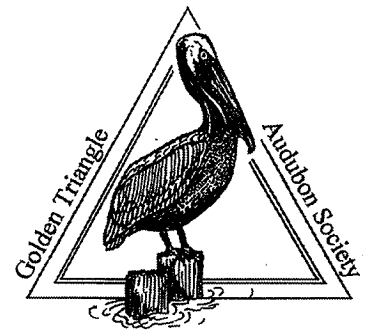


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 24 No. 4

April 2018

**Membership Meeting
Thursday April 19, 2018
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont 7:00 p.m.**

**The Beauty of Birds
Photographs by Dr. Spencer Moore**

Dr. Moore has been involved in photography for 48 years, beginning when he was in University of Houston College of Optometry. In the 1970's and 1980's he did extensive darkroom work and darkroom demonstrations at Padgitts Camera Store in Waco.

His eagle pictures have been on the front page of the Waco Tribune Herald over 10 times. He has also been published in Birds and Blooms, Nature Photography Magazine, Nature Magazine, Alaska Magazine, Shutterbug Magazine, Landscapes Magazine, the Long Island Newspaper, and Yankee Magazine.

The Art Center of Waco has had shows featuring his photography, one of which featured the Lake Waco eagles. The Arboretum in Waco also had a show featuring his photographs. His photos were selected for showing at the Art Center in Granbury and the Creekside Gallery in Belton. The CAST, Creative Art Studio & Theater, in Waco, featured Dr. Moore's photographs for two exhibits. He now has photographs with Texas Fine Artists on display at Springhill Suites in Waco and the Hewitt Public Library. The Art Forum in Waco and Klassy Glass restaurant currently have his photographs on display.

He has done photography for interior designers for use in offices, banks, and restaurants. He has done extensive commercial photography for businesses in Waco, and The Glen Eyrie Castle and Resort in Colorado Springs, Colorado. For several years he has photographed for the city of Waco and Baylor University athletics. He teaches photography and has judged numerous photo contests.

Dr. Moore is a retired optometrist, having practiced in Waco for 40 years. He and Jeanie have been married 46 years. They have two grown children who are married, and five grandchildren. Dr. Moore features his photography on his website drspencermooorephotography.com.

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.

The Brown Pelican

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Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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The Brown Pelican is published monthly except July by the Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292

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.

Thursday April 19, 2018. Membership Meeting. Photographs by Spencer Moore. See p.1

Directions to Tyrrell Park From the South

Go "north" on US69/96/287 around the south side of Beaumont.

Take Texas 124 (south or west, whichever it is signed) towards Fannett (left turn under the highway).

Travel about 1/2 mile to the first light.

At the first light, turn left onto Tyrrell Park Road and go about 3/4 mile.

Turn left into Tyrrell Park.

Almost immediately turn left at the conservatory into the parking lot for the Garden Center.

From IH10

Exit at Walden Road on the west side of Beaumont.

Go south of Walden Road for about 1/2 mile to the first light.

At the light go straight over Highway 124 onto Tyrrell Park Road and go about 3/4 mile.

Turn left into Tyrrell Park.

Almost immediately turn left at the conservatory into the parking lot for the Garden Center.

Saturday April 21, 2018. Field Trip to Sabine Woods. This trip will look for Neotropical migrants at the height of spring migration. We will assemble at Sabine Woods at 7:30 a.m. (You should be able to find the group if you are unable to be there quite that early.)

At Sabine Woods, there is a small parking area, with additional parking improvised using the roadside verges. Portable toilets are available at the entrance during spring migration.

This trip will seek Neotropical

migrants at the height of spring migration, and involves relatively easy walking on the trails at Sabine Woods to look for migrant songbirds, although another option is to sit at one of the drips and wait for the birds to come to you. The trails may be muddy and slippery if it has rained in the prior day or two. Armadillos and feral pigs have been very active, so there will be holes to avoid! There is a \$5 sanctuary pass donation at Sabine Woods for those who are **not** members of Golden Triangle Audubon or TOS. This field trip is especially suited for not-very-experienced birders. Often, we break into smaller groups, with an experienced birder in each group.

Bring insect repellent. Most participants will bring lunch. Facilities in Sabine Pass are limited, although gasoline and very limited food are available.

Sabine Woods is on the north side of Hwy 87, 4.1 miles west of the stop sign in Sabine Pass. Take Highway 87 from Port Arthur to Sabine Pass, turn right at the stop sign, and go 4.1 miles.

