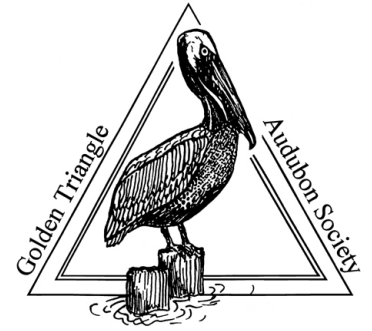


# *The Brown Pelican*



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

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Vol. 15 No. 5

May 2009

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**Membership Meeting  
Thursday, May 21, 2009  
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont  
7:00 PM**

**Cardinal Neches River Adventure  
Dr. Richard Bothel  
Lamar University**

The speaker for April is Dr. Richard Bothel, Executive Director, division of Continuing and Distance Education at Lamar University. He will talk about the Cardinal Neches River Adventures and other things happening at the Environmental Learning and Research Center of Lamar University, Beaumont. As you may be aware, there is a special boat adventure conducted through Lamar University on request along portions of the Neches River to educate guests on the ecosystem surrounding the Neches River and Beaumont.

This talk will be especially timely with all the attention being given to the Neches River in recent months. As noted in the April *Brown Pelican*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the Fish And Wildlife Service's decision to create the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, various conservation groups are promoting the designation of the Neches as a Wild and Scenic River.

We plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. with refreshments available shortly thereafter and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. sharp.

# The Brown Pelican

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Issue number 152

## Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information  
[www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org)

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## Calendar of Events

**Saturday May 9. North American Spring Migration Count.** Contact John Whittle ([johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com) or 409-722-4193) to volunteer to help in this county-wide count. This is again the day before Mother's Day! We try to cover all of Jefferson County. Even if you can only help for part of the day, it will be very much appreciated. The early morning hours are by far the best for detecting birds. This will be an important count, and will provide insights into the changes in bird populations in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike.

**Thursday May 17. Membership Meeting.** Dr. Richard Bothel, Executive Director, Division of Continuing and Distance Education at Lamar University will talk about the Cardinal Neches River Adventures and other things happening at the Environmental Learning and Research Center at Lamar University, Beaumont. As you may be aware, there is a special boat adventure conducted thru Lamar University on request along portions of the Neches River to educate guests on the ecosystem surrounding the Neches River and Beaumont. See also page 1.

## Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. **We need volunteers to bring items for the remaining spring 2009 meeting.** Please do not wait until the last minute to volunteer! We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! If you can just bring drinks and cookies or something similar, please call Jennifer Armacost at (409) 790-7222 (or email her at [armacostj@yahoo.com](mailto:armacostj@yahoo.com)) **as far in advance as possible.** Please help if you can! We thank the following for bringing or arranging for refreshments for the April meeting: Jennifer and Jim Armacost, Sherrie Roden, Paula and Paul Shaw, Jana Whittle and anyone whose name we have inadvertently omitted. We also thank those who have contributed cash towards refreshments.

**Saturday May 30. Field trip to Hardin County.** We plan to run a field trip to Hardin County to look for the nesting species of the area – Hooded, Pine, Prairie and Swainson's Warblers (and possibly Prothonotary Warbler), Yellow-breasted Chat, , White-eyed, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireo, Indigo and Painted Bunting, Gray Catbird, Summer Tanager, Acadian Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch and others. Some of these species are easier to see on the breeding grounds than on migration. For others the reverse is true. Swainson's Warbler is a particular target of this trip. We have almost always got excellent views of this normally very secretive species on this field trip. Yellow-breasted Chats, notorious skulkers in migration, have often be seen perched high up in the open. We have even seen Roadrunners on this trip, and last year, a singing Eastern Towhee was completely unexpected.

Check our website or call Steve Mayes at 722-5807 to confirm the details of the trip if you miss the May Membership Meeting.

The meeting place will be at **7:00 a.m.** (note the necessary early start if we are to find the breeding birds!) at the shopping center on the northeast corner of the intersection of FM92 and FM418 in the northern part of Silsbee. To reach this from Beaumont, take US 69 north and then US96 north. Take **Business 96** into and through downtown Silsbee. When Business 96 turns right a short distance after crossing the railroad, continue straight ahead on FM92 for about a mile to the shopping center. We will bird the Firetower Road/Gore Store Road/ Camp Waluta area and any nearby areas that are brought to our attention as being productive. Unfortunately, many areas along Firetower Road have been clear cut, and we will likely spent most of our time in the northern section of Firetower Road, and along Gore Store Road. We will probably finish about noon.



## Subscription Renewal Reminder

Please check the mailing label on this issue. If the date on your label NOT prefixed by "AU" has passed, or there is no other date, please remit your contribution of \$15 to Golden Triangle Audubon Society at P.O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292. Although this contribution towards the cost of the *Brown Pelican* is voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the official chapter territory, we will appreciate your support. Our official chapter territory is defined by zip codes, but is basically Jefferson, Hardin, and Orange Counties and one or two localities close to those Counties.

