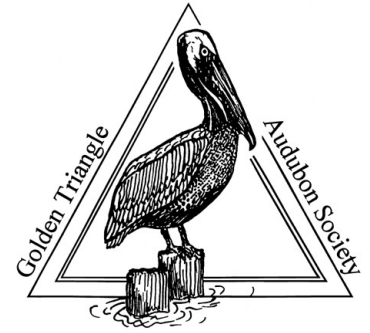


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 20 No. 7/8

July/August 2014

Membership Meeting
Thursday August 21, 2014 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

Speaker: Jana and John Whittle

Birds of Costa Rica

Costa Rica has a rich avifauna! The Central American country, bordered on the northwest by Nicaragua and the southeast by Panama, has moist lowlands bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and a range of volcanic mountains, rising to over 10,000 feet, with a more densely populated Central Valley between two of the Cordilleras. A country of about 20,000 square miles, about 1/14th the size of Texas, Costa Rica boasts a bird list of about 900 species.

The talk will describe some of the bird species seen on a ten day trip in April of this year, visiting five varied birding destinations, ranging from the La Paz Waterfall Gardens just above the Central Valley, the lowlands of the Selva region in the north, the Arenal Volcano, Carara National Park on the northwest Pacific Coast, to the Savegre mountain valley high in the Talamanca Cordillera. The talk will be illustrated by photographs and video taken on the trip. In addition to the poster bird of Costa Rica, the Resplendent Quetzal, birds seen included twenty five species of hummingbirds, thirteen species of parrots, eleven species of "true" tanagers as well as toucans, many flycatchers and other tropical species.

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.

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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.

Saturday August 2. Field Trip to Liberty-Dayton Area. Each year, several of us have made a pilgrimage to the Liberty-Dayton area in August. During the first half of August each year, Swallow-tailed Kites congregate in the Trinity River bottomlands between Liberty and Dayton for two or three weeks before they migrate south for the winter. Sometimes, we are lucky enough to find up to 20 or more; other times they are more spread out and we don't see quite as many.

This has become a regular field trip. We will meet on Saturday August 2 at 8:00 AM at the McDonalds at 1923 Highway 90 in Liberty. This is on the north side of the Highway at the intersection with Travis Street, one block west of Main St/Highway 227. Carpooling is highly desirable on this trip. Most of this trip does not **necessitate** extensive walking, although some of the group will probably do quite a bit of walking. The trip will probably not last beyond noon.

We will check the area along Highway 90 between Liberty and Dayton, perhaps several times, and also the Liberty Municipal Park area. We might even also drive down FM1409. In addition to the Swallow-tailed Kites, there are usually Mississippi Kites flying low in the residential areas of Liberty north of US 90. Depending on how wet the area is, there may be other birds characteristic of bottomlands.

For more information, contact Steve Mayes (sgmayes@hotmail.com or 409-722-5807).

Thursday August 21, 2014. Membership Meeting. Birds of Costa Rica. Details on page 1.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Jean Beavens, Debbie Bradford, Linda Davis, Harrison Jordan, Denise Kelley, Phil Rogers, Christine Silva, Gail Slocum and Janice Sutton for bringing refreshments in May. **We need volunteers to bring items for 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!

Saturday August 23. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. Tentative. Meet leader Steve Mayes at the vehicle barrier at Bolivar Flats at 8:30 a.m. Take Highway 124 south from Winnie about 20 miles through High Island. At the shoreline, turn right along Highway 87 and proceed approximately 25 miles through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you come to the intersection with Loop 108. At that intersection, turn left (south -- the opposite direction from Loop 108) on Rettilon Road to the beach. If conditions permit, drive onto the sand and turn right to the vehicle barrier (about 1/2 mile). It is about a 90-minute drive, with no allowance for stops, from Beaumont or mid-County to the Flats.

We will visit High Island on the way home, checking there for migrants.

You will need a Galveston County Beach Parking Permit, obtainable for \$10 from most merchants on the Peninsula, to park on the beach.



