



Field Guides Tour Report

Texas Coast Migration Spectacle II 2016

Apr 23, 2016 to Apr 29, 2016

John Coons

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



This Red-headed Woodpecker, surely one of the prettiest woodpeckers in the world, perched atop a fence post in the Big Thicket of East Texas. (Photo by participant Cynthia Jackson)

We had a very enjoyable week of birding in the Big Thicket and at the migration traps along the upper Texas Coast. This trip is quite dependent on weather for seeing a lot of migrants, and we were not disappointed. A couple of systems moved in during our time on the coast and caused a lot of birds to drop in. Both Wednesday and Thursday were quite good, with birds arriving while we were in the woods at High Island. It's thrilling to be there when these tiny birds drop in on their long trek north to their breeding grounds.

Our trip started well in the Piney Woods and Big Thicket of East Texas. A group of three Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were among the first species we saw, along with another pine woods specialist, the Brown-headed Nuthatch. We had an excellent day and following morning in this area, as we had nice views of many great birds, including a singing Swainson's Warbler hopping about on limbs well above ground, and a singing Bachman's Sparrow that moved between song perches. Kentucky, Prairie, Hooded, Pine, Yellow-throated, Prothonotary, and Northern Parula were warblers we saw on their breeding grounds. A real surprise was seeing five Swallow-tailed Kites, a very good bird in East Texas, soaring about with five Mississippi Kites and a few Broad-winged Hawks as we headed to lunch. Our first day finished with a great performance by a pair of Barred Owls that cackled back and forth to each other in the trees just above us. The second afternoon, we got to the coast for our first taste of migrants, and we enjoyed the selection. We found lots of Scarlet and Summer tanagers, and we picked up a few new warblers including Magnolia, Yellow, and American Redstarts. Over the next couple of days, including our fallouts on Wednesday and Thursday, we added such goodies as Golden-winged, Cerulean, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Bay-breasted, and Chestnut-sided warblers, and I especially remember seeing so many Ovenbirds walking about in the open on the wooded trail. Baltimore and Orchard orioles were seen in good numbers feeding in the fruiting trees, and both Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos were also highlights in the woods. During the afternoons, as we were finding migrants in the woods, there was a continuous flight of herons, egrets and spoonbills flying back and forth to the rookery, where we had such good looks at those birds in their breeding plumes and colors.

We also had a number of great birds in the surrounding marshes, rice fields and mudflats. Both King and Clapper rails put on good shows for us in the marshes, as did Purple Gallinules and those Seaside and Nelson's sparrows. It was fun sorting through nine species of terns and having those wonderful, pink-breasted Franklins Gulls on the beach. It took us a while to locate a shorebird-friendly rice field, but when we did it was a good one. Those five Hudsonian Godwits were a great find on our last morning in the huge wet field, and we also had nice Upland Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes, close White-rumped and Stilt sandpipers, and lots of Whimbrels and dowitchers of both species.

Besides birds, we encountered American Alligators, American Anoles, Coyotes and a few Bottle-nosed Dolphins, as well as a local culture and cuisine that is quite different from the rest of the country. Becky and Pam took good care of us at the motel and dining room, and helped make the trip memorable. I look forward to birding with all of you again in the future!

-- John

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – Fair numbers were seen each day after we reached the Texas Coast.

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – We only saw a few in the rice fields.

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – There were two birds that flew through the woods on our first morning.

MOTTLED DUCK (*Anas fulvigula*) – There were a handful of pairs we saw on freshwater ponds and in the Bay during our week.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*)

RED-BREADED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – A couple of individuals were still hanging around from the big numbers that are present in the winter.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – These were the more common of the cormorant species, by far.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – Our only ones were seen on one of the dredge islands in Galveston Bay.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – On our second visit to Anahuac we saw a flying bird over the marsh that settled in with several Tricolored Herons.

LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – Surprisingly, our only one was at the marsh at Tyrrell Park near Beaumont. They must have started nesting and become quite inconspicuous.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Many of the birds at the rookery at Smith Woods had chicks and were in brilliant breeding colors with fancy plumes and bright green lores.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Some of those at the rookery showed bright orange feet and red lores which they only have for a short time in the breeding period.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – Most of our sightings were in fresh water areas.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – We saw a handful with breeding plumes at the nesting colony at Smith Woods.

