston Island, June 19, and twenty June 25, 1934. After those dates, the earliest autumn record is August 12, 1933.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Pagolla wilsonia wilsonia*).—A common summer bird, most numerous in June and July. Earliest spring record March 8, 1937; latest autumn record October 16, 1932. A single straggler was seen on Bolivar Peninsula, January 8, 1933.

MOUNTAIN PLOVER (*Eupoda montana*).—A rare spring migrant. Earliest spring record March 20, 1937; latest spring record June 19, 1934, when one bird was seen on Galveston Island.

KILLDEER (*Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*).—Common at all times of the year. Very small downy young noted May 19, 1935, and half-grown, feathered young June 13, 1934.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica dominica*).—Seldom observed during the period and each time on Galveston Island. Earliest date April 24, 1937, and latest May 6, 1934.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Squatarola squatarola*).—Noted during every month of the year, though most of the summer birds are in immature plumage. Earliest spring record of a bird in breeding plumage April 1, 1934. Other significant records of birds in breeding plumage are June 27, 1933 (two birds); July 13, 1933 (one bird); June 8, 1934 (one bird).

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres morinella*).—One bird seen December 1, 1933, one January 1, 1933, and five January 27, 1937, all on Bolivar Peninsula. Otherwise, there are no records for December and January. About three hundred were seen on Bolivar, February 19, 1933; but otherwise there are no records for February. From about the first of March to about the middle of May a few solitary birds, some in winter and some in summer plumage, are always in evidence along the beaches. At about mid-May thousands, all in breeding plumage, suddenly appear everywhere near the coast; but within three weeks have disappeared, leaving only a few stragglers. It is remarkable that birds in winter or immature plumage, and also birds in full breeding plumage, are constantly in evidence along the beaches during every day of June, July, and August. By mid-September practically all the birds have lost the summer plumage. The number of birds present is much augmented during August and September, presumably by the return of autumn migrants; but the autumnal birds are never so numerous as were the spring birds. Practically all have disappeared by November 1.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Capella delicata*).—A not uncommon winter bird inland, but appearing along the coast in the migratory seasons only. My earliest spring record is February 29, 1936, and my latest spring record May 18, 1934. The height of the spring migration comes during the last two weeks of March, when hundreds of birds are to be observed in marshes near the coast. My earliest autumn record is July 13, 1933, when several hundred were seen feeding in a marsh a few hundred yards from the beach. My latest autumn date for the Galveston region is October 6, 1934; but the species was fairly numerous on Aransas Bay, near Rockport, November 30, 1935.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus americanus*).—A common spring and autumn migrant, though it appears inland during the spring much earlier and more frequently than it appears on the coast. My earliest date for the Galveston region is April 19, 1936, when one bird was seen. It lingers along the coast in this region until the end of June. Fifteen birds were observed on Bolivar Peninsula, June 19, 1932; two at Palacios, June 13, 1934; and two near Freeport, June 30, 1934. The earliest autumn record is August 14, 1936; but the species is most frequently seen during September and October. My latest autumn date for the Galveston region is October 28, 1933; but the bird was numerous on Aransas Bay, near Rockport, November 30, 1935.

HUDSONIAN CURLEW (*Phaeopus hudsonicus*).—A regular spring migrant. Earliest record April 13, 1936; latest record May 19, 1935.

UPLAND PLOVER (*Bartramia longicauda*).—A regular but uncommon migrant in spring and autumn. Earliest spring record April 11, 1937; latest spring record April 29, 1934. Only autumn date for the period, August 19, 1934, when about twenty birds were seen at different places near Galveston.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularia*).—A winter resident in the region. Latest date seen in spring May 29, 1934; earliest date seen in fall August 6, 1935.

EASTERN SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria solitaria*).—A common spring and autumn migrant inland, but not common near the coast. Earliest spring record March 17, 1935; latest spring record May 18, 1934. Observed only once in autumn near the coast, September 15, 1934, when six individuals were seen on Galveston Island.

WILLET (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*).—The Eastern Willet breeds in the region, but during the migration season it becomes confused with the Western form. The species has been observed in every month of the year except December and January. The earliest spring records are February 15, 1936, and February 19, 1933. The latest

autumn record is November 11, 1934, at Galveston; but the species was exceedingly numerous November 30, 1935, farther down the coast at Rockport.

GREATER YELLOW-LEGS (*Totanus melanoleucus*).—A regular spring and autumn migrant, and a not infrequent winter resident. Latest spring record May 19, 1935; earliest fall record July 13, 1933, when two birds were seen on Bolivar Peninsula.

LESSER YELLOW-LEGS (*Totanus flavipes*).—Observed in every month of the year, though it is uncommon during December and January. The main migration, when many hundreds may be seen, occurs during the first two weeks of April. The bird is present in small numbers throughout June and July.

