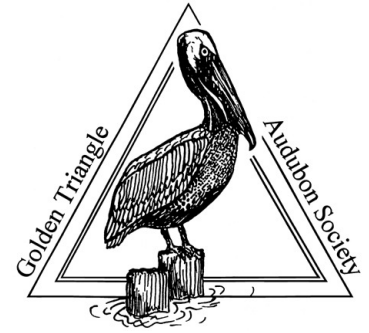


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 20 No. 5

May 2014

**Membership Meeting
Thursday May 15, 2014 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**Speaker: Ben Herman
Superintendent
Sea Rim State Park**

Ben Herman will give us a presentation on the status of the reconstruction currently under way at Sea Rim, and the current operational status of the park.

Ben is originally from original from North Texas, Denison. He graduated from Texas A&M – Commerce in 2001. He started with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 2007 as a Park Police Officer at Eisenhower State Park in Denison, Texas. In 2010, he was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of Fairfield Lake State Park in Fairfield, TX. He became Superintendent of Sea Rim in September of 2012. He is married with three children and states that "we are all very proud to be part of the South East Texas community!"

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. sharp. A light supper will be available from 6:15 p.m.

Sabine Woods Work Day – Saturday May 17, 2014

Please put this date on your calendar and help us if you can. On this work day, we plan to take care of trail maintenance tasks so that we do not face too daunting a task on our next work day in September. Riding mowers will be helpful if heavy duty, but we will also need loppers to cut back the vegetation to prevent it encroaching on the trails. Weather condition this spring have been generally cool with little precipitation, so growth has been somewhat restricted. A specific task we would like to address is to treat the Japanese Honeysuckle, a somewhat invasive non-native species, with glyphosphate (a generic form of Roundup). Sabine Woods is located 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on Highway 87. We will start around 7:30 a.m. and work till about noon.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 20, No.5 May 2014
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Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Important Note: Field Trip notices published here should always be regarded as needing confirmation just before the date. Changes will always be posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. Confirmation of the location will also normally be available at the Membership Meeting that is usually, but not always, two days prior to each trip, or by contacting Field Trip Committee chair, Steve Mayes at 409-722-5807 or sgmayes@hotmail.com. Note that we will not be holding a regular field trip the Saturday after the May Membership Meeting, but instead, we will run a trip to Hardin County on May 31 as detailed below.

Saturday May 10, 2014. Jefferson County Spring Migration Count. We have been doing these counts since 1995. The count attempts to cover as much of Jefferson County as is reasonably possible. We welcome all participants, especially if you are able to count in the early morning from dawn through about 11:00 a.m. even if you would just like to cover your own neighborhood. It is not necessary to commit to the whole day. If you have special access to any areas within the county, we would appreciate your help! Contact John Whittle (409-722-4193 or johnawhittle@aol.com) for details or offers to help. We will be out of town May 1 through 5, but will respond to emails.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Merri Dillinger, Jessica Barry, Edra Bogucki, Debbie Bradford, Sherry Gibson, Cindy Harland, Denise Kelley, Phil Rogers for bringing refreshments in January. **We need volunteers to bring items for the May meeting and all fall 2014 meetings.** We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! Even if you would like to bring drinks and cookies or something similar, please call Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193 (or email her at janafw@aol.com) **as far in advance as possible.** Please help if you can!

Thursday May 15, 2014. Membership Meeting. Details on p. 1.

Saturday May 17, 2014. Sabine Woods Work Day. 7:30 a.m. to noon. See p.1 for details.

Saturday May 31, 2014. Field Trip to Hardin County: We will focus on the area north of Silsbee to look for the breeding birds of the area. This is typically a half-day trip. We plan to look for the nesting species of the area – Hooded, Kentucky, 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. Swainson's Warbler is a particular target of this trip. We have sometimes been rewarded with excellent views of this normally very secretive species on this field trip. Yellow-breasted Chats, skulkers in migration, have often been seen perched high up in the open.

This area also has many breeding Prairie Warblers, and many of the areas replanted with pines a few years ago are now at a stage favored by this species, so we will hopefully see a good number of them.