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*) – We had nice looks of this handsome egret on the Bolivar Peninsula.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – These, too, were at nests at the rookery and showed brightly colored bills and cinnamon brown backs.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – We saw several but the one perched in the woods at Smith Woods was especially memorable.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Pam and Lynne found a pair nesting in the courtyard of our hotel near the Houston airport. They were not there on our first evening but were back on our last morning.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*)

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – It is always a treat to see this colorful bird so well at the rookery.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Quite common in the Piney Woods and Big Thicket, these were not seen on the Bolivar Peninsula before Hurricane Ike.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We saw a few here and there on the peninsula.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – Lorena spotted one flying and briefly hovering on the south end of the Bolivar Peninsula.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*) – It was a great thrill to hear the call of a Swallow-tailed Kite soaring by, then to get out of the van and find five birds sailing about overhead with Mississippi Kites and Broad-winged Hawks. This is one of the most sharply marked raptors in the world.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – It was really cool to see about five birds soaring with the Swallow-tailed Kites over a pasture in the Big Thicket area. These are migrants heading up to Oklahoma and Kansas to nest.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – We had one lingering bird at Anahuac.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – Our only ones were flying with the Mississippi and Swallow-tailed kites.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – We saw a few soaring and perched in the open country and rice fields.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans*) – We had great looks at Anahuac NWR of these rufous-cheeked birds at the edge of the marsh.

CLAPPER RAIL (GULF COAST) (*Rallus crepitans saturatus*) – After hearing a few we had a great look on the Bolivar Peninsula.

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) [*]

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – There were a lot of these around this year.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Good numbers of these handsome shorebirds were seen.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus*) – We saw a couple or three pairs on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Many that we saw were in nice breeding plumage with full black bellies.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) – We encountered a few birds in the grassy areas at the edge of the rice fields with one on the lawn at Gregory Park on the Bolivar Peninsula.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – We saw a few pairs at Bolivar Flats.

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – There were good numbers of these in the rice fields and along the coast.

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*) – It took some looking but we finally found a pair at Bolivar Flats. The recent heavy rains had changed the topography of the flats and some of the nesting shorebirds had moved around.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*) – There were lots of these about, both local breeders and wintering birds still lingering.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (*Bartramia longicauda*) – Another sought-after migrant on the Coast we saw one in a short grass field on the Bolivar Peninsula then another the following day standing on a low dike in a rice field.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*) – Good numbers were seen in the flooded rice fields.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT (*Limosa haemastica*) – We had nice looks at this local specialty in a flooded rice field on our last morning. There were about five individuals probing about in the mud with thousands of other shorebirds. This is one of my favorite shorebirds.

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) – We only saw a couple along the Coast.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – We had several good looks at birds in full breeding plumage. Some were right in front of us on the beach.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) – Those in full breeding plumage with rufous cheeks and barred breasts were especially noteworthy.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – There were lots on the beaches at Bolivar and at Rollover Pass.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – When we finally located a flooded rice field we found a lot of these in various stages of dress.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*) – We only saw a couple in the fields but there were certainly more mixed in with the Least Sandpipers way back in the wet field.

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Many were found in several of the sites we visited on the Peninsula and in the rice fields.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER (*Calidris fuscicollis*) – Our first were seen in the small wet field where the crop duster came in for a landing. Then we had a close view in the grassy field at Gregory Park. We had a few more in the flooded rice field. This is one of the later shorebird species to move through the upper Texas Coast.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*) – We had good views of a few birds in fields near Anahuac.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – We saw a few in the very large flooded field on our last morning.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) – Both this species and the following were seen in good numbers with more of these in the rice fields than on the Coast.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – We saw a few in direct comparison to the previous species.

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*) – Lorena probably saw one flush out of a field near Smith Point.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – There were a couple of individuals in the large flooded field that we checked on our last morning. This is an uncommon migrant along the coast.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – This was far and away the most common gull we saw.