AMERICAN KNOT (*Calidris canutus rufus*).—A regular spring and autumn migrant. Earliest spring record April 1, 1934, when one bird, partly in breeding plumage, was observed near Freeport; latest spring record June 16, 1933, when fifty birds in breeding plumage were observed on Bolivar Peninsula. It is generally present in large numbers from the middle of April to the first of June. Earliest fall record July 1, 1934, when three birds with faintly pink breasts were observed on Galveston Island; latest fall record November 8, 1937, when several birds were observed on Galveston Island, all in winter plumage.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Pisobia melanotos*).—A regular spring and autumn migrant. Earliest spring record March 21, 1936, latest spring record May 19, 1935. Earliest autumn record July 17, 1934; latest autumn record October 15, 1934, when five birds were seen.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER (*Pisobia fuscicollis*).—A regular spring migrant. Earliest record May 6, 1934; latest record May 31, 1936.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Pisobia minutilla*).—Observed occasionally in spring and frequently in autumn along the coast, though the species is never common. Earliest spring records February 4, 1934, and April 1, 1934; latest spring record May 6, 1934. Earliest autumn record August 2, 1934; latest autumn record October 28, 1933.

RED-BACKED SANDPIPER (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*).—A very common wintering bird. Latest spring records June 19, 1934, when two birds in summer plumage were seen on Galveston Island; and June 30, 1934, when one bird in summer plumage was seen near Freeport. Earliest autumn record October 31, 1935.

DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*).—Whether the following data apply to the Eastern or to the Long-billed form of the species I do not know. An infrequent spring and common autumn migrant. Earliest spring record March 21, 1936, when a few individuals in summer plumage were observed; latest spring record May 19, 1935, when seven individuals in summer plumage were observed. Ten birds in winter plumage were noted June 18 and 19, 1932; and thirty birds in winter plumage and one bird with a reddish breast as in the summer plumage were noted June 19, 1934. Earliest autumn record July 13, 1933; latest autumn record November 8, 1937, when three birds were seen on Galveston Island.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Micropalama himantopus*).—An infrequent spring and autumn migrant. Earliest spring record May 6, 1934; latest spring record May 19, 1935. My only autumn date for the species is September 16, 1934.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Ereunetes pusillus*).—A common wintering bird which has been observed during every month of the year in the Galveston region. Significant records are these: about one hundred seen on Bolivar Peninsula, June 27, 1933, all the birds in breeding plumage; about sixty in breeding plumage were seen on Galveston Island, June 19, 1934. The earliest date that probably involves true autumn migrants is July 13, 1933, when about fifty birds were observed. The height of the migrations occurs in early May and in early August.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Ereunetes maurii*).—Observed in every month of the year although the bird is common in spring and autumn only. Earliest spring record February 13, 1937. Four seen as late as June 27, 1933, and twenty on June 25, 1934. Birds are most numerous in early May and in early August.

SANDERLING (*Crocethia alba*).—Observed during every month of the year, but not common in early July. Two birds in summer plumage were observed on Bolivar Peninsula, June 16, 1933; two in summer plumage June 27, 1933, near Freeport; two in summer plumage June 19, 1934, on Galveston Island; and one in summer plumage June 25, 1934, on Galveston Island. About the middle of July, the birds (all in winter or juvenal plumage) become more numerous, as migrants from the north join those that have lingered in the south.

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*).—A common summer resident and breeder. Earliest spring record March 21, 1936; latest autumn record September 16, 1934.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Steganopus tricolor*).—A regular but not common spring and autumn migrant. Earliest spring record May 18, 1934; latest spring record June 25, 1934, when seven birds in breeding plumage were seen on Galveston Island. Earliest autumn record August 6, 1934; latest autumn record August 12, 1933.

POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*).—One bird seen on Bolivar Peninsula, June 16, 1933, and June 27, 1933. Examined at close range with good glasses, and identified definitely as this species.

HERRING GULL (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*).—Noted during every month of the year, though only a few stragglers remain during June and July. The species is most numerous from mid-November to mid-April. During this period it may be observed by the thousands along the beach and in favorable spots along the lower bay shore. All birds observed from the first of June to the last of December are in immature plumage; but after early January a few birds in adult plumage begin to appear. Their number reaches a maximum in late February and early March, and from mid-March to June their number gradually diminishes. At its maximum, however, the number of adults in proportion to immatures is hardly more than one to ten. My earliest record of an adult is January 8, 1933, and my latest record May 18, 1934, when seven adults were seen.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*).—Noted during every month of the year, though only a few stragglers remain during June and July. The species is most numerous from mid-October to mid-April, when it may be observed by the thousands feeding and flocking with Herring Gulls. Both immature and adult birds may be seen on almost any day of the year; but during the autumn and winter months the adult birds are in a majority of perhaps five to one over the immatures. During April and May, however, the proportion is reversed; and during June and July the few birds seen may sometimes be adults, and sometimes immatures.