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



EarthShare of Texas represents Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll contribution programs in workplaces throughout Texas. For more information about how you can support Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society at your workplace, call 1-800-GREENTX, or visit www.earthshare-texas.org

distance after crossing the railroad, continue straight ahead on FM92 for about a mile to the shopping center. We will bird the Gore Store Road/Firetower Road/Camp Waluta Road area and any nearby areas that are brought to our attention as being productive. Many areas along Firetower Road were clear cut three or four years ago, and while this has undoubtedly reduced the diversity of species, it has created much habitat that is proving very attractive to Prairie Warblers. However, we will likely spend most time along Gore Store Road between Firetower Road and the Beech Creek bridge and in the northern section of Firetower Road. We will probably finish about noon.

This trip is mostly easy car birding. Bring water!

New Drips at Sabine Woods

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Howard Davis, Gary Kelley and Harlan Stewart for working to construct two new drips in an area in the eastern section of Sabine Woods that lost its trees. These new drips will be the centerpiece of Rose Ann's Water Feature, named in memory of Rose Ann Jordan and have been designed with photographic opportunities in mind.

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues remain at \$15 per year. You may pay at any membership meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page.

Dues for all members will be for the period ending on December 31. The memberships of new members joining in August or later in the year will extend to the end of the following calendar year. For new members joining National Audubon using the membership blank printed on the back page of each printed issue of the *Brown Pelican*, we receive a rebate of the entire first year's national dues, and no Chapter dues are expected for that first year.

As a reminder, dues are voluntary for National Audubon Society members living in the Chapter's official territory, which is defined by zip codes, but basically covers all of Jefferson, Orange and Hardin Counties and one or two zip codes adjacent to these counties. We do welcome members in other nearby counties!

Your dues cover the cost of printing and mailing the *Brown Pelican* to you, and help fund our other activities. We urge you to help us do more by receiving your *Brown Pelican* as a PDF attached to an email if you do not already. We will continue to post

the Newsletter on the GTAS website at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. The typical issue will be less than 500 KB so it is not a large file. Please send an email to johnawhittle@aol.com with your request, including the name we are currently send the printed copy to, and the email address you want us to use.

Golden Triangle Audubon now on Facebook

Thanks to Kelley Sampeck, Golden Triangle Audubon has its own Facebook page. The page will include bird reports from the Golden Triangle area, meeting, field trip and other birding event announcements, and pictures. To participate, simply go to <http://www.facebook.com/GoldenTriangleAudubon/> and click the "Like" button to follow. Once you have "liked" the page, any posts to the page will show up in your newsfeed, and you will be able to post comments and pictures to the page. If you do not have Facebook but would like to send in bird reports/alerts for the page, you may email Kelley at kpeck2487@gmail.com. This Facebook page has proven to be a much easier and better method to distribute daily bird updates during migration.

The Spring Migration Season So Far

Here we present a summary of the early part of Spring Migration and some observations, which should be read with the understanding that the season was still in full swing as these were written. These observations are anecdotal in nature rather than the result of thorough analysis, and likely in some respects reflect the biases of the writer. We will present our usual more thorough and numerical analysis in a future issue.

At the time this is written (April 26), there had been only two significant weather events after March 20 that impacted migration – a frontal passage on March 23/24 and another front that did not fully pass beyond the coast on April 5 through 7. For most of the rest of the time, most predictions based on the low level winds from the Yucatan to the Gulf Coast proved to be less than clairvoyant. While there were no major groundings of birds during these periods, there were occasions on which the birding was unexpectedly good, and others where it is unexpectedly slow. All in all, there were

many days, most days in fact, when over 20 warbler species were reported at Sabine Woods, even if the numbers of each species were usually quite low. Larger species such as thrushes, tanagers, and orioles were more episodic, but equally unpredictable.

Two species that are eagerly sought after in our area because their migration is overwhelmingly far to our west – Black-throated Blue Warbler and Cape May Warbler – were found, not in the Woods but on the side of Highway 87 near Sea Rim. The Black-throated Blue was seen for a reasonable period on April 14, while the Cape Way Warbler was only observed for a very short time on April 25.