Saturday May 12, 2018. North American Migration Count. On International Migratory Bird Day, we undertake an all-Jefferson-County Bird 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. 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 (johnawhittle@aol.com or 409-722-4193) for details or offers to help.



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.com.

Thursday May 17, 2018. Membership Meeting. Your favorite bird pictures.

Once again, we are doing another program of members' favorite bird pictures. Dr. Harlan Stewart has again volunteered to prepare all photos submitted in advance into a PowerPoint presentation. Each member's pictures will be prefaced by an introductory "slide" giving the member's name, and any other relevant information the member wants. This might well indicate where the pictures were taken, if all at the same place, or that information can be in the caption to each picture, along with other information such as the species of the bird. The contributors of the pictures may, if they desire, talk briefly about their pictures, or they can allow the pictures to stand on their own. The pictures should be bird related, but do not need to be exhibition quality, especially if the subject is especially interesting for any reason.

In order to prepare a combined presentation, we will need to have the pictures by May 12. They can be emailed as attachments to Harlan at hstewartmail@gt.rr.com If necessary, send several separate emails to avoid exceeding the limits set by your email provider.

We will also be able to show PowerPoint presentations that you prepare yourself if they are on a flash drive, and are in the PowerPoint format or are a series of jpg files.

Sabine Woods Work Day – 3 March 2018

An excellent work day was held at Sabine Woods on March 3, with 17 volunteers contributing to the effort on the day. We thank each and every one of the following for their splendid accomplishments, and we especially thank Craig Geoffroy for mowing all of the meadow areas in advance of the Work Day itself:

Laura Baker, Michael Cooper, Ashley Fuselier, Craig Geoffroy, Sherry and Steve Gibson, Claudia Gilson, Sheila Hebert, Thomas Hellweg, Denise and Gary Kelley, Steve Mayes, Dana Nelson, Harlan Stewart, and Jana Whittle.

Over the two days, we got a lot accomplished. We mowed all the trails

and meadows, and prepared some new trails outside the main woods. We trimmed all the trails inside the Woods. We filled in a large number of armadillo excavations. We treated fire ant mounds on and near the trails. We dealt with some hog damage. Later this spring, we will contract for brush hogging the northern portion of the Sanctuary.

Herbert (Herb) Stafford 1926-2018

It is with great sorrow that we record the passing of Herb Stafford. For more than 18 years, together with his wife, Mary Beth, they have folded and tabbed each issue of the *Brown Pelican*, put the address labels on and prepared the newsletters for mailing.

Herbert (Herb) Stafford, Jr., 92, was born in Ranger, Texas on February 4, 1926 and moved to Groves, Texas in 1935. He entered into eternal rest on March 26, 2018.

Herb went to Thomas Jefferson (TJ) High School in Port Arthur rather than Port Neches-Groves (PNG), where he was zoned, to play an extra year of football since TJ was a 12 year school and PNG was an 11 year school.

Herb enlisted in the Navy at age 17, and following high school graduation in May 1944 boarded a train to San Diego for basic training the next day. He served as a 20 mm machine gunner on the USS Corson, a seaplane tender. He saw lots of action in South Pacific, and entered Nagasaki two weeks after it was bombed, spending several weeks there. Herb was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1946.

Following WWII, he went to college at Texas A&M for one year, Lamar for one year, and graduated from the University of Texas in 1950 with a BBA. Herb went to work for Jones and Laughlin Steel in 1951 and spent approximately 20 years there until the early 1970s.

Herb married Mary Elizabeth (Mary Beth) Daley on December 13, 1952. He became father to Herbert James Stafford, III in 1955 and Marian Kay Stafford in 1958.

Herb and Mary Beth opened Stafford's Nursery in 1959, and operated the nursery for almost 40 years before retiring in 1996. Their

specialty was roses, and they both became Certified Rosarians. For about 15 years, they also operated a commercial greenhouse tomato operation, supplying local grocery stores with tomatoes year round. They also operated an antiques store for about 20 years at their nursery site out of a log cabin that Herb built by hand. During the 1980s Herb was a radio celebrity on a Saturday morning radio nursery call in show.

Herb was involved in the Boy Scouting program as a volunteer for many years, and received the Silver Beaver in 1969, Scouting's highest award for volunteer service. Herb had been an active member of the Groves United Methodist Church since 1935, and was the longest tenured member with over 80 years membership.

