



Field Guides Tour Report

## Texas Coast Migration Spectacle II 2021

Apr 17, 2021 to Apr 23, 2021

John Coons

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



*Our experience with the large flock of American Avocets at the jetty was pretty cool. They seemed to move about as one entity over the shallow water, and it was interesting to see them tipping up to feed. Photo by participant Brian Murphy.*

It was great to be birding again!! We had a wonderful week of birding in East Texas and along the Upper Texas Coast. There were new birds everyday and migrants were arriving daily in good numbers.

We started our birding at Jones State Forest, north of Houston, where a beautiful male Wood Duck perched in a tree was one of our first birds. It wasn't long before we had wonderful views of a couple of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers feeding on the pine trunks. We also managed to sprinkle in some Brown-headed Nuthatches, Pine Warblers, Eastern Bluebirds, and a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers here before we headed east through the Piney Woods to the Big Thicket. Along the way and after lunch, we birded some bottomland forest, forested uplands and pine plantations, where we saw a slew of breeding warblers including Northern Parula, Kentucky, Hooded, Prairie, Yellow-throated, a migrant Black-and-white, and a beautiful Swainson's. Some cooperative Acadian Flycatchers and three perched Mississippi Kites also showed well for us. We made an early morning departure the next day to try for Bachman's Sparrow north of Jasper. We had just started to look intently when we heard one singing and soon had a great scope view of this quite local species that stayed on the same perch for the whole time we were there.

Heading south to the coast we found our first Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, and a few marsh birds. After stopping in at the motel, we went on to famous High Island and encountered a number of migrants right where we parked the van. We visited the woods at High Island and Sabine each day and with migration in full swing it was quite different from day-to-day in terms of the overall composition of migrants. With the afternoons usually the best time for seeing passerine migrants we used the mornings to visit the marshes and coastal prairies at Anahuac NWR, the shorebird sanctuary at Bolivar Flats and other spots in the pastures and rice fields. On our last full day we went to Sabine Woods in the morning and the birding was so good we threw together a picnic lunch and ended up staying through the afternoon. Seeing a pair of Whooping Cranes in a field on the way back to our motel was another coup.

Highlights throughout the trip were many, and included several sightings of Yellow-billed Cuckoo, both King and Clapper rails, that wonderful experience with the American Avocets tipping up to feed in the shallow water close to us, nice looks at all four species of single-banded plovers (Snowy, Piping, Wilson's, and Semipalmated), Upland Sandpipers and a quite close and fabulous Buff-breasted Sandpiper, big numbers of Sanderlings and Dunlin, eight species of terns, great views of both American and Least bitterns, a few days with a lot of thrushes of four species (Wood, Gray-cheeked,

Veery and Swainson's), Seaside Sparrow and a group of five Nelson's Sparrows in the marsh, lots of both Summer and Scarlet tanagers on a couple of days, male Painted Buntings and a group of Dickcissels on our last morning.

When most people think of Texas Coast migration, the plethora of warblers are what comes to mind. We did well with 26 species seen, and many of them encountered multiple times. The numbers of Hooded, Kentucky, Tennessee, and even Ovenbirds were impressive on some days. Worm-eating Warblers were in higher than normal numbers seen, and we enjoyed Golden-winged, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Cerulean, Blackpoll, several Prothonotary, both Northern and Louisiana waterthrushes together, among others.

Special mention needs to be made of the new canopy walkway at Smith Woods in High Island that gave us level views at a few treetop birds, and it afforded a wonderful new vista of the great rookery of herons, egrets, cormorants and, of course, Roseate Spoonbills. One could get lost watching the comings and goings of these birds as they tended to young, incubated eggs, and worked on nest building.

It was great enjoying these birds with all of you and experiencing East Texas culture and cuisine which was usually in big supply. I hope to see all of you again soon for some more wonderful birding. -- John

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#### 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

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### BIRDS

#### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – We saw a good number of these unusual ducks including some perched in trees during our week.