One feature of the season has been the unusually large number of Swainson's Warbler sightings. Perhaps we have just become better at finding this extremely secretive species, or perhaps there is more or better habitat that induced them to
(continued on page 7)

Field Trip to Bolivar Flats 29 March 2014

The Bolivar trip is an annual tradition as the March field trip for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society. If you have to ask why, it means you have never made the trip. The Bolivar Peninsula holds a wide variety of birds at all times of the year including shore birds, gulls, terns plus the possibility of lots of migrant land birds in High Island. It is one of the few places where you can be guaranteed to see birds at any season and with spring migration starting the possibilities are near limitless!

The trip started at the Houston Audubon Society's Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. This stretch of beach and mud flats near the end of the Bolivar Peninsula is a magnet for birds and it was no different on this day. Hundreds of sandpipers, plovers, gulls and terns were concentrated across the flats, so much so it was difficult to determine what area to focus on first. Starting down the beach, Sanderlings are always one of the first species to be noted as they feed along the edge of the water. A Long-billed Curlew stalked the beach while Dunlin fed in shallow pools. Western Sandpipers were easily found while it took a while to locate the first Short-billed Dowitcher. Ruddy Turnstones flipped shells and debris searching for invertebrates while Willets called noisily. Black-bellied Plovers displayed both their plainer winter plumage and their more colorful breeding plumage. The small plovers also made a good showing with Snowy, Piping, Semipalmated and Wilson's all on display. One particular shorebird species of great concern is the Red Knot. The population of this species has been in steep decline in recent years and the numbers on the Texas coast have been decreasing. Therefore, any sighting of Red Knots on the upper Texas coast is worth noting and the group was lucky enough to find a few of these birds including at least one nearing full breeding plumage.

Gulls and terns were also seen in good numbers. Laughing Gulls were numerous and Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were present in smaller numbers. A number of Bonaparte's Gulls were also present on the flats. Forster's Terns were common on the flats and some Common Terns were picked out among them. There was no trouble finding Royal Terns and Sandwich Terns were also easy to come by. Tiny Least Terns had recently arrived back to the flats and were present in easily found. Large Caspian Terns were also noted on the day.

The large oil spill that had recently occurred in the Houston ship channel was of special concern to all of the area bird watchers as thoughts of this oil contaminating Bolivar Flats or other nearby important bird areas right at the time that migrant birds are passing through and

resident birds are starting to nest could be disastrous. Luckily, none of that oil ended up on Bolivar Flats though some other areas were not as fortunate. There were a few birds on the flats that had encountered some oil somewhere however, as their plumage was obviously stained. A Semipalmated Plover was fairly heavily stained while at least one Laughing Gull had some oil on it. A few other partially oil stained birds were also seen but the numbers were far fewer than were feared and the spill could have been much worse.

Moving on from the flats, other areas on the Bolivar peninsula were visited to see what they had to offer. The first stop was a cabin near the jetties (courtesy of the Sagan's whom we met on the beach) that had a wonderful view of the mudflats nearby. Those flats contained thousands of American Avocets many of them in beautiful breeding plumage. This large flock is often present at Bolivar Flats or nearby but birders rarely get to see them as close or as well as this. The group savored the wonderful sight of all of the Avocets while also noting other nearby birds including Ruby-throated Hummingbird and White-crowned Sparrow. After that location, the group visited Fort Travis and picked up birds such as Clapper Rail and Whimbrel. Bob's Road gave up Osprey, Blue-winged Teal, Prothonotary Warbler and Northern Parula. Rollover Pass is always a great stop and this day was no different. Hundreds of birds were present including Marbled Godwits, Black Skimmers and Reddish Egrets. One of the best sightings of the day was also one of the most unexpected. As the group was about to pull back onto Highway 87 from a birding stop, a bird was spotted cruising low over a nearby field – it was a Swallow-tailed Kite! Focusing binoculars on this bird, two more Swallow-tailed Kites were seen! The group enjoyed these graceful raptors as they soared out of sight.