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

Bird Sightings – May/June 2014

In this section of the Newsletter, we now generally limit the report to birds justifiably shown as rare or very rare on the local checklists for the week of the sighting, but we also try to mention any particularly high numbers 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 the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We use all checklists in eBird that are reasonable in the light of other checklists and reports (if any) for the date and place, and/or where the rarities are supported by documentation or photographs. We also reviewed, looking for very rare or vagrant species only, 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: May reports include many later migrants. There are too many reports of Broad-winged Hawks and Northern Flickers to justify continuing to treat them as rare, and both Swallow-tailed Kites and Swainson's Hawks will likely follow them in future as both seem to be summer residents locally rather than only passage migrants.

Lesser Scaup	May 3 (late) JEF-PI (7) JHH, SM May 4 (late) JEF-PI (2) JHH Jun 21 (v late) JEF-TP (1) JHH, SM	Black-whiskered Vireo	May 1-2 (rare) JEF-TX87 west of Sea Rim (1) multiple obs
Ring-necked Duck	Jun 21 (late) JEF-TP (1) JHH, SM	Sedge Wren	May 10 (late) JEF-TP (2) JHH
Wood Stork	Jun 1 (early) HAI-BTNP-KNT Jun 18 (early) ANG-TX7 SWof Grisby (1) Mark Westeler Jun 21 (early) JEF-TP (1) JHH, SM Jun 23 (early) JEF-Big Hill Lake (6) RHRC Jun 28 (early) JEF-US90 (9) JAW	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	May 2 (late) JEF-SW (1) MCO, JHH
Amer. White Pelican	Jun 14 (large no.) CAM-East Jetty Beach (225) Jay Huner	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	May 1 (late) JEF-SW (1) multiple obs May 2 (late) JEF-SW (2) Cynthia Hudson, Robert Zirl May 9 (late) JEF-SW (1) J&R
Double-crested Corm	May 10 (late) JEF-TP (6) JHH Jun 1 (v late) JEF-Crystal Lakes (1) J&R	Ovenbird	May 10 (late) JEF-SW (3) MCO, J&R, SM May 13 (late) JEF-SW (4) MCO, JHH, KS May 14 (late) JEF-SW (1) MCO May 15 (late) JEF-SW (1) JHH
American Bittern	May 10 (late) JEF-TP JHH	Louisiana Waterthrush	May 17 (late) HAI-Lumberton (1) KS
Glossy Ibis	May 10 (rare) JEF-TP (2) JHH Jun 21 (rare) JEF-TP (2) JHH, SM	Northern Waterthrush	May 15 (late) JEF-SW (1) JHH May 18 (late) JEF-SW (2) JHH May 19 (late) JEF-SW (1) JHH May 20 (late) JEF-SW (2) JHH, HS May 21 (late) JEF-SW (1) HS
Swallow-tailed Kite	May 9 (rare) TYL-Dam B (1) Buill Wright May 10 (rare) JAS-MDSP (1) Peggy Rudman May 17 (rare) JAS-Sandy Creek (1) Wes Browning May 31 (rare) JEF-TP (1) Clayton Leopold Jun 11 (rare) CAL-north (1) Maxime Guillory, Beth Kramer, Jeanie Pousson Jun 12 (rare) JEF-TX105(1) J&R Jun 12 (rare) TYL-Magnolia Ridge (1) Charles Griffing	Blue-winged Warbler	May 18 (v late) JEF-SW (1) JHH
Mississippi Kite	Jun 1 (rare) JEF-TP (1) John Mariani	Golden-wing Warbler	May 2 (late) JEF-SW (1) multiple obs May 7 (late) JEF-SW (2) JHH, SM May 16 (v late) JEF-SW (1) J&R, JHH, JAW
White-tailed Hawk	May 19 (rare) JEF-Big Hill Lake (1) RHRC	MacGillivray's Warbler	May 1 (v rare) JEF-SW (1) MC, JHH
Swainson's Hawk	Jun 14 (rare) JEF-Bmt (Dishman/Keith Roads) (1) J&R Jun 14 (rare) JEF-Groves (1) Howard Davis Jun 16 (rare) JEF-Big Hill Lake (1) RHRC Jun 23 (rare) JEF-Big Hill Lake (2) RHRC	American Redstart	May 24 (late) JEF-SW (1) HS Jun 6 (v late) JEF-SW (1) JHH
Stilt Sandpiper	May 26 (late) JEF-Big Hill Road (1) RHRC	Cape May Warbler	May 13-14-15 (rare) JEF-SW (1) JFW, HS, JHH
Baird's Sandpiper	May 10 (late) JEF-TP (3) JHH May 12 (late) JEF-PI (10) JAW	Black-thr Blue Warbler	May 15 (rare) JEF-SW (1) Duane Huval
White-rump. Sandpiper	Jun 1 (late) JEF-TP(3) John Mariani	Palm Warbler	May 10 (late) JEF-SW (1) SM
Ruff	May 1-4 (v rare) CHA-Anahuac NWR (1) multiple obs	Blk-thr Green Warbler	May 15-16 (v late) JEF-SW (1-2) JHH
Lesser Nighthawk	May 3 (v rare) CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Jeanie Pousson	Nelson's Sparrow	May 10 (late) JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (4) SM
Chuck-will's Widow	May 31 (late) HAI-BTNP-Sundew (1) Clayton Leopold May 31 (late) HAI-BTNP-KNT (2) Clayton Leopold	Swamp Sparrow	May 3 (late) JEF-SW (1) Derek Muschalek
Buff-bell Hummingbird	May 13-14 (v rare) JEF-Bmt Harrison Jordan	White-cr. Sparrow	May 2 (late) JEF-SW (3) JHH, Michael Dupree
Western Kingbird	May 21 (rare) CAL-Intracoastal Park (2) Don Lopat Jun 12 (rare) JEF-Pt Arthur City Hall (1) Andrew Dickinson	Western Tanager	May 6 (rare) JEF-SW (2) JHH May 10 (rare) JEF-SW (2) SM
Blue-headed Vireo	May 1 (v late) JEF-SW (1) multiple obs. May 2 (v late) JEF-SW (2) JHH, SM	American Goldfinch	May 6 (late) ORA-Ethel St (10) Cindy Harland
Yellow-green Vireo	May 7 (v rare) JEF-SW (1) JHH, JAW	American Goldfinch	May 12 (v late) HAI-Lumberton (1) KS May 26 (v late) CAL-Moss Bluff (1) Deanna Griggs