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

**WOOD DUCK** (*Aix sponsa*) – We had nice scope views of a perched male in a pine at Jones State Forest on our first morning.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – This was the most common duck we encountered.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Spatula clypeata*) – Brian spotted a pair that swam out of the vegetation at Anahuac NWR,

**MOTTLED DUCK** (*Anas fulvigula*) – This southeast US specialty was only seen a couple of times.

#### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) – While near Big Sam we heard a tom gobbler in the distance. [\*]

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – There were a fair number at Anahuac.

#### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) [I]

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

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – We heard a few and saw them at the driveway feeding station at High Island and again at Sabine Woods.

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*)

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus americanus*) – We had several nice looks at this bird. It was one of the first birds we saw at High Island.

**BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) [\*]

#### Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**COMMON NIGHTHAWK** (*Chordeiles minor*) – We saw one perched on a tree limb near Boy Scout Woods.

**CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW** (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – Surprisingly, a flushed individual flew past us at Smith Woods, landed briefly twice, then flew out of sight onto the trees.

#### Apodidae (Swifts)

**CHIMNEY SWIFT** (*Chaetura pelagica*) – We never saw a lot but there were the odd twos and threes here and there.

#### Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Archilochus colubris*) – Sabine Woods yielded several individuals on our day there.

#### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**KING RAIL** (*Rallus elegans*) – We had a calling bird along the roadside in the rice fields and saw it snaking through the vegetation before it flew across a channel.

**CLAPPER RAIL (GULF COAST)** (*Rallus crepitans saturatus*) – This species is associated more with salt water than King Rail and we had a wonderful view of one right next to the van.

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*) – We heard several and one was flushed by the King Rail when we were trying to get a better view.

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*)

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*)

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinica*) – We saw a handful but the one we watched at Smith Woods from the canopy boardwalk was especially colorful.

#### Gruidae (Cranes)

**WHOOPIING CRANE** (*Grus americana*) – After not seeing them in the morning we spotted two of these large birds resting in a field off Hwy 73. These are birds from the introduced Louisiana population that have recently spread into Texas.

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A good number were seen in the middle of the week.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra americana*) – We saw hundreds at Bolivar Flats and more from the nearby jetty where a large close group were tipping up to feed.

*Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)*

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus palliatus*) – We found a couple of individuals along the far end of the Bolivar Peninsula.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Good numbers were along the beach at Bolivar Flats where some were coming into nice plumage and getting black bellies.

**SNOWY PLOVER** (*Charadrius nivosus*) – On the windy walk at Bolivar Flats we spotted a pair of these rather uncommon shorebirds.

**WILSON'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – We had nice views of a few where they were often hunkered down in the sandy vegetation at Bolivar Flats.

**SEMPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Good numbers were along the beach at Bolivar Flats.

**PIPING PLOVER** (*Charadrius melodus*) – This dainty little plover showed well at Bolivar Flats. This species is threatened throughout its range since it prefers the same sandy beaches that humans frequent.

**KILLDEER** (*Charadrius vociferus*)

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**UPLAND SANDPIPER** (*Bartramia longicauda*) – We saw about eight individuals in a pasture with the Buff-breasteds as we closed in on High Island for the first time.

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) – Good numbers were seen in a few of the wet fields we found.

**MARbled GODWIT** (*Limosa fedoa*) – There were a handful feeding in the tidal areas at Bolivar Flats.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – Some of these were in bright breeding plumage.

**STILT SANDPIPER** (*Calidris himantopus*) – We had nice looks at those in the ponds along the entrance road to Bolivar Flats.

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – There were hundreds of these along the beaches. In the cold north wind we experienced while walking at Bolivar Flats, it was interesting to see these lined up behind small dunes or even pieces of beach trash to get out of the wind.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – Many of those we saw had nice black belly patches.

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** (*Calidris bairdii*) – We saw about six individuals at Bolivar Flats.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*)

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris subruficollis*) – After seeing about 12 birds in a pasture with the Upland Sandpipers that were a bit far away, we found a single individual along the entrance road to Bolivar Flats that gave us a great look.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** (*Calidris melanotos*) – We found these in the only wet rice field we could locate as well as nice looks on the way into Bolivar Flats.

**SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris pusilla*) – Not many were seen, but we had rather close views at Bolivar Flats.

**WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*)

**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus griseus*) – This species is generally more associated with the coastal areas and we saw and heard them along the Bolivar Peninsula.

**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – We saw a group in the wet rice field on our way to Anahuac then a few others that were vocalizing here and there.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – We saw a pair on our last morning that were well-spotted.

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (*Tringa solitaria*)

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – This species was outnumbered by Lesser Yellowlegs.

**WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) – There were a lot of these seen in various habitats. Most were of the western race but we did have a nice view of an "Eastern" Willet in the marsh near Sabine Pass.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – Fair numbers were seen throughout.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – We saw a lot of these.

**RING-BILLED GULL** (*Larus delawarensis*) – Typically a quite common species but they are dwarfed in numbers here by Laughing Gulls.

**HERRING GULL (AMERICAN)** (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) – A few were seen along the beaches of the peninsula.

**LEAST TERN** (*Sternula antillarum*) – The high winds were keeping these down but we saw a lot in the Bolivar Flat area.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – A quite sharply marked tern, this species is typically seen more around marshes than along the coastal beaches.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – We only had a couple but one was right next to a Royal Tern for a nice comparison.

**BLACK TERN** (*Chlidonias niger*) – These used to be a quite uncommon species here but we had some nice views at Rollover Pass of all black adults.

**COMMON TERN** (*Sterna hirundo*) – Most of these had moved through already but we had a few at Bolivar where there were certainly more way out on the distant sandbar.

**FORSTER'S TERN** (*Sterna forsteri*) – These are the common nesting small tern of the marshes that we saw flying about the peninsula and at Anahuac NWR.

**ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Good numbers along the beaches where we saw a few engaging in bird-porn.

**SANDWICH TERN** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – One of my favorite terns we had several nice views of this species with the long yellow-tipped black bill.

**BLACK SKIMMER** (*Rynchops niger*) – This odd-looking species was in fairly good numbers at Bolivar Flats and at Rollover Pass.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*) – Brian spotted a single individual near the rookery at Smith Woods.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – This was the common cormorant throughout our trip.

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Only a few were seen.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – Our only sighting was of a few individuals at Bolivar Flats.

**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – There were a lot of these in the coastal areas.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**AMERICAN BITTERN** (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – Brian spotted a well-camouflaged individual standing in the marsh at Anahuac NWR.

**LEAST BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – Brian also spotted our first of this great little heron at Anahuac where it was hunting small fish from the edge of the reeds. We later saw a second one there and another on the Bolivar Peninsula.

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*)

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – There were a big number of these nesting at the Smith Woods rookery. Several pairs had young quite unattractive nestlings.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – The colors of the soft parts on some of the individuals that were nesting at the rookery were amazing, orange feet instead of yellow, and bright red lores on the faces. These birds only have these bright colors for a couple of weeks in the spring.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – We didn't see a lot of these but we mainly saw them in freshwater areas.

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – A handful were nesting at the rookery where their head plumes and brightly colored bills were on full display.

**REDDISH EGRET** (*Egretta rufescens*) – It took some looking but we found a white morph individual on our return trip to Rollover Pass. I think we were thwarted by the wind from seeing them at Bolivar Flats.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – We saw these daily and many were in breeding condition with the cinnamon colored caps and backs.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*)

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – There were several individuals of varying stages of age at Anahuac NWR.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**WHITE IBIS** (*Eudocimus albus*) – We encountered several of these. I wonder why they don't also nest at the Smith Woods rookery.

**WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihi*) – Good numbers were seen once we reached the coast.

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** (*Platalea ajaja*) – We enjoyed fabulous views of many at the rookery. The bright orange tail and other bright breeding colors on the head and neck are not usually illustrated in field guides.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – These became quite common on the Bolivar Peninsula after Hurricane Ike in 2008.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We saw a couple on the Bolivar Peninsula including one at the park in Crystal Beach that was standing on the lawn!?

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus leucurus*) – We had a nice view of a flying bird that we stopped right next to and watched it hovering in place as it searched for large grasshoppers and the like.

**MISSISSIPPI KITE** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – We spotted three in a dead tree at the small lake we visited near Silsbee. These had put down for the evening before heading on north the next morning.

**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus hudsonius*) – We saw a couple that were leftovers from the winter.

**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – We stopped at Lake Charlotte on our way to the airport on our last morning and saw a young bird being harassed by an Osprey across the lake.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) – We saw an immature in the Big Thicket and one at High Island.

**SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) – In the rice fields, north of High Island we came across a few of these very long distant migrants.

**RED-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – This isn't a very common species on our route but we saw a couple.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – We heard one a couple of times at the small lake at Smith Woods but had a nice view of an individual perched on a power line further down the Bolivar Peninsula.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – We saw at least two at Sabine Woods where these were still hanging around from the winter.

**RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

**DOWNY WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates pubescens*)

**RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER** (*Dryobates borealis*) – On our first morning at Jones State Forest we had a great view of a pair of these very local woodpeckers. With their very select habitat requirements this species has been in decline for decades and it is only through large tracks of pine forest in the southeast or managed areas where they have been able to hang on.

**PILEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – We had two that were quite conspicuous at Jones State Forest. A great bird.

**NORTHERN FLICKER (YELLOW-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus auratus*) [\*]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – Formerly a bird we were lucky to encounter in East Texas, they have become more common in recent years. We ended up seeing several in the rice fields and along the Bolivar Peninsula.

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) – We saw a male near Big Sam Reservoir.

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – Brian spotted a flying bird while we were enjoying the American Avocets at the North Jetty.

*Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)*

**EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE** (*Contopus virens*) – We saw a few but they were not widespread.

**ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax virescens*) – We had a nice view of one along the creek in the Big Thicket which was ideal breeding habitat, then we saw a few as migrants along the coast.

**WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax traillii*) – Most of us had a nice view of this somewhat early migrant at Sabine Woods.

**LEAST FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax minimus*) – We saw one at Sabine Woods that was on the early end of the migration timeline.

**GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – We heard a few calling and saw a couple in the woods along the coast.

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – There were a fair number perched on fence wires north of High Island.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – A wonderful bird, we enjoyed a few sitting on fences or shrub tops and sallying out for insects in the open country we visited.

*Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)*

**WHITE-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo griseus*) – This is a species that you normally hear several individuals for everyone you see. But, we ended up seeing several along the way.

**YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** (*Vireo flavifrons*) – We had a few nice looks at this fairly distinctive vireo.

**PHILADELPHIA VIREO** (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – This is not a common species as it migrates through our area but we had nice looks at one in a treetop, but at eye-level, along the canopy walkway at Smith Woods.

**RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) – We saw a good number as migrants at High Island and Sabine Woods.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – It's always nice to see these patrolling fence lines and open country for small prey items. We ended up seeing a handful of them.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**BLUE JAY** (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – We saw these daily and I think this is the prettiest of the North American jays.

**AMERICAN CROW** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

**FISH CROW** (*Corvus ossifragus*) – This species has moved more inland in recent years and we saw and heard our first in Silsbee.

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**CAROLINA CHICKADEE** (*Poecile carolinensis*) – The daintiest of the chickadees we saw them, mostly in the piney woods, of East Texas.

**TUFTED TITMOUSE** (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Much less conspicuous than chickadees, we saw them in the Big Thicket.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**HORNED LARK** (*Eremophila alpestris*) – About four of these widespread birds were in the up-beach vegetation at Bolivar Flats. This is the only spot we visit that has this species on our route.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A handful were flying about at Cattail Marsh at the park near Beaumont.

**PURPLE MARTIN** (*Progne subis*) – A good number were soaring about over the woods at High Island and at Sabine.

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – We saw these daily with a large group perched in the marsh vegetation at Anahuac in the morning.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Some were beginning to build nests under the picnic shelter roof at Anahuac.

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – There were lots of these nesting under the bigger bridges of the Trinity River that we saw on our first and last days of the trip.

*Sittidae (Nuthatches)*

**BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta pusilla*) – This southeast US specialty showed very well for us at Jones State Forest on our first morning.

*Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)*

**BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** (*Poliptila caerulea*)

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) – We saw one from the canopy walk at Smith Woods that we were looking down on.

**SEDGE WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*) – Nice looks were had of one calling from a shrub along the roadside at Anahuac.

**MARSH WREN** (*Cistothorus palustris*) – This sometimes skulker popped up for us when we were looking at the Sedge Wren at Anahuac.

**CAROLINA WREN** (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – We saw a few here and there but we heard many more.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [H]

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**GRAY CATBIRD** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – A very common species in the woods at High Island and Sabine where they were feeding on mulberries or scratching on the ground.

**BROWN THRASHER** (*Toxostoma rufum*) – A fair number were seen, usually shuffling through the leaf litter.

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Quite a few were seen.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**EASTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia sialis*) – At Jones State Forest we had some nice views of this iconic species. A couple were hanging out at nest boxes. No one doesn't like a bluebird.

**VEERY** (*Catharus fuscescens*) – We certainly ran into a lot of these, especially on our last day at Sabine Woods where they were quite conspicuous.

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** (*Catharus minimus*) – At Sabine Woods on our last full day, we encountered "thrush day" where there were a lot of these along with the Veerys, Swainson's, and Wood Thrushes.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) – This was the commonest thrush early in the week then they got usurped by the others.

**WOOD THRUSH** (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – We heard a few singing their beautiful song, and we encountered several in the woods each day.

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – A late lingering species from the winter, we saw about five individuals in the long-leaf pines at Jones State Forest.

*Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)*

**BACHMAN'S SPARROW** (*Peucaea aestivalis*) – One of the trip highlights was heading north to an area near Sam Rayburn Reservoir in hopes of seeing this very local habitat specialist. We heard one off the road and within minutes had a nice scope view of a singing individual that stayed on the same perch for our entire stay. Yip! Yip! Yip!

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) [\*]

**SEASIDE SPARROW** (*Ammodramus maritima*) – We had nice looks in the saltmarsh at Anahuac of this local species, then a couple more near the town of Sabine Pass. We were fortunate with the wind as they sat up and were singing.

**NELSON'S SPARROW** (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) – I think we had five individuals pop up in the marsh near Sabine Pass. These are late-wintering individuals that are going to be headed to Minnesota and North Dakota to breed.

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Several were seen along the roadside edges at Anahuac.

**SWAMP SPARROW** (*Melospiza georgiana*) – One popped up briefly where we saw the Nelson's Sparrows at Sabine Pass but it dropped back into the marsh and out of sight.

*Icteriidae (Yellow-breasted Chat)*

**YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (*Icteria virens*) – We heard one or two in the distance in the Big Thicket area and Brian had one come into the water drip at Smith Woods while he was taking photos.

*Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)*

**YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – A rather rare bird on the Texas Coast in mid-April, we saw one coming to a feeder in High Island.

**EASTERN MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella magna*) – These were singing away in the pastures and near rice fields.

**ORCHARD ORIOLE** (*Icterus spurius*) – There were fair numbers on a couple of days.

**BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – Though this species was not "all-over" we saw a handful during the week.

**RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Common in may wet areas.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus ater*)

**COMMON GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

**BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus major*) – We saw our first and had a nice study at Cattail Marsh at the park near Beaumont, then saw many more at Anahuac NWR.

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Unlike the Boat-tails, this species shows up at feeders and around towns in good numbers.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**OVENBIRD** (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – We saw a fair number during the week in all of the migrant woods.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER** (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – After only hearing one sing on the breeding grounds we ended up seeing several with about six seen on one day.

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia motacilla*) – One individual was walking along the edge of the pod at Boy Scout Woods in direct comparison to a Northern Waterthrush.

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Again, several individuals were encountered during the week.

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – We found a nice male at Sabine Woods on our final day.

**BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – The day we arrived at High Island we saw about eight individuals including one that came into the ater drip.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – These were seen each day of the week in the migrant traps.

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** (*Protonotaria citrea*) – We worked hard to find one on the breeding grounds in East Texas in case they had already passed through High Island but we ended up seeing several including five individuals at once at Sabine Woods on our final day. That was pretty cool!

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*) – It took some looking but we found a singing bird and had nice views of this southeast US specialty in the Big Thicket area. Then, we saw a rather late migrant at Hook's Woods at High Island.

**TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Leiothlypis peregrina*) – This was one of the most numerous warbler species we saw during the week.

**KENTUCKY WARBLER** (*Geothlypis formosa*) – We first located a bird on the breeding grounds in a bottomland forest situation, but then we found several individuals in the woods at High Island and Sabine where they are typically a hard bird to see as they usually stay in dense cover. There were instances that we had to decide if we wanted to look at another Kentucky or another nearby Ovenbird.

**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Surprisingly, we even saw a couple rather high in trees. An odd place for a species normally associated with marshes.

**HOODED WARBLER** (*Setophaga citrina*) – Amazingly, we may have seen more Hoodeds than any other species of warbler. They were seen everyday and I estimated at least 40 individuals at Boy Scout and Smith Oaks woods on the day we arrived.

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – There were about three males at Smith Oaks the day we arrived with one right where we parked the van then only a couple more during the week.

- CERULEAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga cerulea*) – A male showed well for us at Sabine Woods in the afternoon of our last day. This is always one of the more sought-after warblers on the Texas Coast.
- NORTHERN PARULA** (*Setophaga americana*) – We had nice views of a couple on the breeding grounds then a couple more as migrants in the High Island area.
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER** (*Setophaga magnolia*) – Always, one of the later warblers to arrive, we saw one at Sabine Woods after getting the word from our friends Suzanne and David.
- BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** (*Setophaga castanea*) – Another real beauty, we had wonderful views of a full breeding plumaged male at Sabine Woods.
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) – Surprisingly, this warbler was not conspicuous and only some of us got on one at Hook's Woods that we could not re-locate.
- YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – There were very few of these with a nice look on the new canopy walk at Smith Woods.
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER** (*Setophaga striata*) – A female showed well for us with a mixed-species group of birds at Sabine Woods.
- PINE WARBLER** (*Setophaga pinus*) – We had nice looks at Jones State Forest on our first morning then heard several more during our time in the Piney Woods. This is a local breeding as well as wintering species and rarely appears as a migrant on the Texas Coast.
- YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE)** (*Setophaga coronata coronata*) – We saw a few. This species is one of the first to pass through and head north. All that we saw were of this subspecies.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** (*Setophaga dominica*) – A couple that we heard singing in the bald cypress trees along a stream in the Big Thicket showed well.
- PRAIRIE WARBLER** (*Setophaga discolor*) – We had great looks at this handsome species as it sang in a re-generating pine plantation in the Big Thicket area. This is another species that arrives early and is rarely seen in April along the coast.
- BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** (*Setophaga virens*) – We only saw a few during the week.

#### Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

- SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – We saw a lot of these during the week and especially our last day at Sabine Woods.
- SCARLET TANAGER** (*Piranga olivacea*) – There were eight in one tree feeding on mulberries at Sabine Woods.
- NORTHERN CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A handful were encountered with most being adult males.
- BLUE GROSBEAK** (*Passerina caerulea*) – These were not common but we had a few here and there.
- INDIGO BUNTING** (*Passerina cyanea*) – Good numbers were seen throughout the week. Some were in full blue breeding plumage and some were still mottled with brown as the feathers tips were still wearing away.
- PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*) – It took some looking and patience but we saw two males feeding in the weedy low vegetation at Smith Woods.
- DICKCISSEL** (*Spiza americana*) – On our last morning we finally found a group of about eight individuals singing loudly from a tree next to a rice farm.

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## MAMMALS

- SWAMP RABBIT** (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) – This was the largish rabbit we encountered several times in the woods at High Island.
- EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
- BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN** (*Tursiops truncatus*) – There were about three surfacing at the mouth of Galveston Bay near the ferry landing.
- STRIPED SKUNK** (*Mephitis mephitis*) – One was spotted along the edge of the road near the end of the Bolivar Peninsula.
- WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – We saw one in the Piney Woods.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 195 bird taxa and 5 mammal taxa**