This trip always ends up at the Houston Audubon Society's sanctuaries in High Island and what better place to end up than in a world famous migrant trap? Though this trip is too early for the peak of the land bird migration there were still plenty of birds to see. Boy Scout Woods produced standouts like Red-eyed Vireo, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Black and White Warbler and even a Crested Caracara for good measure. Smith Oaks, not to be outdone, gave the group great birds such as Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and even good looks at a normally shy American Bittern. Ending the birding day at the rookery at Smith Oaks is always a good finish. The sight of dozens of Roseate Spoonbills and Great

Egrets all starting the nesting season is a great way to end the birding day.

It was another great birding day on the Bolivar peninsula, as reliably fantastic as always. Whether it is shorebirds on Bolivar Flats, ducks in the ponds on Bob's Road, Skimmers at Rollover Pass or warblers in High Island, this area always produces great birds regardless of the season. And when you can get Red Knots and Swallow-tailed Kites along with breeding wading birds and migrating warblers, it is awfully hard to beat. That's why the Golden Triangle Audubon Society will be back again next March for another great trip to Bolivar!

The following species were recorded by the trip leaders:

Gadwall (4); Blue-winged Teal (23); Green-winged Teal (15); Red-breasted Merganser (1); Pied-billed Grebe (1); Neotropic Cormorant (111); Double-crested Cormorant (1); American White Pelican (4); Brown Pelican (65); American Bittern (1); Great Blue Heron (14); Great Egret (27); Snowy Egret (11); Little Blue Heron (4); Tricolored Heron (1); Reddish Egret (3); Cattle Egret (37); Black-crowned Night-Heron (1); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (4); White Ibis (61); Roseate Spoonbill (200); Osprey (2); Swallow-tailed Kite (3); Northern Harrier (2); Broad-winged Hawk (1); Red-tailed Hawk (4); Crested Caracara (1); American Kestrel (1);

Clapper Rail (1); Common Moorhen (3); American Coot (10); Snowy Plover (5); Wilson's Plover (25); Semipalmated Plover (17); Piping Plover (25); American Oystercatcher (2); American Avocet (10000); Greater Yellowlegs (2); Willet (78); Whimbrel (1); Long-billed Curlew (4); Marbled Godwit (25); Ruddy Turnstone (3); Red Knot (5); Sanderling (40); Western Sandpiper (75); Dunlin (85); Stilt Sandpiper (1); Short-billed Dowitcher (6); Laughing Gull (60); Ring-billed Gull (15); Herring Gull (4); Least Tern (20); Common Tern (1); Forster's Tern (40); Royal Tern (80); Sandwich Tern (17); Black Skimmer (200); Rock Pigeon (3); Eurasian Collared-Dove (3); White-winged Dove (1); Mourning Dove (2); Belted Kingfisher (1); Great Crested Flycatcher (1); Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (3); Loggerhead Shrike (1); White-eyed Vireo (2); Yellow-throated Vireo (1); Red-eyed Vireo (1); Horned Lark (2); Purple Martin (20); Northern Rough-winged Swallow (3); Cliff Swallow (1); Barn Swallow (25); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (10); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2); European Starling (1); Worm-eating Warbler (1); Louisiana Waterthrush (1); Prothonotary Warbler (1); Hooded Warbler (5); Northern Parula (2); Yellow-rumped Warbler (11); Yellow-throated Warbler (1); Vesper Sparrow (1); Savannah Sparrow (10); White-crowned Sparrow (2); Eastern Meadowlark (2); House Sparrow (5).

Steve Mayes

Field Trip to Sabine Woods 19 April 2014

April is the prime birding time for the upper Texas coast. It is the time when millions of birds leave their winter homes in Latin America and fly over land and sea to arrive back in the North America. Many of these birds pass through Texas and a disproportionate number of those birds pass through our little corner of the state often stopping here after an exhausting flight over the Gulf of Mexico. With this in mind, the Golden Triangle Audubon Society always schedules its April field trip for Sabine Woods to (hopefully) catch these little birds as they crash land on the coast!