Abbreviations used

ANG – Angelina County; Bmt – Beaumont; BTNP – Big Thicket NP; CAL – Calcasieu Parish; CAM – Cameron Parish, LA; CHA – Chambers County; HAI – Hardin County; HJ – Harrison Jordan; HS – Harlan Stewart; J&R – Jessica Barry and Randy Lucas; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; KNT – Kirby Nature Trail; KS – Kelley Sampeck; MCO – Michael Cooper; MDSP – Martin Dies SP; ORA – Orange County PI – Pleasure Island; RHRC – Rene Hebert and Rita Czek; SM – Steve Mayes; SW – Sabine Woods; TP – Tyrrell Park incld Cattail Marsh; TYL – Tyler County.

The Spring Migration Season

There were four significant weather events after March 20 that impacted migration – a frontal passage on March 23/24, another front that did not fully pass beyond the coast on April 5 through 7, a cold front that reached the coast on April 29 with a muted but prolonged multi-day impact, and a cold front that reached the coast on the late date of May 13. 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.

Our analysis and the tabular material on which is based attempted to use the same methodology as in previous years. Our analysis was again confined to observations reported from Sabine Woods. Our methodology has always been to record for each species for each day the highest number shown in any plausible report. With the increasing use of eBird, there are many more reports for each day, especially at the height of migration. Necessarily, we have to use judgment in considering reports of species that present difficulties in separating from similar species that are more expected given the date and place. More than anything else, we want some assurance that the observer was aware that a similar species was more expected. It is very helpful if comments in eBird or other reports provide that assurance. We want estimates of the number of birds present, but we occasionally come across reports that seem to be reports of the number of sightings, including repeat sightings of the same bird(s). While the general experience on simple birding trips that are true traveling trips, with the same stretch traversed only once or twice, is that only about one third of the birds present are actually detected, the traveling protocol trips to Sabine Woods often cover the same patch of habitat multiple times and are more likely to encounter most of the birds present for most species. In general, there is remarkable similarity from one report to another from the same day as to the numbers, and we do not use reports where the numbers reported are way out of line for most species seen. Reports without numbers are reviewed, looking for species not otherwise reported, but they are not as useful. We would remark that the amount of birding time put in by our observers after the first week in May was exceptionally high, and this needs to be borne in mind if looking at numbers of late-migrating species.

In previous years, it was possible (just) to compress the tabular material into one page, albeit with resulting very small type. This was really not possible this year, without essentially summarizing both March and May sightings, so we decided to present as much as we could in three pages, with a reasonable size of type. The full table is available in the electronic version of this Newsletter, which is posted on

the web at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org. The report published there includes extensive comments on the dates and numbers of the individual species. We have data going back to 1996, and tables for past years can be found in the *Brown Pelican* (in the August or September issue each year). The last few years *Brown Pelicans* can be downloaded from the web site. The tables of earlier years are available from the editor upon request.

We thank the following of our core group of observers for all their contributions: Jessica Barry, Michael Cooper, Howard Davis, John Haynes, Randy Lucas, Steve Mayes, Harlan Stewart. We acknowledge the reports from the following: Kenneth Able, Peter Barnes, Eddie Bartley, Robert Behrstock, Wes Browning, Damien Carey, Blaine Carnes, Greg Chapman, Christopher Charlesworth, Jack Chiles, Sheridan Coffey, Fred Collins, Bob Craven, Malia DeFelice, Ted Drozdowski, Michael Dupree, Buffie Eicher, Joe Fischer, Jean-Marc Fix, Tony Frank, Caleb Frome, Sid Gauthreaux, Ross Geredien, Linda Gindler, Larry Goodman, Christian Gras, David Hanson, Peggy Harding, Ed Harper, Ken Hartman, Cathy Hay, Janie Henderson, Brittney Hoch, Don Hoechlin, John Houle, Joanie and Mark Hubinger, Cynthia Hudson, Carol Hughes, Carl Jackson, Jackie Jackson, Tom Jackson, Tom Johnson, Imre Karafiath, Glenda Keilstrup, Missie McAllister Kerr, John Kricher, Dee Kuder, Sarah and Michael Kuzio, Jerry Ledbetter, John Lumb, John Mariani, David Martin, Mark McDermott, Arman Moreno, Derek Muschalek, Brook Nicotra, Todd McGrath, Leo Miller, Julie Mobley, Sandra Morey, Greg Page, Kathryn Palmore, Muriel Parker, Sue Peters-Ferree, L G Pr, Sharon and Michael Pratt, John Prentice, Gerard Proulx, Craig Rasmussen, Jent Rathjen, David Roberts, Michelle Rometry, Cindy Rubens, Kelley Sampeck, Mark Scheuerman, Dennis Shepler, Rachel Smith, Pam Smolen, Joyce Marie Stewart, Dan Tankersley, Steve Taylor, Robert Thacker, Susan Tiholiz, Patti Truhn, Linda Tyler, John Vanderpoel, Betty Vermeire, Jenny Vogt, Ron Weeks, Jana Whittle, Catherine Winans, William Woodfin, Robert Zirl.

Two species that are eagerly sought after in our area because their migration is overwhelmingly far to our east – Black-throated Blue Warbler and Cape May Warbler – were found, but west of Sabine Woods on the side of Highway 87 near Sea Rim. The Black-throated Blue was seen for a reasonable period on April 14, and another one by a very few people on April 30. A couple of other reports were not accompanied by any documentation. The first Cape May Warbler was only observed for a very short time on April 25, but another – a poorly marked female -- at Sabine Woods stayed around May 14 and 15. A Black-whiskered Vireo was very cooperative west of Sea Rim April 30 to May 2. A MacGillivray's Warbler was at Sabine Woods April 30 and May 1. A Bullock's Oriole was reported at Sabine Woods May 3. Two Western Tanagers were seen at Sabine Woods on May 6, and another two on May 10. A Yellow-green Vireo was seen briefly at Sabine Woods May 7. Lesser Nighthawks were seen at Sabine Woods April 19 and 23.

John A. Whittle

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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..>