He was active for decades in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Port Neches Post 4820. He served on the honorary 21 gun salute team for many years, and was the local VFW Commander for 13 years. He was recently honored for being instrumental in the establishment of Veteran's Park in Port Arthur.

Herb was an expert wood carver, and many of his carvings are in homes throughout Southeast Texas. Santa's, birds and fish were his favorite carving subjects. He was also an expert at catching redfish, and fished well into his 70s in the canals and marshes across from Port Neches Park. He was active for many years in the local chapter of the Audubon Society, and he and Mary Beth enjoyed bird watching, especially at Sabine Woods.

To recognize his life-long spirit of patriotism and volunteerism, Herb was named Port Arthur Sertoma Club's Citizen of the year in 2010, and was named "Outstanding Senior Citizen" by the Port Neches Rotary. He often gave speeches at local schools and veteran recognition events about patriotism and citizenship.

He is survived by his wife Mary Beth Stafford, a son Herbert James (Jim) Stafford, III (Patty) of Beech Island, South Carolina and a daughter Marian Ruiz (Mike) of Port Neches, Texas, and four grandsons.

Any memorials may be made to First United Methodist Church of Groves.

Bolivar Flats Field Trip 17 March 2018

Fifteen eager birders staged at the Bolivar Flats sanctuary at 8:30 AM. It was quite warm for the date, very humid, and overcast. It was nearly windless, which contributed to the nuisance of biting gnats, as well as the formation of fog, which plagued us for the first hour. This field trip is best known for always having an abundance of shore and water birds, and this day would not disappoint. Bolivar Flats is a world renowned shore and water bird location. This trip is timed so that very nearly all wintering species are still present in decent numbers, while most of the species which summer there are present, albeit sometimes not yet in the numbers that will prevail just a little later in the season.

The tide was as far out as any of us had seen it, exposing vast flats with shorebirds. This condition is difficult to predict, as the coastal water levels on the Upper Texas Coast are more influenced by wind driven water than they are by the tides caused by the moon and sun. While gulls and terns were in lesser numbers than expected, other species picked up the slack. We were allowed good looks at all the small plovers, with good showings of Piping, Snowy, and Wilson's. It was apparently just too early for Least Terns, but they were seen only a few days later. Sandwich Terns were present, but again, a few days later, the numbers were much larger.

The Piping Plover population loosely described as belonging to the Great Lakes breeding population in many sources, but actually including the shores of the western Great Lakes and the northern parts of the Great Basin, is classified as endangered, while the Atlantic coast breeding population is classified as threatened. The Great Lakes population, which winters on the Gulf coast, is being intensively studied. Although on this occasion, the birds were spread out and, only a few could be scrutinized in detail, on other occasions earlier in the month it has been determined that a significant percentage, perhaps as high as 20 percent, of these birds are banded with colored bands, enabling identification of individual birds. A few years ago, one project determined that Piping Plovers nesting in southern Saskatchewan were among those wintering at Bolivar Flats. A check of banded plovers a few days earlier on Bolivar Flats uncovered four that were banded in South Dakota and four in North Dakota. Six of these birds were banded, some as chicks, some as adults in mid-2014, and two in mid-2016.

The Gulf Coast is one of the few places in the United States where all four of the "small" plovers can be found in the same area. This occurs in April and again in August and September, but one or two out of season birds can be encountered in almost any month. The Piping and Semi-palmated Plovers are wintering species, almost all departing for northern breeding grounds by early May at the latest, with the first southbound migrants returning by early August. Snowy Plovers can be found during any month; a few have been shown to nest locally, but they are more numerous in the winter months. They are perhaps the least common of the small plovers on Bolivar Flats, but strangely enough, they can be the most numerous small plover along the beach at Sea Rim State Park and McFaddin Beach.

Interestingly, the latest readily available estimate (2012) of Wilson's Plover populations is only about 8,600 while that of

Piping Plovers is about 8,400. The latter has increased from around 5,000 since the beginning of the century. For comparison, Snowy Plover estimates are about 26,000, Semi-palmated Plovers about 200,000. Extensive efforts, especially protecting breeding sites, have greatly assisted in the Piping Plover recovery. Wilson's Plovers, which breed along the Gulf and Baja California coasts, are estimated to number only 8,600, but the trend is stable. It was a declining trend that focused attention on the Piping Plover.