These spring migration trips are very much a boom or bust phenomenon. If weather conditions are particularly favorable to the birds (strong south winds), the birds may continue flying well past the coast not stopping until they are miles inland. If weather conditions are not favorable to the birds (north winds, rain), the birds will often stop in the very first spot they can find on the immediate coast. This is why birders flock to coastal wood lots like Sabine Woods and High Island, hoping to catch the birds "falling out" of the sky. The Golden Triangle Audubon Society has experienced both sides of this phenomenon on our April field trips but luckily the 2014 trip was on the boom side! This was

somewhat unexpected as the omens were not good.

Warblers are most people's favorites in spring migration and are what most birders come to Sabine Woods to look for. And it is no wonder as these delightful little birds come in a variety of bright colors including yellow, orange, red, blue and green and Sabine Woods is one of the best places in to see large numbers of them. Racking up impressive warbler lists is a game many birders play during the spring and the "twenty warbler day" is a goal for many. The 2014 April field trip produced a twenty warbler day for many of the trip participants. Warblers were not present in huge numbers but the variety of species present was exceptional. Yellow Warblers sang their "sweet sweet I'm so sweet" song from the trees while a Worm-eating Warbler gave its "zip" from a clump of dead leaves. Black and White Warblers crept up tree branches and trunks while Kentucky Warblers crept around under the lantana bushes. Common Yellowthroats lived up to their name as they were common in most parts of the woods while a female Cerulean Warbler provided an encounter with a more scarce warbler. A black and orange American Redstart actively pursued insects in the trees while brilliant golden Prothonotary Warblers probed the

vegetation in and around the ponds. A western-type Palm Warbler wagged his tail from uncharacteristically high in the canopy Hooded Warblers flashed their white outer tail feathers from the underbrush. Other brilliant warblers seen on the day included Blue-winged Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler and Blackburnian Warbler.

But not all warblers are brilliantly colored though this does not mean they are less desired by birders! Orange-crowned Warbler was present in olive and yellow (don't look for the orange crown, it is rarely visible) and Northern Waterthrush worked the water's edge cloaked in brown and white. Brown Ovenbirds walked like clockwork toys through the leaf litter while gray and green Tennessee Warblers twittered from high in the trees. One of the most sought for warblers on the upper Texas coast is the Swainson's Warbler. Not flashy, it has a subtle brown back and chestnut cap and a whitish to buffy underside and it creeps along quietly the leaf litter usually in thick brush. Its presence is often betrayed only by the quiet sounds of leaves being flipped over. The experienced birder will listen for this sound in appropriate habitat hoping to find this elusive species. It is the retiring, skulking nature of the Swainson's Warbler that make it so wanted by birders as it is very difficult to see and many birders have never gotten a good look at one. But on this day, a reasonably cooperative Swainson's Warbler was found in some slightly less thick brush than usual affording good looks by many field trip participants and many other visiting birders as well. Quite a number of birders left Sabine Woods with their "lifer" Swainson's Warbler on this day!

But this day belonged to the "big" birds -- well not really big birds like eagles or cranes but migratory song birds that are larger than warblers like thrushes and tanagers. It became clear that, even if warblers were not that numerous some other birds were present in good numbers though even more arrived late in the day after the field trip "officially" ended. Vireos (only slightly larger than warblers) were well represented with large numbers of Red-eyed Vireos, good numbers of Yellow-throated Vireos and smaller numbers of Blue-headed and White-eyed Vireos. Brilliant tanagers were easy to spot in the trees. Most prominent were the Summer Tanagers dressed in red (for the males), mustard yellow (for the females) or some combination of both (for immature males). Summer Tanagers, known for their love of eating bees, lined up at the known bee hives in the woods for a hearty meal! Scarlet Tanagers, especially the vibrant red and black males, were seen in fewer numbers but were appreciated by all the birders present. Orchard and Baltimore Orioles were well represented on the day showing off orange and black plumages. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks descended on the coast in big numbers on this