## Birdathon Report

We thank all of you who contributed to our Birdathon. Your donation to our Birdathon will be earmarked to support Audubon's mission of protecting our natural heritage in Texas and the nation by supporting conservation, education and advocacy. Again this year, half of the funds we raise will be designated for Audubon Texas activities and programs, and the other half for NAS.

We were fortunate this year in picking a day when everything was right for a big day. We recorded 161 species on April 20. We covered the area of Gore Store Road and Firetower Road in the Big Thicket north of Silsbee, west Jefferson County, Bolivar Flats, and Sabine Woods and nearby locations. The weather was virtually perfect. A moderate north wind was blowing (helping ensure that the spring migrants would at least pause on the coast), but the wind was not strong enough to cause birds to hunker down and not move around. The morning was cool, but it warmed up to a very pleasant day.

We began in the early morning and birded along Gore Store Road from FM92 as far as the Beech Creek crossing. Although it was quite early, the breeding birds of the area were in good voice. The habitat along Gore Store Road is now at a later stage of succession than in previous years,

whereas Firetower Road has been clearcut in many areas, especially in the southern part. We heard many Prairie Warblers along Gore Store Road, and enticed one into view. We saw Summer Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Acadian Flycatcher, and heard Swainson's and Prothonotary Warblers near the bridge over Beech Creek. Surprises included a brilliant male Baltimore Oriole and a female Nashville Warbler. Also along Gore Store and Firetower Roads, we saw most of the other expected species of the area, including numerous White-eyed Vireos, Carolina Chickadee, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. A Broad-winged Hawk was a ice additions to the growing list.

We made two more stops before leaving Hardin County. First to Sherry Gibson's house in Silsbee, where we very quickly picked up a pair of Pine Siskins and three Brown-headed Nuthatches at or near her feeders. There were also many House Finches around. The second stop was a brief one at the Nature Conservancy's Sandyland Sanctuary where we found a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and some previous seen species.

We next proceeded to west Jefferson County, and although we only covered a small part of the area, we were very successful. The highlights included a large flock of American Pipits at the intersection of South China Road and Lawhon Road, a flock of and about 75 Dickcissels on a fence wire on Greenpond Road. But the surprise of the day was a Pileated Woodpecker bounded in front of us along a good length of Lawhon Road. We proceeded along "Aggie Drive" and were delighted to pick out three Upland Sandpipers on a grassy levee in one of the fields. In the fields themselves were five well camouflaged Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and eight Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. A Swainson's Hawk flew over the area. We returned to South China Road, and were found a field on the southern part that held shorebirds including a pair of winter plumaged Hudsonian Godwits among many Greater Yellowlegs as well as three Gull-billed Terns. On one side of the road there was a nice Red-tailed Hawk of the Krider's race, and on the other two young Swainson's Hawks.

The next portion of our day was the

least productive and the most depressing. We proceeded through Winnie to High Island, picking up a few new birds there, and then along Highway 87 to Bolivar Flats. In this devastated area, one can see the beach from the highway in many places, but there appeared to be few birds around other than good numbers of Brown Pelican. Reaching the flats, we found there to be no exposed mud between the water and the marsh grasses, so we proceeded to the North Jetty, where, despite the birds being very distant, we were able to pick out the vast majority of the expected species.

We then had a choice between spending the rest of the daylight hours in High Island or driving to the Sabine Pass area. We decided we knew the Sabine Pass area very much better, and so pressed on. As we approached Sabine Pass from the north, we realized we had not seen either White Ibis or Tricolored Heron. We were able to quickly remedy that!

Sabine Woods did not disappoint. There were many migrants in the woods. Everywhere we went, there were Swainson's Thrush's and Hooded Warblers. We also saw many Wood Thrushes, a Veery, and many Gray Catbirds. But of course, everyone counts the number of warbler species they see. We had 21 species of warbler there in about three hours, but these included five of the nine warbler species recorded in Hardin County, so our count for the day was only 25. Included in this total was a Brewster's hybrid. We also saw the "usual" tanagers and grosbeaks. Perhaps more interesting were the Great Horned Owl seen in the tress to the west, and a Common Nighthawk overhead. Although the light was fading, we proceeded to McFaddin Beach, and were able to find a Snowy Plover, as well as a pair of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks. We realized we hadn't seen Rock Pigeon during the day, so after eating dinner, we went to the lighted underpass at Spurlock Road and US69 and found species number 161!

A more complete account with all the species seen listed will have been posted on the Golden Triangle Audubon website by the time you read this.

John Whittle and Royce Pendergast

## Bird Sightings – March 2009

**Coverage:** Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Tyler, Jasper, Newton, Angelina, San Augustine and Sabine counties. Send Reports to: John Whittle, 3015 Nashville Avenue, Nederland, Texas 77627-6749 by the 10th of the month after or e-mail to john.whittle@lamar.edu or call (409) 880-8276. For "very rare" birds, or very much out-of-season species, please submit a brief account of your sighting, including a description of the bird (unless unmistakable), brief details of what it was doing, and where it was seen (if on publicly accessible property). Format: "Common" to "abundant" birds are shown in the fashion "JEF 4 reps(25)" which means four reports in Jefferson County totaling 25 birds. Less than "common", as JEF-SW 7/5(2) ABC", which means seen in Jefferson County (JEF) at Sabine Woods (SW) on the 5th of July, two (2) birds, reported by observer "ABC." The range of dates for which the species was reported is shown in parentheses in a column before the sighting details or report

summaries.

**Commentary:** Observers often look to the latter part of March for indications of an "early" or "late" Spring migration. If anything, there are some indications of an "early" migration, with a number of species being seen a little earlier than normal. To some extent, a frontal passage on March 31 may have been partly responsible for observers finding several of these species on the last day of the month.

Other noteworthy sightings included continuing large numbers of Pine Siskins in north Jefferson and Hardin counties, and an Ash-throated Flycatcher which spend approximately three weeks in Sabine Woods. Three separate reports of Swallow-tailed Kites, one of three birds is encouraging. By mid-March, large numbers of American Golden-Plovers were to be found in various areas of west Jefferson County.

**WHISTLING-DUCK, Blk-bell.** (17-17) JEF-NEDR 3/17(1) JAW  
**WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous** (29-29) JEF-SRSP 3/29(17) JAW  
**GOOSE, Snow** (1-14) JEF 3/1(3) JAW; JEF 3/14(30) RW  
**GOOSE, Ross's** (14-14) JEF 3/14(1) RW  
**DUCK, Wood** (17-17) HAI-VCSP 3/17(2) JA  
**GADWALL** (15-29) JEF-MCFW 3/15(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(2) JAW  
**MALLARD** (15-15) JEF-BMT 3/15(2) RHJ  
**DUCK, Mottled** (29-29) JEF-TX87 3/29(2) JAW  
**TEAL, Blue-winged** (15-29) JEF-MCFW 3/15(10) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/15(37) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(70) JAW  
**SHOVELER, Northern** (29-29) JEF-SRSP 3/29(1) JAW  
**TEAL, Green-winged** (29-29) JEF-SRSP 3/29(2) JAW  
**MERGANSER, Red-breast.** (8-8) JEF-TX87 3/8(1) JAW  
**DUCK, Ruddy** (15-29) JEF-MCFW 3/15(5) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(2) JAW  
**GREBE, Pied-billed** (29-29) JEF-SRSP 3/29(2) JAW  
**PELICAN, Amer. White** (15-15) JEF-SW 3/15(11) JAW  
**PELICAN, Brown** (8-15) JEF 2 reps(5)  
**CORMORANT, Neotropic** (8-31) JEF 6 reps(21)  
**CORMORANT, Double-cr.** (29-29) JEF-TX87 3/29(2) JAW  
**ANHINGA** (29-29) JEF 3/29(1) JAW  
**BITTERN, American** (15-15) JEF-TX87 3/15(1) SM  
**HERON, Great Blue** (1-22) HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 2 reps(3)  
**EGRET, Great** (1-31) JEF 10 reps(125)  
**EGRET, Snowy** (14-31) JEF 6 reps(112)  
**HERON, Little Blue** (28-28) JEF-TX87 3/28(5) JAW  
**HERON, Tricolored** (15-31) JEF 4 reps(54)  
**EGRET, Cattle** (15-31) JEF 4 reps(88)  
**HERON, Green** (28-28) JEF 3/28(1) JAW  
**NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-cr.** (15-31) JEF 5 reps(14)  
**IBIS, White** (15-31) JEF 5 reps(595)  
**IBIS, White-faced** (31-31) JEF-SW 3/31(10) JAW  
**IBIS, Plegadis** (28-28) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD  
**SPOONBILL, Roseate** (15-31) JEF 3 reps(43)  
**VULTURE, Black** (1-29) HAI 3 reps(25); JEF 4 reps(19)  
**VULTURE, Turkey** (1-31) HAI 2 reps(3); JEF 9 reps(53)  
**OSPREY** (29-29) JEF-MCFW 3/29(1) JAW  
**KITE, Swallow-tailed** (21-30) JEF-BMT 3/21(1) PPS; JEF-BMT 3/26(1) SK; JEF 3/30(3) CDU  
**HARRIER, Northern** (1-14) JEF 3/1(6) JAW; JEF 3/8(10) RHJ; JEF 3/14(4) JAW  
**HAWK, Cooper's** (14-14) JEF 3/14(1) JAW  
**HAWK, Red-shouldered** (4-30) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 6 reps(13)  
**HAWK, Red-tailed** (1-18) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(20)  
**HAWK, Red-tailed (Krider's)** (28-28) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD  
**CARACARA, Crested** (1-31) JEF 3/1(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/15(1) SM; JEF 3/16(1) JAW; JEF 3/30(2) CSL; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW  
**KESTREL, American** (1-29) JEF 7 reps(37)  
**MERLIN** (14-29) JEF 3/14(1) RW; JEF-TX87 3/29(1) JAW

**RAIL, Clapper** (15-29) JEF-SW 3/15(1) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(1) JAW  
**SORA** (15-31) JEF-SW 3/15(1) JAW; JEF-MCFW 3/29(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW  
**MOORHEN, Common** (15-31) JEF-TX87 3/15(2) JAW; JEF-SRSP 3/29(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/31(1) JAW  
**MOORHEN, Common** (15-31) JEF 3 reps(5)  
**COOT, American** (8-29) JEF 3 reps(31)  
**GOLDEN-PLOVER, Amer.** (14-16) JEF 3/14(150) GD; JEF 3/14(15) RW; JEF 3/16(300) JAW  
**KILLDEER** (1-29) HAI 1 rep(2); JEF 5 reps(14)  
**STILT, Black-necked** (29-29) JEF 1 rep(8)  
**YELLOWLEGS, Greater** (29-29) JEF 1 rep(2)  
**WILLET** (29-29) JEF-TX87 3/29(2) JAW  
**YELLOWLEGS, Lesser** (16-29) JEF 2 reps(11)  
**YELLOWLEGS species** (15-15) JEF 1 rep(1)  
**SANDERLING** (29-29) JEF-MCFW 3/29(10) JAW  
**SANDPIPER, Least** (14-14) JEF 3/14(10) RW  
**SANDPIPER, Pectoral** (14-14) JEF 3/14(30) RW  
**DUNLIN** (14-14) JEF 3/14(1) RW  
**SNIFE, Wilson's** (1-1) JEF 3/1(1) JAW  
**GULL, Laughing** (1-29) JEF 4 reps(88)  
**GULL, Ring-billed** (8-29) JEF 3 reps(79)  
**GULL, Herring** (15-15) JEF-TX87 3/15(1) JAW  
**TERN, Caspian** (29-29) JEF-TX87 3/29(1) JAW  
**TERN, Forster's** (28-29) JEF 2 reps(31)  
**TERN, Royal** (29-31) JEF 2 reps(24)  
**TERN, Sandwich** (29-29) JEF-MCFW 3/29(1) JAW  
**PIGEON, Rock** (1-29) HAI 2 reps(34); JEF 5 reps(38)  
**COLLARED-DOVE, Euras.** (1-30) HAI 2 reps(6); JEF 6 reps(9)  
**DOVE, White-winged** (1-31) JEF 21 reps(70)  
**DOVE, Mourning** (1-29) HAI 5 reps(14); JEF 10 reps(46)  
**DOVE, Inca** (5-27) HAI 12 reps(24)  
**CUCKOO, Yellow-billed** (28-29) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW  
**OWL, Great Horned** (8-11) JEF-SW 3/8(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 3/11(1) RHJ  
**SWIFT, Chimney** (24-31) JEF-BMT 3/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/27(1) RHJ; JEF-NEDR 3/27(3) JAW; JEF-GROV 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 3/31(1) JAW  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-thr.** (1-31) HAI 10 reps(16); JEF 13 reps(18)  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Black-chin.** (10-16) JEF-NEDR 3/10(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 3/15(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 3/16(1) JAW  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous** (2-29) HAI 3/4(1) JM; JEF-BMT 3/2(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/3(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/4(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/8(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/9(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/10(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/11(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/15(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/16(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/24(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/25(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/28(1) JAW; JEF-BMT 3/29(1) RHJ  
**HUMMINGBIRD, Selasph.** (12-12) HAI 3/12(1) JM  
**HUMMINGBIRD species** (2-27) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 9 reps(10)  
**KINGFISHER, Belted** (8-31) JEF 4 reps(9)

**WOODPECKER, Red-head.** (17-17) HAI+VCSP 3/17(1) JA  
**WOODPECKER, Red-bellied** (1-27) HAI 27 reps(41); JEF 2 reps(2)  
**SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bell.** (17-29) HAI+VCSP 3/17(1) JA; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW

**WOODPECKER, Downy** (3-31) HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 17 reps(19) /15(1) JAW; JEF-NEDR 3/18(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW  
**FLICKER, Northern** (8-29) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 4 reps(4)  
**WOODPECKER, Pileated** (5-26) HAI+SILS 3/5(1) MG; HAI+SILS 3/21(1) MG; JEF-BMT 3/17(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/26(1) RHJ  
**PHOEBE, Eastern** (1-28) HAI 2 reps(2); JEF 5 reps(9)  
**FLYCATCHER, Ash-throat.** (14-28) JEF-SW 3/14(1) GD; JEF-SW 3/26(1) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(1) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD  
**FLYCATCHER, Gt. Crested** (26-26) JEF-SW 3/26(1) JHH  
**KINGBIRD, Eastern** (28-31) JEF-SW 3/28(4) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(3) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(5) JAW  
**FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tail.** (27-31) JEF 3/27(2) CSL; JEF-SW 3/28(5) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(2) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(2) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(3) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/31(2) JAW  
**SHRIKE, Loggerhead** (1-29) HAI 1 rep(1); JEF 7 reps(23)  
**VIREO, White-eyed** (15-31) HAI+VCSP 3/17(2) JA; JEF-SW 3/15(6) JAW; JEF-SW 3/17(30) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(7) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(10) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(23) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(10) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(5) JHH  
**VIREO, Yellow-throated** (13-29) HAI+VCSP 3/17(3) JA; JEF-SW 3/13(2) GD; JEF-SW 3/15(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/17(5) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(2) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(3) JHH; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW  
**VIREO, Blue-headed** (17-31) JEF-SW 3/17(1) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**VIREO, Red-eyed** (31-31) JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(2) JHH  
**JAY, Blue** (13-30) HAI 4 reps(9); JEF 2 reps(2)  
**CROW, American** (1-31) HAI 4 reps(34); JEF 2 reps(4)  
**CROW, Fish** (11-29) HAI+VCSP 3/17(2) JA; JEF 3/11(3) JAW; JEF-NEDR 3/18(4) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/29(1) JAW  
**CROW, species** (1-12) JEF 2 reps(2)  
**MARTIN, Purple** (1-30) JEF 7 reps(45)  
**SWALLOW, Tree** (1-31) JEF 8 reps(775)  
**SWALLOW, Cave** (14-14) JEF 3/14(2) RW  
**SWALLOW, Barn** (15-31) JEF-TX87 3/15(1) JAW; JEF 3/16(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-TX87 3/29(7) JAW; JEF-TX87 3/31(8) JAW  
**CHICKADEE, Carolina** (1-29) HAI 20 reps(46); JEF 1 rep(2)  
**TITMOUSE, Tufted** (1-27) HAI 23 reps(54)  
**WREN, Carolina** (1-31) HAI 22 reps(32); JEF 5 reps(6)  
**WREN, House** (15-31) JEF 2 reps(2)  
**WREN, Winter** (17-17) HAI+VCSP 3/17(1) JA  
**KINGLET, Ruby-crowned** (3-31) HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(25)  
**GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray** (1-31) JEF 7 reps(73)  
**BLUEBIRD, Eastern** (1-27) HAI 9 reps(16); JEF 4 reps(12)  
**THRUSH, Hermit** (28-28) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD  
**THRUSH, Wood** (31-31) JEF-SW 3/31(1) GD  
**ROBIN, American** (1-31) JEF 24 reps(98)  
**CATBIRD, Gray** (27-27) HAI+SILS 3/27(1) SG  
**MOCKINGBIRD, Northern** (1-31) HAI 18 reps(26); JEF 13 reps(48)  
**THRASHER, Brown** (1-31) HAI 8 reps(11); JEF 9 reps(10)  
**STARLING, European** (1-30) HAI 4 reps(290); JEF 10 reps(124)  
**PIPIT, American** (14-14) JEF 3/14(20) RW  
**WAXWING, Cedar** (5-30) JEF-BMT 3/5(20) JAW; JEF-BMT 3/9(30) JAW; JEF-BMT 3/30(25) JAW; ORA 3/12(40) GK  
**WARBLER, Tennessee** (28-31) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**WARBLER, Orange-crown.** (1-31) HAI 5 reps(5); JEF 7 reps(16)  
**WARBLER, Nashville** (28-31) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**PARULA, Northern** (13-31) HAI+VCSP 3/17(1) JA; JEF-SW 3/13(12) GD; JEF-SW 3/14(3) GD; JEF-SW 3/15(6) JAW; JEF-SW 3/17(17) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(12) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(12) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(10) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(20) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(20) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(10) JHH  
**WARBLER, Yellow-rumped** (1-31) HAI 4 reps(4); JEF 15 reps(136)  
**WARBLER, Black-thr. Green** (31-31) JEF-SW 3/31(2) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(2) JHH

**WARBLER, Yellow-throated** (13-31) JEF-SW 3/13(2) GD; JEF-SW 3/15(3) JAW; JEF-SW 3/17(2) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(1) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(1) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(2) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(2) JHH  
**WARBLER, Pine** (2-27) HAI 2 reps(6); JEF 13 reps(13)  
**WARBLER, Black-and-wh.** (13-31) JEF-SW 3/13(3) GD; JEF-SW 3/14(2) GD; JEF-SW 3/15(3) JAW; JEF-SW 3/17(13) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(12) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(5) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(3) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(6) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(3) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(3) JHH  
**WARBLER, Prothonotary** (17-17) JEF-SW 3/17(2) JHH  
**WARBLER, Worm-eating** (26-31) JEF-SW 3/26(2) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(2) JHH; JEF-SW 3/31(2) GD  
**WATERTHRUSH, Northern** (26-31) JEF-SW 3/26(1) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(1) JHH; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**WATERTHRUSH, Northern** (26-31) JEF 4 reps(4)  
**WATERTHRUSH, Louisiana** (17-31) JEF-SW 3/17(2) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(1) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(3) JHH; JEF-SW 3/29(2) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(2) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(3) JHH  
**WARBLER, Kentucky** (31-31) JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**YELLOWTHROAT, Common** (26-31) JEF 4 reps(5)  
**WARBLER, Hooded** (15-31) JEF-SW 3/15(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/17(3) JHH; JEF-SW 3/26(4) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(4) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(2) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/29(5) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(7) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(6) JHH  
**TANAGER, Summer** (26-31) JEF-SW 3/26(1) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(1) JHH; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**TOWHEE, Eastern** (28-28) JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD  
**SPARROW, Chipping** (2-28) HAI 17 reps(675); JEF 3 reps(6)  
**SPARROW, Savannah** (1-29) JEF 5 reps(115)  
**SPARROW, Swamp** (29-29) JEF-MCFW 3/29(2) JAW; JEF-SW 3/29(1) JAW  
**SPARROW, White-throated** (1-31) HAI 5 reps(24); JEF 27 reps(110)  
**SPARROW, White-crowned** (1-8) JEF 3/1(1) JAW; JEF 3/8(1) RHJ  
**CARDINAL, Northern** (1-31) HAI 26 reps(675); JEF 10 reps(21)  
**BUNTING, Indigo** (26-31) JEF-SW 3/26(2) GDJH; JEF-SW 3/26(3) JHH; JEF-SW 3/28(1) SWWD; JEF-SW 3/31(4) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(4) JHH  
**BLACKBIRD, Red-winged** (1-31) JEF 6 reps(62)  
**MEADOWLARK, Eastern** (1-16) JEF 3 reps(57)  
**MEADOWLARK species** (1-14) JEF 5 reps(44)  
**GRACKLE, Common** (1-28) HAI 1 rep(3); JEF 6 reps(72)  
**GRACKLE, Boat-tailed** (8-29) JEF 3 reps(20)  
**GRACKLE, Great-tailed** (1-31) HAI 4 reps(6); JEF 12 reps(150)  
**GRACKLE, Gt./Boat tailed** (7-29) JEF 5 reps(41)  
**COWBIRD, Brown-headed** (1-26) HAI 15 reps(52); JEF 2 reps(85)  
**ORIOLE, Orchard** (29-31) JEF-SW 3/29(4) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(23) JAW  
**ORIOLE, Baltimore** (31-31) JEF-SW 3/31(1) JAW; JEF-SW 3/31(1) JHH  
**FINCH, Purple** (28-28) HAI+SILS 3/28(1) MG  
**FINCH, House** (1-28) HAI 15 reps(82); JEF 10 reps(29)  
**SISKIN, Pine** (1-27) HAI+SILS 3/1(8) SG; HAI+SILS 3/2(14) SG; HAI+SILS 3/3(9) SG; HAI+SILS 3/4(16) SG; HAI+SILS 3/9(12) SG; HAI+SILS 3/10(12) SG; HAI+SILS 3/11(12) SG; HAI+SILS 3/12(5) RHJ; HAI+SILS 3/12(4) SG; HAI+SILS 3/13(7) SG; HAI+SILS 3/16(3) SG; HAI+SILS 3/19(14) SG; HAI+SILS 3/20(7) SG; HAI+SILS 3/24(7) SG; HAI+SILS 3/26(6) SG; HAI+SILS 3/27(7) SG; JEF-BMT 3/1(4) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/2(3) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/3(1) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/6(4) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/7(2) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/8(4) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/9(4) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/10(4) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/12(4) RHJ; JEF-BMT 3/13(1) RHJ  
**GOLDFINCH, American** (1-29) HAI 32 reps(147); JEF 13 reps(112)  
**SPARROW, House** (1-29) HAI 1 rep(12); JEF 7 reps(23)

**Number of Species** 162  
**Number of Individuals** 16248  
*(continued on page 7)*

## Field Trip to Sabine Woods 18 April 2009

Spring birding on the upper Texas coast is highly variable and largely dependent on the weather. A north wind and rain can bring great birding while strong south winds can cause the famous coastal woodlots to be virtually empty of birds. On its annual April field trip to Sabine Pass, the members of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society have seen both the boom and bust ends of this cycle. But what if you combine the two extremes? What if you combine strong south winds with the threat of heavy rains, what do you get then? A dozen birders found out on the 2009 field trip and the results were outstanding!

The day started with visions of an Ash-throated Flycatcher perched just outside the main woods. This was possibly the same bird that has been present for a month or more at this coastal bird sanctuary or maybe another wandering individual of this western species. Brilliant Indigo Buntings were present as well giving their buzzy calls as they flitted between the trees and the weedy understory. This was a terrific start but was only a glimpse of things to come. With heavy rain predicted for the afternoon hours, the group had no time to lose and continued into the main woods.

Sabine Woods is certainly no stranger to bad weather. Hurricane Ike left everyone in the birding community wondering what would become of the coastal woodlots that bring the birds and birders in by the thousands every year. Sabine Woods looked pretty bleak in the days after the storm but with a lot of hard work and some healing rains the sanctuary spring back to life. Oak trees sprouted new leaves and the bare ground underneath exploded with grasses and wild flowers. It may look a little different than it did pre-Ike (and Rita) but this day proved that the birds are still coming and the birders can still come and enjoy them.

And what can those birders come and enjoy? Well, let's start with the flycatchers. On this field trip, Ash-throated was not the only member of this large and often confusing family around. An Eastern Kingbird was spotted outside of the woods while Eastern Wood-Pewees gave their plaintive calls from inside the tree line. A few flycatchers of the dreaded genus *Empidonax* were spotted as well. This group of look-alike species is the bane of many North American birders. At first glance, all of the Empids seem to be smallish flycatchers, olive to grayish in color with wing bars and eye rings. But, with practice and study, some of these birds can be sorted out. On this day, Acadian Flycatchers seemed to be the easiest to find. These are largish Empids often more greenish colored on the back with buffy wing bars and often prominent eye rings. Acadian Flycatchers nest in our area and are generally the earliest of the Empids to arrive in spring.

There are also the vireos to consider. One of the most commonly encountered birds on this trip was the White-eyed Vireo. This species can be a skulker at times, giving a variety of fussy calls from deep in the underbrush without revealing themselves. But in migration, these birds can be bold, inquisitive and quite easy to see. Chunky Yellow-throated Vireos were also seen on the day, often working high in the

trees. Red-eyed Vireos were also seen working both high and low in the vegetation. These birds were checked carefully but none of the very similar but much rarer Black-whiskered Vireos were found.

Tanagers and grosbeaks were not to be left out. Species from these two groups are often brightly colored and are always favorites with birders. On this day, in addition to the Indigo Bunting, a number of species were enjoyed. A flock of Blue Grosbeaks were spotted along the edge of the fields behind the woods. The dark blue males and the rusty colored females were both seen. Striking Rose-breasted Grosbeaks with the black and white plumage of the males contrasting with the brilliant pink of their throats searched for fruiting trees along with bright red Summer Tanagers and the even more brilliant red and black Scarlet Tanagers. But, not to be outdone, came the Painted Buntings. Seeing the green females paired with the gaudily multi-colored males is a experience unmatched by any other species in the U.S. Luckily, several of these fantastic birds were seen on the day.

But warblers are the stars of any bird outing on the upper Texas coast in spring and they did not disappoint. More than twenty species of warblers were seen on the day. Ground dwelling species like Ovenbird and Northern Waterthrush were easily seen and a shy Swainson's Warbler was even seen by a lucky few. Hooded Warblers and Kentucky Warblers were thick in the underbrush, flushing along the trails as the birders walked along. A bright yellow Wilson's Warbler with his black cap showed off in the outer branches of an oak. This species is often hard to find in this area in the spring so the birders all appreciated the sighting. At least two spectacular Golden-winged Warblers were found along with a few more of their close cousins, the Blue-winged Warbler. Worm-eating Warblers made their "zip" calls from nearly every batch of dead leaves in the sanctuary (and there are a lot of those)! Flame-throated Blackburnian Warblers and multicolored Black-throated Green Warblers flitted through the tree tops while golden Prothonotary Warblers were seen lower down. The group also got looks at a female Cerulean Warbler, not as brilliant blue as the male, but subtly beautiful in her own right. A quick look was had by some of the group at a striking Magnolia Warbler. If warblers are the measure of a spring bird outing, then this was one of our best spring field trips ever!

All trips must end and this one ended a bit prematurely with heavy rains threatening in the afternoon but the participants could not have asked for much more. Throw in a shy Black-billed Cuckoo and few blazing Baltimore Orioles and it all added up to one fantastic birding experience! Weather can bring us joy and give us many hardships but on this day, the elements all combined to give us a great day to remember!

The following species were recorded on the trip: CORMORANT, Neotropic (2); EGRET, Great (1); HERON, Little Blue (1); HERON, Tricolored (1); EGRET, Cattle (5); HERON, Green (5); IBIS, White (7); SPOONBILL, Roseate (30); WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (6); DUCK,

Mottled (2); TEAL, Blue-winged (2); SORA (1); RAIL, Clapper (3); STILT, Black-necked (2); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (50); CUCKOO, Black-billed (1); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (3); SAPSUCKER, Yellow-bellied (1); WOODPECKER, Downy (1); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (2); FLYCATCHER, Ash-throated (1); FLYCATCHER, Acadian (2); KINGBIRD, Eastern (3); MARTIN, Purple (2); SWALLOW, Barn (2); JAY, Blue (1); WREN, Carolina (1); KINGLET, Ruby-crowned (5); THRUSH, Swainson's (1); THRUSH, Wood (4); CATBIRD, Gray (50); VIREO, White-eyed (10); VIREO, Red-eyed (1); VIREO, Yellow-throated (1); WARBLER, Blue-winged (3); WARBLER, Golden-winged (3); WARBLER, Tennessee (5); PARULA, Northern (2); WARBLER, Yellow (2); WARBLER, Yellow (1); WARBLER, Black-throated Green (5); WARBLER, Blackburnian (3); WARBLER, Blackburnian (1); WARBLER, Blackpoll (2); WARBLER, Cerulean (1); WARBLER, Black-and-white (8); REDSTART, American (3); REDSTART, American (7); WARBLER, Prothonotary (3); WARBLER, Worm-eating (8); WARBLER, Swainson's (1); OVENBIRD (6); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (2); WARBLER, Kentucky (8); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (2); WARBLER, Hooded (35); WARBLER, Wilson's (1); CHAT, Yellow-breasted (2); TANAGER, Summer (4); TANAGER, Summer (4); TANAGER, Scarlet (3); CARDINAL, Northern (1); GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (3); GROSBEAK, Blue (15); BUNTING, Indigo (50); BUNTING, Painted (1); BUNTING, Painted (1); SPARROW, Lincoln's (1); ORIOLE, Orchard (10); ORIOLE, Baltimore (1); ORIOLE, Baltimore (1). 71 species.

*Steve Mayes*

## Got Nest Boxes?

### Monitoring helps the Cornell Lab of Ornithology study climate change and nesting birds

Anyone with one or more nest boxes can help scientists learn more about bird families and how they might be affected by climate change. Just register the nest box (or boxes) with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program ([www.RegisterYourNestbox.org](http://www.RegisterYourNestbox.org)). It doesn't cost anything but yields valuable information needed to better understand breeding birds and how their natural rhythms may be changing. If you don't have a nest box, now is the time to set one up. Many species that build nests in cavities have become very accustomed to using wooden boxes set up by bird watchers to help the birds more easily find a home. "It's time to lose the winter blues and focus on spring renewal," says project leader Tina Phillips. "NestWatch is easy and fun for adults and children. It helps all of us reconnect with nature which is good for our own health and well-being. NestWatch is a great activity to do on your own, in a classroom, or as a homeschool project. And it helps the birds too." Studies have shown that some birds are laying their eggs sooner than in the past--as much as nine days earlier in the case of Tree Swallows--and that could spell trouble if the eggs hatch before a steady supply of insects is available for feeding the young. NestWatch participants visit nests once or twice per week and

report what they see during each visit, such as which kinds of birds are using their nest boxes, when the first eggs are laid, and the total number of eggs and young. The project collects this information for all species of nesting birds in North America. "Citizen scientists really make a big difference," says Phillips. "You can turn a nest-box hobby or a passion for bird watching into reliable data that, when combined with other observations from across the continent, increases our understanding of the impacts of environmental change and human land-use on breeding birds. These data allow us to detect trends on large scales, which are very powerful for diagnosing potential threats to breeding birds. Armed with that knowledge, we can take the steps needed to help them survive in this changing world."

All materials and instructions are available on the NestWatch web site, including directions on how to monitor nest boxes without disturbing the birds. Anyone interested in putting up nest boxes for the first time will find information on how to provide the best and safest boxes for bluebirds, swallows, chickadees, and other cavity-nesting birds online. NestWatch participants also monitor the nests of backyard birds that don't use nest boxes, such as phoebes, robins, and

The hugely popular NestCams are back in action—anyone can get a live peek into nests and nest boxes across the country. Live cameras are focused on Eastern Bluebirds, Barred Owls, Wood Ducks, Barn Owls and more. Keep watching and see what hatches! ([www.nestcam.org](http://www.nestcam.org)) NestWatch is a free nest-monitoring project developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in collaboration with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and funded by the National Science Foundation.

Note: Watch the "Early Birds and Spring" video about the NestWatch project posted on the ScienCentral website.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a membership institution dedicated to interpreting and conserving the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Visit the Lab's web site at [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu).

Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Rd, Ithaca NY 14850.

## Bird Sightings *(cont from page 5)*

### County Abbreviations

HAI — Hardin; JEF — Jefferson; ORA — Orange

### Location Codes

BMT — Beaumont; GROV — Groves; MCFW — McFaddin NWR; NEDR — Nederland; SILS — Silsbee; SRSP — Sea Rim State Park; SW — Sabine Woods; TX87 — Texas 87 Pt. Arthur-Sabine Pass-Sea Rim SP; VCSP — Village Creek State Park

### Observer Abbreviations

CDU — Clay Dupuy; CSL — Christine Sliva; GD — Gerald Duhon; GDJH — Gerald Duhon and John Haynes; GK — Gary Kelley; JA — Jim Armacost; JAW — John Whittle; JHH — John H. Haynes; JM — John Mariani; MG — Melanie Goetsell; PPS — Paula and Paul Shaw; RHJ — Rose Ann and Harrison Jordan; RW — Ron Weeks; SG — Sherry Gibson; SK — Steve Kuritz; SM — Steve Mayes; SWWD — Sabine Woods Work Day participants

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## RARE BIRD ALERTS

Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various Internet based means of distribution.

The Texas-wide Rare Bird Alert, maintained by Houston Audubon Society, is available on their web-site at <http://www.houstonaudubon.org/> Email alerts are also available for a small fee. Most rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at <http://lists.texbirds.org/texbirds.html> It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives, which include postings up to the most recent..

Transcriptions of many current and recent email alerts are available on the Siler's Birding on the Net at <http://birdingonthe.net/hotmail.html> Detailed information (maps and text) on birding sites on the Upper Texas Coast is also available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirding.net>.

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