Dowitchers are very common in "winter" (meaning, in an avian sense, September through late April), but all those away from the immediate shore are Long-billed Dowitcher. Those on the shore are normally all Short-billed Dowitchers, as was seen on the flats. While location is a normally reliable clue to the specific identification, the best way to distinguish between the two species is by voice. The Long-billed Dowitcher has a high pitched "keek" while the Short-billed has a much more mellow call. The average bill length is longer in the Long-billed, but there is overlap. There are some plumage differences, especially in breeding plumage but using this is made more difficult by the semi-annual molt from winter to breeding plumage and vice versa. Long-billed Dowitcher populations are very much greater than Short-billed, and very large flocks can be found in our area in winter and on migration.

Other small shorebirds on the Texas Gulf coast shores in winter that were present on Bolivar Flats include Western Sandpipers and Dunlins. Both species are quite gregarious, and were found in groups on the wetter parts of the Flats. Ruddy Turnstones were also seen.

Avocets and Marbled Godwits were numerous and both phases of Reddish Egret were present. The white phase of the Reddish Egret, once virtually restricted to the nesting islands off the southern reaches of the Laguna Madre, has become much more common on the Upper Texas Coast in recent years. As usual, there were a few Long-billed Curlews around, and even a Whimbrel. There seems to be a few Whimbrel along the coast at any time of the year, but very large numbers pass through in spring migration. Offshore rafts of ducks were largely Lesser Scaup.

After getting our fill of the Flats, we headed out. A couple from our group volunteered to check the area just east of Rettilon Road, and called with exciting news. The Great Black-Backed Gull that had been seen recently was there. Most of the birders were treated to good looks at this behemoth of a gull, towering over nearby Herring Gulls. Hard to overstate just how huge this thing is. Absolutely towered over nearby Herring Gulls, the flight was reminiscent of an eagle. This species is seemingly spreading from its previous beachhead along the coasts of the Northeastern United States. Found near where Rettilon Road enters the beach, it moved three times, each time west, ending up past the vehicle barrier; this was a life bird for most who saw it. The bonus of a Lesser Black-Backed Gull was also appreciated.

Fort Travis Park was our next brief stop, mostly for bathroom availability. However, a sharp-eyed young observer spotted a large bird in the nearby marsh, and we were soon treated to excellent views of a fully exposed American Bittern,

a normally reclusive bird. American Bitterns winter in the marshes of the Upper Texas Coast, much more commonly in fresh water marshes, but, as was demonstrated on this occasion, in brackish and salt marshes.

Adjacent Frenchtown Road was next, and we had target birds here. A pair of Surf Scoters had been around for a few days, and we located them shortly within a group of Scaup. This duck is fairly rare along the coast, and also a life bird for some present. Surf Scoter is the least rare of the three scoter species that winter in the coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Numbers reported of all three species seem to have increased over the last two or three years. American Oystercatchers were our other target, and five were found in close proximity on exposed oysterbeds.

After a stop at the Big Store for lunch we tackled Bob's Road. Among a large group of gulls and terns we were able to pick out Bonaparte's Gulls and a Common Tern to add to the growing list.

Rollover Pass had a large variety of birds available as our next stop, albeit almost all previously seen.

High Island, as is our custom, was the final stop for the group. The Boy Scout Woods sanctuary was scoured for migrants, but we were left wanting. The early date was largely to blame. Smith Oaks sanctuary was our very last location, and the rookery there never fails to amaze. Huge numbers of Neotropic Cormorants, Great Egrets, and Roseate Spoonbills nest there, and alligators lounge under the nests waiting for overeager young to make a misstep. Always a good place to end our journey.

Bolivar Flats

Northern Shoveler (2); Mottled Duck (4); Green-winged Teal (13); Lesser Scaup (175); Red-breasted Merganser (8); Neotropic Cormorant (2); Double-crested Cormorant (1); American White Pelican (15); Brown Pelican (18); Great Blue Heron (1); Great Egret (2); Snowy Egret (1); Reddish Egret (3); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (1); Roseate Spoonbill (1); Northern Harrier (1); American Avocet (950); American Oystercatcher (1); Black-bellied Plover (25); Snowy Plover (4); Wilson's Plover (6); Semipalmated Plover (1); Piping Plover (9); Whimbrel (1); Long-billed Curlew (3); Marbled Godwit (31); Ruddy Turnstone (8); Sanderling (65); Dunlin (90); Least Sandpiper (45); Western Sandpiper (5); peep sp. (150); Short-billed Dowitcher (50); Greater Yellowlegs (2); Willet (15); Lesser Yellowlegs (5); Laughing Gull (30); Ring-billed Gull (16); Herring Gull (8); Lesser Black-backed Gull (1); Great Black-backed Gull (1); Gull-billed Tern (1); Forster's Tern (150); Royal Tern (20); Sandwich Tern (3); Black Skimmer (275); Barn Swallow (2); Sedge Wren (2); American Pipit (1); Savannah Sparrow (3); Swamp Sparrow (2); Eastern Meadowlark (2); Red-winged Blackbird (6); Great-tailed Grackle (4); 53 species

Fort Travis

Lesser Scaup (22); Red-breasted Merganser (8); Pied-billed Grebe (1); Neotropic Cormorant (2); Double-crested Cormorant (1); American Bittern (1); Great Blue Heron (1); American Coot (3); Willet (3); Laughing Gull (12); Ring-billed Gull (5); Common Yellowthroat (1); Red-winged Blackbird (8); Frenchtown Road (0); Lesser Scaup (18); Surf Scoter (2); Red-breasted Merganser (12); Pied-billed Grebe

(1); Neotropic Cormorant (2); Brown Pelican (6); Great Egret (2); Snowy Egret (3); Tricolored Heron (1); Clapper Rail (1); Sora (1); American Coot (8); American Oystercatcher (5); peep sp. (15); Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitcher (8); Willet (2); Lesser Yellowlegs (2); Laughing Gull (10); Ring-billed Gull (2); Red-winged Blackbird (6); Great-tailed Grackle (8); 13 species.

Bob's Road

Pied-billed Grebe (1); Neotropic Cormorant (3); Brown Pelican (8); Great Blue Heron (1); Great Egret (4); Snowy Egret (3); Little Blue Heron (1); Tricolored Heron (1); White Ibis (3); Osprey (1); American Coot (12); American Avocet (5); Black-bellied Plover (1); Killdeer (1); Marbled Godwit (2); peep sp. (15); Willet (2); Bonaparte's Gull (2); Laughing Gull (25); Ring-billed Gull (8); Caspian Tern (1); Common Tern (1); Forster's Tern (30); Royal Tern (8); Purple Martin (3); Northern Mockingbird (1); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Savannah Sparrow (2); Eastern Meadowlark (3); Red-winged Blackbird (8); 29 species

Rollover Pass

Neotropic Cormorant (2); American White Pelican (6); Brown Pelican (8); Great Blue Heron (1); Great Egret (6); Snowy Egret (2); Reddish Egret (1); Roseate Spoonbill (15); Osprey (2); Black-necked Stilt (1); American Oystercatcher (1); Black-bellied Plover (2); Wilson's Plover (2); Semipalmated Plover (3); Piping Plover (2); Whimbrel (1); Long-billed Curlew (1); Marbled Godwit (2); Ruddy Turnstone (1); peep sp. (100); Willet (2); Laughing Gull (75); Ring-billed Gull (12); Herring Gull (2); Caspian Tern (1); Common Tern (2); Forster's Tern (150); Royal Tern (15); Black Skimmer (25); 28 species.

High Island – Boy Scout Woods

Great Egret (1); Snowy Egret (2); Turkey Vulture (1); Mourning Dove (6); Belted Kingfisher (2); Downy Woodpecker (1); Eastern Phoebe (1); Loggerhead Shrike (2); Blue-headed Vireo (1); Purple Martin (4); House Wren (1); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3); Hermit Thrush (2); Brown Thrasher (1); Northern Mockingbird (2); European Starling (6); Orange-crowned Warbler (2); Common Yellowthroat (1); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (10); Northern Cardinal (2); 21 species.

Smith Oaks

Blue-winged Teal (4); Pied-billed Grebe (6); Neotropic Cormorant (450); Great Blue Heron (1); Great Egret (85); Snowy Egret (7); Little Blue Heron (29); Roseate Spoonbill (160); Turkey Vulture (2); Common Gallinule (8); American Coot (5); Downy Woodpecker (1); Eastern Phoebe (1); Blue Jay (1); Tree Swallow (35); Carolina Wren (1); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2); Northern Mockingbird (1); Yellow-rumped Warbler (Myrtle) (8); Northern Cardinal (2); Red-winged Blackbird (16); Boat-tailed Grackle (2); Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle (18); 23 species.

Total Species for the day: 90 species.

John Haynes with additional material by John Whittle

Bird Sightings – March 2018

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records for the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review records for Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-and brief location information if available – (number) – Observer(s). If more precise location information is needed, it can often be obtained by using the bird species map feature to find the sighting in eBird, opening the checklist, and using the map function to display the location as precisely as the observer provided.

Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Least Grebe	Mar 4-29	JEF-Cattail Marsh (up to 3) multiple obs
Swallow-tailed Kite	Mar 4	JEF-Wise Rd (1) Christine Sliva
Purple Gallinule	Mar 3	JAS-Martin Dies SP-Island Trl (1) Bob White
	Mar 23	JEF-Cattail Marsh (1) HS
Crested Caracara	Mar 13,28	HAI-Old Sour Lake Rd (1) JM continuing bird (rare in Hardin Co)
Gt. Crested Flycatcher	Mar 20	ANG-Boykin Spr entrance road (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Mar 3	JEF-TX87 bet. Sabine Pass and Sabine Woods (1) Jana Whittle
	Mar 10	JEF TX87 bet. Sabine Pass and Sabine Woods (1) Frank Izaguirre
Wood Thrush	Mar 14	JEF-SW (1) JHH
Prothonotary Warbler	Mar 13-15	JEF-SW(1) SH, MC, JHH et al
Swainson's Warbler	Mar 31	JEF-SW (1) JHH et al
Hooded Warbler	Mar 11	JEF-BTNP Edgewater (1) SH
	Mar 11-14	JEF-SW (1) MC, JHH
Y-r (Audubon's) Warbler	Mar 30-31	JEF-SW (1) SM et al
Yellow-thr. Warbler	Mar 3	JAS-Martin Dhes SP (1) Carl Poldrack
Black-thr. Green Warbler	Mar 13	JEF-SW SH, MC, JHH et al
Summer Tanager	Mar 7-15	JEF-SW (1) JHH et al (female)
Painted Bunting	Mar31	JEF-SabinePass Battleground (1) Bob & Bettina Arigoni
Dickcissel	Mar 4	JEF-Cattail Marsh parking lot (1) SM, TH, JHH

Nearby Counties

Cinnamon Teal	Mar 1-25	CAM-Cameron Prairie NWR, Pintail Loop (up to 5) multiple obs (continuing birds, m & f)
Long-tailed Duck	Mar 27-31	CAM-Davis Beach Rd (1) Jay Huner
	Mar 28	CAM-East Jetty Beach (1) Cameron Rutt, Melissa Roach, Tom Johnson
Wood Stork	Mar 17	HAS-Addicks Res (2) Steven Gast
	Mar 30	HAS-Bear Creek Pk (1) Theresa Wiens
Brown Booby	Mar 5	Galveston Channel at Bolivar Roads/Ferry (1) Mike Austin
	Mar 11	GAL-Texas City Dike (1) Tripp Davenport
	Mar 13	GAL-Rollover Pass (1) Dennis Shepler
	Mar 17	HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) Eric Faria
Glossy Ibis	Mar 10-18	CHA-Shoveler Pond (1) Daniel and Kevin Parsons et al (unconf)
	Mar 22	GAL-Sportsman's Rd (1) Nancy Thomas (unconf)
Purple Gallinule	Mar 17-25	CAM-Cameron Prairie NWR (1) Kirk Gardner et al
Swallow-tailed Kite	Mar 4	HAI-Russ Pittman Park (1) Sarah Flournoy
	Mar 12	CAM-Grand Chenier (2) Phillip Vasseur

	Mar 13	LIB-FM1008 nr CR2328 (40) Colette Micallef
	Mar 15	LIB-FM1008 Kenefick (2) Colette Micallef
	Mar 19	LIB-CR638 (2) Colette Micallef
Mississippi Kite	Mar 26	LIB-US90 Dayton(1) Colette Micallef
Sandhill Crane	Mar 1	LIB-Hwy146 just N of FM1413 (up to 350) Colette and Paul Micallef
	Mar 3	LIB-CR491 (50) Colette Micallef
	Mar 4	CHA-FM1663 (58) John and Nancy Thaden
	Mar 12	HAS-Rice Univ (3) Cin-Ty Lee
Upland Sandpiper	Mar 10	GAL-Galveston Is. SP (2) Ryan Shaw
Harris's Hawk	Mar 6-18	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) mult. obs (continuing bird);
Broad-winged Hawk	Mar 3	LIB-CR491 (1) Colette Micallef
	Mar 8	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Timothy White
	Mar 12	HAS-La Porte (1) Lynn Wright
Swainson's Hawk	Mar 21	HAS-N.Bayshore, La Porte (10) Lynn Wright
Red-tail (Harlan's) Hawk	Mar 26	CAM-Hwy 82 nr Sabine Lake (1) Cameron Rutt, Melissa Roach, Tom Johnson
Iceland Gull	Mar 3, 11	GAL-BF (1) Conor McMahon, Kris Petersenn
	Mar 31	HAS-Alexander Deussen Park (1) Joshua Jaeger
Iceland Gull (Thayer's)	Mar 22-23	GAL-BF (1) Terry Baldwin, JAW (2nd winter)
Franklin's Gull	Mar 11	GAL-Apfel Park/East Beach (1) John & Sue Ewan, Fran Holmes
Great Black-backed Gull	Mar 3-31	GAL-BF (1) C. McMahon, Michael Cooper et al (second cycle)
Black Tern	Mar 20	CAM-Price Lake Rd, Grand Chenier (1) Alan Moss
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Mar 13	GAL-9-mi. Rd (1) Jamie Schubert
Burrowing Owl	Mar 13	ANWR-exact location not given (1) John & Sue Ewan, Fran Holmes
Common Nighthawk	Mar 9	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee
Ladder-backed W'pecker	Mar 23	HAS-Settegast Rd (1) Richard Gibbons
Hairy Woodpecker	Mar 18	HAS-Edith Moore Sanctuary (2) Drew Dickert
Crested Caracara	Feb 28	LIB-CR491(2) Paul Micallef
	Mar 1	LIB-FM1413 (1) Colette and Paul Micallef (rare in Liberty Co.)
	Mar 16	LIB-TX146 2 mi N of Mont Belview (2) Colette Micallef
Prairie Falcon	Mar 10	CAM-Cameron Prairie NWR (1) Mary DeWire
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Mar 23	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Farokh Jamalyaria (heard)
Greater Pewee	Mar 9-12	HAS-Bear Creek Park, Bathroom #9 area (1) continuing bird
Acadian Flycatcher	Mar 30	HAS-Rice U (1) Cin-Ty Lee (call recorded)

Say's Phoebe	Mar 13	ANWR-exact location not given (1) John & Sue Ewan, Fran Holmes	Hooded Warbler	Mar 11-14	HAS-Houston, Wilchester Blvd (1) Sue Orwig
Great Kiskadee	Mar 3	CAM-Rockefeller SWR (1) David Booth	Magnolia Warbler	Mar 28 Mar 30	HAS- Katy (1) Dan Sherick GAL-Boy Scout Woods (1) Sumita Prasad
	Mar 4, 17	CHA-Tricities Beach Rd (2) Chuck Davis, Darrell Fagala	Y-r (Audubon's) Warbler	Mar 1	HAS-Towne Lake (1) Greg Page (continuing bird)
	Mar 10-16	CHA- Augusta St, Northpoint (2) Carl Poldrack (continuing birds)		Mar 30	HAS-Armand BayouNC (1) Chris Hammond, Stuart Nelson
	Mar 17-27	CAL-Sam Houston Jones SP (1) David Booth, Julian Grudens, Deanna Griggs	Black-thr. Green Warbler	Mar 16	HAS-Kleb Woods (2) Kendra Kocab and Megan Ahlgren
Gt. Crested Flycatcher	Mar 11	LIB-Big Thicket Loblolly (1) Greg Cook, Steve Glover		Mar 19	HAS-Wilchester Blvd (1) Sue Orwig
Tropical Kingbird	Mar 5	HAS-Longenbaugh Rd (1) John Vanderpoel	Western Tanager	Mar 5	GAL-Kempner Park (1) Kyle O'Haver (male)
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Mar 12	HAS-Paul Rushing Park (1) Nina Rach		Mar 17, 24	HAS-White Oak Park (1) Wendy Wright, Tom Helm (male)
Yellow-throated Vireo	Mar 1	LIB-Damuth Woods (2) Richard Gibbons (heard only)		Mar 26	HAS-Houston-Timberlake Village (1) Megan Ahlgren (female)
	Mar 11	CAM-Peveto Wood (1) Paul Conover	Indigo Bunting	Mar 13	CAM-Willow Island (1) Van Remsen et al
Red-eyed Vireo	Mar 12	HAS-Terry Hershey Pk (1) Sue Orwig	Painted Bunting	Mar 1-13	GAL-nr. Marina Blvd (1) Sally Pachulski (fem, continuing)
	Mar 21	HAS-Geo. Bush OPark (1) Janey Woodley		Mar 13	CHA-Texas Chenier Plain Visitor Center (1) Gene Campbell
	Mar 22	HAS-Jesse Jones Park Matthew Abernathy		Mar 24	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Judson Lassiter
Fish Crow	Mar 18	CHA-ANWR exact location not given (1) Wyatt Egelhoff	Yellow-headed Blackbird	Mar 10	GAL-nr. Marina Blvd (1) Sally Pachulski (male)
Cliff Swallow	Mar 15	CAL-Vinton Water Treatment Plant (restricted) (5) David Booth		Mar 25	CAM-Sweet Lake Land Co HQ on Chalkley Rd (restricted) (130) Paul Conover
Cave Swallow	Mar 15	CAL-Vinton Water Treatment Plant (restricted) (4) David Booth			
Bewick's Wren	Mar 16	HAS-Mabry Mill Park (1) J & C Miles			
Wood Thrush	Mar 22	LIB-Off FM1008~5 mi. N of Kenefick (1) Colette & Paul Micallef			
Louisiana Waterthrush	Mar 11	HAS-Wilchester Blvd (1) Sue Orwig			
Black-and-white Warbler	Mar 3	CAM-Peveto Woods (2) Marie Asscherick			
Prothonotary Warbler	Mar 13	CAM-Sabine NWR Walkway (1) Heidi Retherford			
	Mar 13-14	CAM-Willow Island (2) Van Remsen, Patsy and Tom Inglet			
Nashville Warbler	Mar 1	LIB-FM1008 5 mi N of Kenefick (1) Colette Paul Micallef (continuing bird)			

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; BF – Bolivar Flats; BTNP – Big Thicket National Preserve; CAL – Calcasieu Parish; CAM – Cameron Parish; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HAS – Harris County; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle; JM – John Mariani; LIB – Liberty County; MC – Michael Cooper; NEDR – Nederland; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Is, Port Arthur; RL – Randy Lewis; SAA – San Augustine Co.; SAB – Sabine County; SH – Sheila Hebert; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TH – Thomas Hellweg; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TXPT – Texas Point NWR; TYL – Tyler County; WJC – West Jefferson Co..

Commentary

A large section this month. This may be inevitable, as in almost all years, there are a few "early" migrants. Following most detailed checklists for the area and eBird, we determine whether a sighting is "rare" separately for each week in a month. Of course, this means that a bird that is rare one day may be only uncommon the next. This is particularly applicable to the fourth week (22nd to 31st) of March, when many birds are seen that would be classified as rare the preceding week. We generally use a combination of the *Birder's Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast* (9th Edition, May 2008) and the status set in eBird, and use the sightings listed in *Birdlife of Houston, Galveston and the Upper Texas Coast* by Eubanks, Behrstock and Weeks (2006) to help in difficult cases. In some counties and parishes, the eBird filters are set to rare based on the desire of the eBird reviewer for the area to require details for some species for which identification issues exist with a view to further refining knowledge of the occurrence and/or arrival and departure dates. Generally, in

our listings, we do not treat such species as "rare" for the week if the number of sightings (including historical sightings) with adequate details is sufficient.

March may be the month that will first show changes in migration dates. Most ornithologists believe that it is the lengths of night and day that act as the cue to initiate migration, but birds may also respond to changing

Normally, we are deliberately slow to embrace changes in normal dates and occurrences, but this month this year, we have done so for Swainson's Hawk. The species used to be rare in the fourth week in March. In 2017, there was a total of 17 reported in Calcasieu, Cameron, Chambers, Harris, Jefferson and Jefferson combined, and 13 in 2016. This year, the total was in excess of 43. This does include 17 reported from La Porte, a very favorable place to monitor spring hawk migration, and as shown above, there were 10 more as early as March 21, in the third week. We have not individually listed Swainson's Hawks reported this year in the fourth week!

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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 forms of 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.

Detailed information/maps on birding sites in Texas is available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirds.org/birdingLocations.php>. This leads you to the maps of the various eBird hotspots. You can also subscribe (free) on eBird for email alerts for all rare birds reported in a specific county.