day and seemed to be in every tree by late afternoon, especially the mulberry trees. Smaller numbers of Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings were also present along with at least one Painted Bunting. Gray Catbirds were seen high and low but the real numbers belonged to the thrushes. Gray-cheeked Thrush was seen but Swainson's Thrush was much more numerous, showing off its buffy spectacles for all that cared to look. Even the number of Swainson's Thrushes paled in comparison to the number of Wood Thrushes present however. There seemed to be a Wood Thrush under every bush, hopping along every trail and perched in every fruiting tree. Wood Thrush was certainly the most numerous bird present on the coast on the field trip, more than any of the participants can ever remember seeing in one day.

While plenty of other good birds were seen on the field trip (Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Great Horned Owls and a perched Lesser Nighthawk pointed out by John Dunn himself), this will be remembered as the field trip of the thrushes in grosbeaks. The warbler diversity was excellent but the sheer numbers of bigger birds was a spectacle to behold. A twenty warbler day? Check! Dozens of Gray Catbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Wood Thrushes? Check! After a day like this, all of the participants are already looking forward to see what next April's trip to Sabine Woods will produce!

The following species were recorded by the trip leaders:

Blue-winged Teal (4); Green Heron (5); White Ibis (4); Plegadis species Ibis (1); Turkey Vulture (1); Sora (1); Greater Yellowlegs (1); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (6); Great Horned Owl (2); Common Nighthawk (5); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (1); Red-headed Woodpecker (1); Golden-fronted Woodpecker (1); Melanerpes Woodpecker (1); Downy Woodpecker (1); Empidonax species (2); Great Crested Flycatcher (2); Eastern Kingbird (5); White-eyed Vireo (2); Yellow-throated Vireo (7); Blue-headed Vireo (1); Warbling Vireo (1); Red-eyed Vireo (7); Sedge Wren (1); Marsh Wren (1); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2); Gray-cheeked Thrush (1); Swainson's Thrush (8); Wood Thrush (8); Gray Catbird (7); Northern Mockingbird (1); Brown Thrasher (2); Ovenbird (4); Worm-eating Warbler (2); Northern Waterthrush (1); Blue-winged Warbler (2); Black-and-white Warbler (3); Prothonotary Warbler (4); Swainson's Warbler (1); Tennessee Warbler (6); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Kentucky Warbler (3); Common Yellowthroat (4); Hooded Warbler (2); American Redstart (1); Cerulean Warbler (1); Northern Parula (1); Yellow Warbler (4); Palm Warbler (2); Yellow-rumped Warbler (2); Black-throated Green Warbler (2); Yellow-breasted Chat (5); Lincoln's Sparrow (1); Swamp Sparrow (1); White-throated Sparrow (7); Summer Tanager (12); Scarlet Tanager (5); Northern Cardinal (2); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (27); Blue Grosbeak (2); Indigo Bunting (9); Painted Bunting (1); Red-winged Blackbird (2); Common Grackle (1); Great-tailed Grackle (1); Brown-headed Cowbird (3); Orchard Oriole (8); Baltimore Oriole (2)

Steve Mayes

Bird Sightings – March 2014

This year, we have changed the method of compilation and the format of this section, a change that was made necessary by the increasing number of reports that are becoming available, especially on eBird. We encourage all of our regular contributors to enter their sightings into eBird going forward. We will use all reports available to us so if you do not enter your sightings into eBird, please continue to send those of rare birds to us (johnawhittle@aol.com) by the 15th of the month following.

In this section of the Newsletter, we now record only the rare and unusual birds reported during the month. To some extent we use our judgment on what constitutes rare or unusual. We are working to formalize this for future issues, probably limiting the report to birds shown as rare or very rare on the local checklists, but we will also try to mention any particularly high numbers and even expected birds that were not seen, as well as any sightings that may be of special interest for reasons other than those mentioned.

We have reviewed eBird and other submitted records for

White-tailed Hawk	Mar 17 JEF-Big Hill Road (1) RHRC
Ferruginous Hawk	Mar 10 CHA-Anahuac NWR (1) Robert Foster and Rebecca Bates
	Mar 18 CAM-LA82 W of Holly Beach (1) Jim Geisler
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	Three thru March 14+ JEF-Nederland JJW
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	One thru Mar 4 JEF-Nederland JJW
	One thru March 13+ JEF-Nederland JJW
Rufous Hummingbird	Two thru March 14+ JEF-Nederland JJW
	One thru March 7 JEF-Nederland JJW
	One March 4 and 14 JEF-Nederland HS
	One all month JEF-Beaumont HJ
	One all month JEF-Beaumont SK
	One thru Mar 26 JEF-Beaumont SK
Whip-poor-will	Mar 15 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) RW
	Mar 16 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH, SM
Yellow-throated Vireo	Mar 10 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH
Worm-eating Warbler	Mar 23 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) MC
Louisiana Waterthrush	Mar 1 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) SM
	Mar 5 JEF-Sabine Woods (2) JHH
	Mar 6 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH

February for the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also looked at, more selectively, records for nearby counties or parts of counties that are easily accessible to and often birded by birders in our core Golden Triangle Audubon area. These are Chambers, Galveston (High Island and Bolivar Peninsula only) and Liberty counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes (both west of the Calcasieu River only) in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-more precise location if available – (number) – Observer(s)

Commentary: March reports always seem to focus on the early appearance of a few migratory species, and we have no grossly out of normal range species to report on this month. Tracking our wintering hummingbirds became very difficult after mid-March, owing to out of town trips, and the appearance of the first migrating Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in mid-month. We have found only very few noteworthy sightings in counties other than Jefferson this month.

Northern Waterthrush	Mar 26 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH, SM, JAW
Tennessee Warbler	Mar 24 JEF-Sabine Woods (2) JHH (1) SM, JAW
	Mar 25 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH
	Mar 30 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH
Nashville Warbler	Mar 26 CHA-Winfree Rd (1) Andy Newman
Hooded Warbler	Mar 10 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH
	Mar 12 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH
Black-thr. Green Warbler	Mar 8 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH, SM
Blue Grosbeak	Mar 30 JEF-Sabine Woods (1) JHH, SM, JAW
Painted Bunting	One thru March 5+ JEF-Groves (10) Howard Davis

Abbreviations used

CAM – Cameron Parish, LA; CHA – Chambers County; HJ – Harrison Jordan; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle;; MC – Michael Cooper; RHRC – Rene Hebert and Rita Czek; RW – Ron Weeks; SK – Steve Kuritz, SM – Steve Mayes.

The Spring Migration Season So Far

(continued from page 3)

stop over for a longer period. We may still be improving our understanding of the migration timeline for the species.

A feature of the early part of the season was the sight of Yellow-throated Warblers (and less unexpectedly several other species) feeding on and near the ground in the recently brushhogged areas in the north section of Sabine Woods. Louisiana Waterthrushes are always early migrants and many may be missed as a result; however, we saw a lot more this year.

Cerulean Warblers have been above average again this year, with many females, while Blackburnian numbers have been disappointing. Golden-winged Warblers were well above average.

A number of species seemed to appear early this year. Some of those are noted in the sightings report elsewhere on

this page. Others included Canada Warbler – early for the second year in a row – Chestnut-sided Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler. A Northern Waterthrush on March 26 was exceptionally early, but there is always the possibility that it was a bird that had overwintered in south Texas.

Thrush migration has been good, with large number of Wood, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes

Mention must also be made of species that were lower in number. One that sticks out has been the exceptionally low number of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Another has been the virtual absence of Wilson's Warblers after last year when many overwintered and many other migrants were seen. Vireos of all kinds except Yellow-throated seem to have been present in numbers lower than we have come to expect. Conversely, Yellow-throated Vireos were hard to miss through most of the season.

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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 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 fee. Most rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds. It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives, which include all recent postings. Postings for the last two weeks are also available at <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/TX>.

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..>