LAUGHING GULL (*Larus atricilla*).—A very common summer resident and breeder in the region, but recorded during every month of the year. During very mild winters it may be numerous during December and January, although as a rule it is by no means abundant in those months. Immature birds are not common in the winter. The number of local birds is vastly augmented during April, September, and October as migrants from other regions pass along the coast. A few birds begin assuming the summer plumage by the first of February, and all adult birds have assumed it by March 20. A few immature birds appear in spring with the adults, but they assume adult plumage during May. Finally, a few adults begin to assume the winter plumage during the last week of June, and all have acquired complete winter plumage by

the end of the first week in August. Thereafter the number of birds present diminishes sharply, due doubtless to the emigration of individuals which have bred or been hatched in the region. This scarcity of Laughing Gulls persists until the first week in September, when the migrants from farther north and east begin to appear in huge flocks along the beaches or migrating southwestward along the coast. In years when hurricanes with their high tides do not disturb nesting activities, most of the young are on the wing by July 1; but in unfavorable years the majority of young may not take to the air until mid-July or later.

BONAPARTE'S GULL (*Larus philadelphia*).—A regular but not common spring migrant. Earliest date January 27, 1937; latest spring date April 15, 1934.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica aranea*).—Breeds in the region and has been noted in every month of the year. Though common, it is not an abundant species at any time. Young on the wing were seen as early as May 6, 1934.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*).—A very common summer resident and breeder in the region. Earliest spring record February 5, 1933; latest autumn record October 27, 1935; but the species was fairly abundant near Rockport, November 30, 1935. Near Galveston it is most abundant in March. Many pairs were observed copulating March 19, 1934; young on the wing June 8, 1934.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo hirundo*).—This species was definitely identified three times only in the entire period: April 16, 1933; May 18, 1934, when several hundred were observed; and June 27, 1933.

LEAST TERN (*Sterna antillarum antillarum*).—A very common summer resident and breeder. Earliest spring date April 11, 1937; latest autumn date September 13, 1933, though one bird was shot September 20, 1923. The species is most abundant in early August. Eggs and very small downy young were noted June 8, 1934; and a nest with eggs being incubated was found June 20, 1933.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus maximus*).—A very common summer resident and breeder, observed in every month of the year. The birds are not abundant except at the breeding places until late May, when thousands of adults and immatures appear along the beaches. Most of the immature birds disappear by mid-August; then in September and October there comes a great influx of both adult and immature birds numbering in the thousands. Most of these birds gradually disappear until, in February, only a few scattered adults remain. Pairs were noted copulating April 8, 1934; and one pair was apparently copulating August 17, 1933. On July 1, 1934, many hundred young not quite able to fly were observed, along with four downy young and about ten nests of eggs being incubated.

CABOT'S TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis aculeatus*).—Noted only once, April 16, 1933, near Freeport.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia imperator*).—Noted in every month of the year. Most abundant in early March and October, when scores of birds may be seen flocking with Royal Terns along the beaches. At other times it is common, but not abundant.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonia nigra surinamensis*).—A common and abundant spring and autumn migrant. In mid-May it appears very suddenly and in vast numbers. Earliest spring date May 2, 1936 (one bird). On May 18, 1934, the first birds in immature plumage were observed along Galveston Island beach. By June 10 (latest date June 8, 1934) all mature birds have disappeared, and immature birds have become slightly more numerous than they were earlier in the season. These immature birds seem to linger along the coast until they are joined by young of the year, which come down from the north during late June and early August. Signifi-

cant summer observations are: June 19, 1932, five birds in adult summer plumage observed a mile from the beach as they flew straight south; June 25, 1934, ten birds in adult summer plumage seen on Galveston Island, along with over one hundred birds in immature plumage; June 30, 1934, observations near Freeport similar to those on Galveston Island on June 25; July 1, 1934, eight birds in adult summer plumage seen on Galveston Island, along with many hundreds of birds in immature plumage. Several close flocks of immature birds were seen flying straight in from the north, reaching the sea-line and dipping down to the water without pausing in their flight, continuing straight out to sea for about half a mile, and then turning to fly west along the coast. Latest autumn date for the period September 13, 1933, when several hundred birds in winter plumage were seen near Freeport; but the species was observed September 20, 1933.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops nigra nigra*).—An abundant breeder in the region, noted in every month of the year. It begins disappearing from the open beaches in mid-April, probably to go to the breeding grounds, and during most of May is not abundant except at the breeding grounds. A visit to a nesting colony June 8, 1934, revealed scores of nests with eggs, about twenty very young downy birds, and all other birds in adult plumage. A visit to the same colony on June 30, 1934, revealed three or four immature birds on the wing, and young birds of all sizes running about on the sand. In winter the species was noted only during January and February of 1933, when several hundred were regularly seen in a favored spot on Bolivar Peninsula.

The Rice Institute
Houston, Texas