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – There were a few standing on the beach with Laughing Gulls at Bolivar Flats and all showed a quite

pink blush on the chest.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

HERRING GULL (AMERICAN) (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*)

LEAST TERN (*Sternula antillarum*) – This tiny tern was seen well on our visits to the sandy beaches and at Rollover Pass.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – We found a group of about ten individuals perched together at a pond on our way to Smith Point.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – I believe we only encountered one bird perched among a group of Royal Terns at Rollover Pass.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*) – A couple that we saw at Rollover Pass were in nice black plumage.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*) – A good number were still remaining and had not yet headed north.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – This is the common local nesting tern that we saw flying about over the Bay and along the Coast.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*)

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – One of the more handsome terns, there were always a few wherever terns gathered.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*) – Another unusual species, we saw a good number on the beaches.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) [I]

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaidura macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*) – We encountered a few in our afternoon birding in the woods at High Island.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) – We had good views of this quite uncommon species at Smith Woods.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – On our second stop we saw an adult peeking out of a nest box on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Strigidae (Owls)

BARRED OWL (*Strix varia*) – One of the highlights of the trip was having a pair of these great birds calling back and forth just above us in the bottomland forest in the Big Thicket area. It is one of the best calls of any North American bird.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*) – We saw several flying about in the day time and even more perched on fenceposts or trees, especially in the Anahuac area.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – We heard a distant bird during our Barred Owl evening. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – Most of those we saw were females, but we did have one or two males.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – We had great views of this wonderful woodpecker along a dirt road in the Big Thicket area.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – One was still hanging around from the winter at Smith Woods.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*)

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER (*Picoides borealis*) – It took some looking but we finally got fantastic views of three birds at Jones State Forest on our first morning in the field. We saw them working the trunks of short-leaf pines and flaking off pieces of bark. This is one of the rarest birds in North America by total numbers.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – We saw a couple of individuals on our first morning in the Big Thicket area. Always a great one to see.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Our only sighting was one flying over the rice fields. We gave chase in the van but lost it behind some trees. This is a species just on the edge of its range here in East Texas.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*)

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virens*) – After hearing a couple calling along creeks in the Big Thicket where they are breeders we had a handful of migrants in the woods at High Island. This is the early *Empidonax* to arrive and the only one to expect until the end of April.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*)

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – We saw several pairs, first in the Big Thicket, then on fence wires in the rice fields near the Coast. This is always a favorite.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – One of the common voices of thickets throughout the trip we finally caught up with it.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – A few individuals were seen as migrants but our first was in the Big Thicket where it was certainly a local breeder.

PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – On one of our afternoons we came across a handful of individuals that had just arrived from the south.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Many seen and heard.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – I still think this is the prettiest of the North American jays.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*) – We heard a saw a few in the Piney Woods area and again near Beaumont.

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – We saw one or two in the beach vegetation at Bolivar Flats.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – There are more and more nesting colonies each year but they just were not keeping up with the mosquitos.

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – This was the most widespread swallow we encountered.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – A few were watching our lunch from their nests in the shelter at Anahuac.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – These are not very common in the woods on the coast but we saw them in the Piney Woods on our first day.

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH (*Sitta pusilla*) – This tiny nuthatch showed well at Jones State Forest on our first morning. This is another of the southeast US specialties.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) – We had great looks at a singing bird right along the fence line in the rice fields on our way to Anahuac.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – At least one performed well for us at the marsh at Anahuac NWR.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – We heard a lot and we found a pair feeding young in a nest in an abandoned tire in the Big Thicket.

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*)

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH (*Catharus minimus*) – We had nice looks at this migrant at High Island where it was outnumbered by the following species.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*)

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – We saw and heard a few singing at High Island.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – This is one of a few species that nests in the woods at High Island.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Good numbers were around High Island where they were feeding on the mulberries.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – We had a wonderful experience with this often hard to see well species. On Wednesday we saw at least ten individuals in a stretch of the trail at Smith Woods.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – We saw, or heard chipping, a couple of these migrants most days in the woods at High Island.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – A quite desirable species, we saw at least three on Wednesday including two males and a female.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – This was one of the more common warbler species we saw.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) – A rather early migrant in the woods at High Island we saw these on the breeding grounds in the Big Thicket where they really light up the bottomland forests.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*) – We had great looks at this often quite difficult species on our first morning in the bottomland forest of the Big Thicket. We heard it singing in the distance and got close enough to see it working through the upper branches of the trees.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – We saw a few each day at the woods.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – There was a quite late individual we found at Smith Woods on Wednesday with our fallout. Most of these pass through earlier in the month.

KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Geothlypis formosa*) – One or two were seen on the Coast as migrants but our best view was a singing bird on the breeding grounds.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – We heard a few here and there but most got the best look at one coming in to bathe at the water feature at Smith Woods.

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – We also had good looks at this southern breeder in the Big Thicket.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Both males and females were seen on a few days at High Island.

CERULEAN WARBLER (*Setophaga cerulea*) – Lorena spotted a well-marked male in the tree tops at Smith Woods, This is another uncommon migrant that usually draws a crowd of birders.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Our first was a well-marked male in the Big Thicket but we saw a few more as migrants on the Coast.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*) – A good number of these colorful birds were seen during the week with a couple putting on a good show.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER (*Setophaga castanea*) – This is one of the warblers that usually comes through the migration traps a bit later than others. A quite colorful species, we had a couple of good views of this far northern breeder.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (*Setophaga fusca*) – Ralph spotted our first, and second in the taller trees at Smith Woods. The first one slipped away but we had a nice view of the second.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – Several of these well-known warblers were encountered.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – Another dazzler, this brightly marked species made a few appearances.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Setophaga striata*) – Lorena spotted a nice male at Boy Scout Woods just before we were headed to Smith Woods.

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – We heard a good number in the Piney Woods of East Texas and saw a few overhead and even saw a female feeding a couple of young birds.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*) – We had two singing males in the tops of bald cypress trees in the Big Thicket and finally got a good view of it above us.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – On our first afternoon we found one singing close to the road and had quite good views as it sang from the tops of small pines. This is always one of my favorites.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) – Surprisingly, we did not see many of these usually numerous warblers.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – We heard a few in the dense woods and I think a few of us got a look through the pines at one singing in the distance.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

BACHMAN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea aestivalis*) – We were quite fortunate to hear one singing in the Big Thicket and, after getting permission from the landowner to enter, we got good views of this very local species as it sang from short pines. This is a species that has greatly declined in much of its range in East Texas.

NELSON'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) – After a bit of looking we found two individuals in a marsh on the Bolivar Peninsula. This is a quite handsome sparrow that nests in the far north and has usually left by this time of year.

SEASIDE SPARROW (*Ammodramus maritimus*) – We had a couple of rather close birds in the marsh at Anahuac.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*)

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – These were rather numerous along the roadsides in a few places.

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – A good number of these were seen each day on the coast where they were moving in numbers.

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*) – We saw a good number but not as many as the Summer Tanagers. This is always a great species to see well.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – It's even on the water tower in High Island.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Several were seen feeding in the mulberry trees at Smith Woods.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – We saw a male in the brush pile by the parking lot at Smith Woods.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Good numbers were encountered during the week.

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) – We saw a colorful male close to the Bachman's Sparrow site and a few female plumaged individuals later on.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) – We saw a few singing from the bush tops in a field near Anahuac NWR. This is a late migrant along the Texas Coast.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*)

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) – We saw many at Anahuac NWR in the marshes and coastal prairies.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – There were a lot of these at Anahuac where some will stay to breed as well as many migrants on the Coast.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*) – We saw big numbers of this well-known species in the woods at High Island.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – This was the smaller rabbit we saw in the Big Thicket area.

SWAMP RABBIT (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) – Several were seen in the woods at High Island. This is a species with a rather limited range.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – About three individuals were seen in the shipping channel off of Port Bolivar.

COYOTE (*Canis latrans*) – Two quite handsome and healthy looking individuals were seen in a sandy area at Bolivar Flats.

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*) – I think I was the only person who saw this guy run through the undergrowth at Smith Woods.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 187 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa