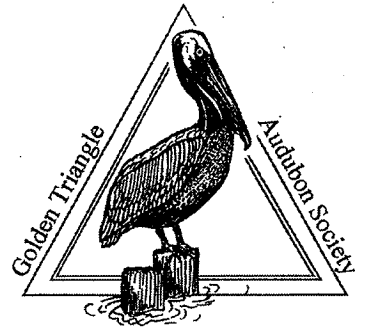


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 25 No. 3

March 2019

Membership Meeting
Thursday March 21, 2019 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

DIY Costa Rica

Michael Cooper, Gerald Duhon and Steve Mayes

A birders first view of Fruit Loop Toucans (well, technically, Keel-billed) playing follow-the-leader, landing in open view and commencing to joust one another with those impossibly swollen, day-glow colored bills is likely not to be their last. There's just something magnetic about the American Tropics. Of all locations within, say, six hours flight time from Houston it's hard to top Costa Rica for a birding getaway. A collection of 921 species in an area smaller than West Virginia make the country a birders paradise. Huge swaths of land, much of it primary cloud and rain forest, set aside in national parks and other protected areas means easy, comfortable access to those birds. "CR" has been catering to birders for decades, and its system of ecolodges with feeders and other bird friendly habitat is probably preeminent among other similar destinations. For example, we explored hotel grounds with bird lists of 512, 228 and 337 — our temporary digs in the middle of San Jose boasted 153. It really doesn't get much better than that! Many will opt for a fully structured visit organized by one of the major tour groups, and others will go the opposite direction staying in hostels or even camping, employing public transportation to get around. Between these two extremes there is a "do it yourself option" where one gives up nothing to a organized tour. By acting as one's own "general contractor" the savings can be substantial, the agenda flexible, site visits customizable even on the fly, and everyone gets a view of the bird. Come along with Steve, Michael and Gerald as they retrace their trek to perhaps the most popular neotropical birding location, Costa Rica, and discuss how to assemble the elements of such an "avication" (Hint: there's really just one step). Lots of bird photos of course!

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: GTAS 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 gtaudubon@aol.com.*

Saturday March 16, 2019. Sabine Woods Work Day Sabine Woods Work Day. We plan to get the Sabine Woods Sanctuary ready for spring migration. Mostly, it will be trail maintenance both inside and outside the woods. We will certainly be able to put riding mowers (the heavier duty the better) to good use, and we will probably need push mowers to trim round the trees we have planted in the last few years, and parts of the trails where riding mowers are too big. As always, we will need loppers to trim small branches to keep the trails open. We have a few hand tools, but it will help if you bring any that you have. You will probably want to bring insect repellent, and you may want to bring sunscreen.

Sabine Woods is 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on the north side of Highway 87. We will be there from about 7:30 a.m. but you will be welcome if you arrive somewhat later. We normally work until noon or a little after, and we will provide drinks and lunch. We plan another Work Day for mid-May. Call 722-4193 with any questions.

Thursday March 21, 2019. Membership Meeting. Michael Cooper, Gerald Duhon and Steve Mayes on Birds of Costa Rica. See page 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 through the nice new arch. 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 through the nice new arch.

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

Refreshments

We thank all those who brought refreshments over the last few meetings. We will be looking for offers to provide refreshments for all the spring meetings.

Saturday March 23. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. This trip will occur as spring shorebird migration is getting well under way, but while the wintering birds are mostly still present. Bolivar Flats is an internationally important shore-bird location. We know that a lot of birders are intimidated by shorebirds, but they are not nearly as difficult to identify as is sometimes alleged! This trip offers an opportunity to compare many of the "true" shorebirds with lots of help in identifying them.

Meet at the vehicle barrier at 8:30 a.m. From Winnie, take TX 124 south to High Island. At the shoreline, turn



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right (west) on TX 87 and proceed through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you reach the intersection where Loop 108 turns right (north). Turn left (the opposite way to Loop 108) along Rettilon Road. At the beach, if conditions permit, turn right (west) about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. Follow recent tire tracks, and be careful to avoid any cuts that may have developed. It takes at least one and a half hours to drive from the Golden Triangle. We will leave the vehicle barrier at about 8:45 a.m., although the group will be visually obvious on the flats should you be a few minutes late.

The Flats in winter always have lots of plovers, sandpipers and other wading species. A large flock of American Avocets winters there.

Some walking is necessary on this field trip. If the tide is a long way out, the leaders may walk up to a mile from the vehicle barrier, but you can turnaround at any point. Depending on the mud flat conditions, we may visit to the North Jetty to view the birds from that side.

We normally stop at Fort Travis Park to eat lunch and use the facilities. We may stop at Rollover Pass and often stop at High Island on the way back to check in High Island for any "very early" Neotropic songbird migrants. Bring drinks and lunch (or buy locally, but that is not particularly easy), sunscreen and insect repellent.

Important Note: Galveston County operates a parking permit program on the Bolivar Peninsula. If you park on most parts of the beach, including the

part next to the Flats, you must have a parking permit on your windshield. The fee for the permit is \$10.00 a year and permits are obtainable from most merchants on the Bolivar Peninsula including the Big Store, which opens at 7:00 a.m. Currently, the permit also entitles you to park at Rollover Pass.

Thursday April 18, 2019.

Membership Meeting. Purple Martins. Jace Stansbury. Full details in future issue.

Saturday April 20, 2019. 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. Full details in next issue.

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues effective with 2019 dues are \$20 per year. We are now accepting 2019 dues. 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. All dues already paid in advance for 2019 will be honored. For new members joining National Audubon on line and selecting our Chapter code (W25), 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 (NAS) 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 also welcome NAS members in other nearby counties although their membership in NAS does not automatically bring them to our attention.

We would very much encourage you receive the Brown Pelican electronically. To start that, simply send an email to gtaudubon@aol.com from the address you want us to use. Please include your full name if it is not contained within your email address.

Wetlands Education Center at Cattail Marsh

The Wetlands Education Center at Cattail Marsh will be open from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. each Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Also, each Tuesday the Center will be open from 7:00 a.m. (with coffee available!) for those who may want to do some morning birding.

Warblers of Sabine Woods

(This article is based on the talk given at the February Meeting)

The Warblers that migrate through Sabine Woods include both those that cross the 600 miles or so of the Gulf of Mexico from the Yucatan peninsula – trans-Gulf migrants – and those that work their way round the lower Texas coast – circum-Gulf migrants. The circum-Gulf migrants tend to head north before reaching our area, and so are relatively rare in spring migration. Most are trans-Gulf migrants, and look for neutral or tailwinds, but they do not know what the weather will be as

they progress over the Gulf farther and farther away from land. It is believed that most warblers and other migrants take their clue as to when to migrate from the length of day and night, the so called photoperiod. When the migration routes evolved, as the last ice age receded, the land went out to where the 400 foot depth is nowadays, and slowly the distance across the Gulf increased, and the distance the birds have to fly increased.

John Haynes

It should be noted that the migrant warblers typically spend only about one quarter of their lives on breeding territory, with another quarter in spring and fall migration, leaving half the year in their wintering grounds. So conditions on the wintering grounds may be the most important.

Sabine Woods is well situated. A large percentage of the migrant warblers are headed towards the eastern parts of the northern tier of the United States and Canada. Probably the birds leaving the Yucatan aim for central or eastern Louisiana or even further east. However, the prevailing winds across the Gulf have an eastern component, and may birds end up hitting the coast west of Louisiana. However, there are hazards. When the birds leave the Yucatan, they have no way of knowing what the weather -- winds and precipitation -- exists along the northern Gulf. If the birds are flying at an average 30 miles per hour and encounter headwinds of 20 miles per hour, they will only be making 10 miles an hour across the water. They may also encounter precipitation which further hinders their progress. So the best days for the birders along the coast may be the worst for the birds. But if the birds make it, and the inclement weather continues, they may well stay around for a day or two or occasionally longer awaiting better weather. Wet "northers" are especially likely to produce good birding. They will always stop at least briefly to feed, but the driving force to reach the breeding grounds and occupy the best breeding territories is strong. The vegetation at Sabine Woods is good, has natural water features and six drips that have been created to help the birds.

The early migrants are those breeding not far north. The weather is warmer there earlier in the spring than further north. Species that breed in the far north are likely to be late migrants, because they do not want to reach the breeding grounds before the food supplies have become available,

There are 39 species of warbler that are seen at Sabine Woods (now that Yellow-breasted Chat is no longer classified as a warbler. We might regain 40 species if we can find a Tropical Parula, a species that has been seen in nearby Louisiana. Of the 39 species, there are 13 species that nest not far from Sabine Woods, but only one that nests in Sabine Woods itself. They are presented in approximately the chronological order of their passage at Sabine Woods. All are trans-Gulf migrants unless otherwise stated. Although a few comments about fall migration patterns are included, the focus is on spring migration.

Permanent Residents

The **Common Yellowthroat** nests in Sabine Woods, and can be seen all year round. The permanent population is augmented by migrants during migration periods. These birds often feed in the tree tops, unlike the residents, which usually stay very low.

Wintering Species

Yellow-rumped Warblers are very common from mid-October or after the first strong cold front if later, and are generally gone by late April, before they have molted into

their breeding plumage.

Orange-crowned Warblers are resident all winter from October to end of March, rarely to early or mid-April with one outlying May record.

Pine Warblers are seen at Sabine Woods in the early winter as overshoots after strong cold front, but are common further north, and nest in Jefferson County. They are often detected by their characteristic song.

The **Palm Warbler** is another warbler seen in winter. Yellow under the tail is one of the markings of the western race this bird. The eastern race has much more extensive yellow. Typically they arrive in mid-October and stay until mid-April. The numbers can be augmented in by additional birds during migration, but most are western race birds. These birds will often forage much higher than wintering birds.

Another wintering warbler is the **Wilson's Warbler**, but numbers are very low most years. As circum-Gulf migrants, some springs pass and we do not see any at Sabine Woods but they are somewhat easier to see in the fall.

Spring Migrants

As early as about February 25, we could start seeing **Louisiana Waterthrushes** at Sabine Woods. They are "near nesters," although probably not in Jefferson County. They like running water and walk on the edge of ponds. Uncommon, with small numbers seen every year, the average first arrival is March 2. The highest known count in one day is 14.

Black and White Warblers are one of the warblers most likely to stay during the winter, but in very low numbers. They start showing up as migrants in March with March 2 the average date. They have huge breeding range and spring migrants can be seen all the way to May. Early migrants nest not far away, later migrants much further north. Can be numerous - one day there were 50 of them in the Woods.

Northern Parulas arrive around March 4, perhaps even late February some years. They have a wide migration window. They are common to abundant, and are near nesters, preferring Spanish moss.

Another early migrant, the **Yellow-throated Warbler** arrives around March 9 and can be seen through the third week in April. Uncommon to common, they typically feed high up, but can come down low on occasion.

The **Hooded Warbler** is the single most abundant warbler in the area. They start coming through the woods around March 10 and continue until well into May. Probably a few nest in Jefferson County, many just a little further north. The high count at Sabine Woods for one day exceeds 100.

The **Black-throated Green Warbler** starts coming through, around March 8 although not common until later, and migration extends through April. They can be present in large numbers -- 50 in one day in late April once.

The **Prothonotary Warbler** was initially known as the of swamp lands. They are near nesters, some nesting in Jefferson County including the wetlands at Cattail Marsh. Fairly common, we see them from as early as March 10 until the end of April.

Worm-eating Warblers start coming through March 25 and continue to the first week May. They are near nesters, but difficult to find on the breeding grounds. Fairly common, 30 or more in one day have been recorded.

The **Prairie Warbler** is a near nesting bird, but we do not get many at Sabine Woods. As "Florida Straits" migrants, they come up through Florida and head west to the area. There are records between March 26 and April 21. They are rare, even in the fall, and there are two or more records of wintering.

Kentucky Warblers nest near the area, not quite in Jefferson County but just above. Fairly common, but difficult to locate, typically on or near the ground, they pass through starting March 28 and continue through the second week of May. In one day, an April 9, there were 24 in Sabine Woods.

Swainson's Warblers used to be hard to find. The habitat has changed and we seem to be seeing more of them. Sabine Woods has more open areas under trees. Swainson's are ground birds exclusively, and quiver their tail while they feed, and tend to stay in one area for the duration of their stopover. Last year we had at least 19 in one day, and ten per day for four or five consecutive days. Passage starts around March 30 on average and can be seen through the end of April. They are near nesters.

Blue-winged Warblers migrate through from about April 1 for four-five weeks. Fairly common, with up to 20 being seen on a good day.

The **Tennessee Warbler** is a common to abundant migrant, with 30-40/day, often in the tree tops, from April 1 on average (have been seen in 3rd and 4th week of March) through mid-May or later.

Nashville Warbler. A circum Gulf migrant and therefore not common in spring, perhaps 1-2 Nashville Warblers are seen each spring, but fairly common in fall (20+ in a day). Spring records from about April 2 to third week of April.

Northern Waterthrush. A fairly common migrant typically seen from about April 5 through May 17, with 20 once on a day in late April. The species doesn't nest anywhere near the area.

Cerulean Warbler. Becoming rare; Ceruleans are seen every year but never in large numbers, with a highest day count of eight. The species is uncommon in spring, passing through between April 5 and 30, but decidedly rare in fall migration.

The **Yellow Warbler** can be abundant, passing through from April 6 to May 8 or later in spring. They have the fastest "turnaround" of any warbler species, the first fall

migrants coming only about seven weeks after the last spring migrant. They have an extensive breeding range, but not anywhere in Texas.

The **Ovenbird**, a ground dwelling warbler, has been more numerous in recent years, passing through between April 6 and the first week in May. A conservative count in excess of 44 was recorded on a recent April 29.

The **American Redstart** is a very conspicuous migrant from April 18 through May 19, and quite numerous to abundant. The species is a relatively near nester, but surprisingly difficult to find on the breeding grounds.

Blackburnian Warblers are uncommon at best from April 8 through about April 17. The highest day count known is 20, but usually significantly less. The species tends to forage in the tree tops.

The **Chestnut-sided Warbler** passes through from about April 12 through as late as May 16, with 30+ in a day not uncommon.

The **Blackpoll Warbler** has a relatively easterly spring migration route, and is uncommon in Sabine Woods in the spring as a result. The species has been demonstrated mostly to fly non-stop from New England to South America (1,700 miles) in the fall, taking between 50 and 72 hours, and so is exceedingly rare in the fall.

The **Golden-winged Warbler** is an uncommon to rare and possibly declining species that passes through between about April 15 and May 11. The highest count is approximately 10 in a day.

The **Cape May Warbler** is another rare (for Sabine Woods) migrant that mostly passes well east of the area. It is a nectar feeding species for part of the year, and one found a tree with Sapsucker holes in Sabine Woods and returned every 20 minutes for five days.

Black-throated Blue Warblers, although common along the US east coast, are highly unusual migrants in April and May.

The **Magnolia Warbler** is an abundant later migrant, passing through Sabine Woods from about-May19 for about 30 to 40 days, with 50 in a day not uncommon.

Another circum-Gulf migrant, the **Canada Warbler** is uncommon to rare in spring between April 19 and May 17, but 20 on good days is common in the fall.

The **Bay-breasted Warbler** is often present in significant numbers for only a few days between about April 21 and May 15, but often at least 20 on each of those days. Apart from an unusual 2018, it is rare to very rare in the fall.

The **Mourning Warbler** is another late season circum-Gulf migrant that is rare to very rare in the spring, but reasonably common in September. The spring sightings range from May 3 to 7 and much later, with one outlying record of April 25.

Field Trip to Sheldon Lake – 16 February 2019

There is always a worry that when you schedule a field trip a little farther away than normal that few birders will show up. With many Golden Triangle birders not very familiar with the February field trip destination of Sheldon Lake State Park, perhaps no one would want to come. And with the weather forecasters miscalculating the arrival time of a cold front, who could blame them? Luckily, Golden Triangle birders are built of sterner stuff and nearly a dozen turned out for a colder than expected day of birding!

Starting with a little birding from the parking lot area, the group quickly picked up flyby Snowy Egrets and a distant Red-tailed Hawk. A White-eyed Vireo called from nearby as did American Crow. As the group headed into the park, more birds became obvious. An Anhinga perched very cooperatively near the road for the passing group. A Northern Flicker was heard along with the first of several Carolina Wrens. A brief stop at a wet area revealed Swamp Sparrow and a heard-only Common Yellowthroat. Another stop at a very likely looking field full of bluestem grass failed to produce any LeConte's Sparrows despite much pishing and looking. A flock of eight Mallards gave the group a good look before bolting their small pond and flying away. All of these birds were seen along the drive through the restored prairie area of the park, unfortunately recently burned. This is necessary to keep a healthy grassland but not very conducive to good birding! With fewer sparrows than hoped for on the drive in, the group headed into the wooded area of the park.

One of the great things about Sheldon is the diversity of habitat available in the park. The prairie area is good for sparrows, raptors and waterfowl. The wooded areas are good for wintering songbirds and there is even a tower for observing the waterfowl on the lake. Heading on the trails through the woodlands, a few birds were immediately obvious. Northern Cardinals were easily seen while White-throated Sparrows were more heard than seen. Northern Mockingbirds tried to defend their berry patches from invaders but were often overwhelmed! The main culprits were hordes of Cedar Waxwings. They were moving everywhere, perched in the tops of trees, raiding privet and yaupon bushes and constantly giving their high-pitched calls, there were hundreds of them! American Robins were here and there among the waxwings also eating the berries but were vastly outnumbered. A Brown Thrasher was briefly glimpsed while a few Gray Catbirds were slightly more cooperative.

A special bird for the day was one that has been present in the park for some time – a Great Kiskadee! This large, colorful tropical flycatcher ranges up the Texas coast in small numbers and even into Louisiana on occasion. Luckily, the Kiskadee is a very vocal species and is usually heard giving its loud calls long before they are seen. The group heard the Kiskadee calling almost as soon as they entered the main part of the park. The bird was soon tracked down and gave excellent, if distant looks.

The trails through the trees eventually wound their way to the observation tower. The tower (featuring a working

elevator) looks out over the prairie and over Lake Sheldon. Normally this would provide great looks at waterfowl and raptors over the prairie and plenty more on the lake. The windy, cold conditions combined with the recent fires left the prairie section largely empty of birds and a kayak fishing tournament on the lake kept the birds there on the move. Still, the birders did manage some good sightings from the tower. The most obvious was the mass of American Coots in one section of the lake. Mixed among the Coots were some Ruddy Ducks and Lesser Scaup. Scope searching of the lake produced more groups of Scaup and a few Pied-billed Grebes. One pair of American Wigeon was spotted and several Anhingas were perched in the tops of the cypress trees in the lake. At least four Ospreys were present with some perched in trees and others cruising over the lake in search of a meal. Flocks of Tree Swallows zipped overhead.

Heading back out to the main part of the park, Sheldon revealed a few more good sightings. A male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker sampled the nearby trees. A last nice sighting (depending on your feelings about legless reptiles) was a young, curled up Copperhead snake lying camouflaged amongst the plant debris in a flowerbed. Probably not something that the park personnel would have been happy about but the birders enjoyed it! A close look at a beautiful little snake like this is not something that happens every day and, despite the cool weather that likely had the snake very inactive, the birders never got too close to it. It is a venomous snake and must be treated with respect.

Wrapping up the field trip, some birders headed for Anahuac NWR while others headed for nearby Eisenhower Park. More nice birds were seen and a good day was had by all. Perhaps a bit colder than expected and at only a little over an hour from the Golden Triangle (at least when I-10 is functional), it provides a nice change of pace from the local birding. A nice cure for the February doldrums!

The following species were recorded by the trip leaders:

American Wigeon (2); Mallard (8); Lesser Scaup (35); Ruddy Duck (10); Pied-billed Grebe (6); Mourning Dove (3); American Coot (300); Killdeer (1); Anhinga (1); Neotropic Cormorant (15); Double-crested Cormorant (20); Great Blue Heron (3); Great Egret (7); Snowy Egret (12); Tricolored Heron (1); White-faced Ibis (1); Turkey Vulture (6); Osprey (4); Red-tailed Hawk (1); Belted Kingfisher (1); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (2); Red-bellied Woodpecker (1); Downy Woodpecker (1); Northern Flicker (1); American Kestrel (1); Eastern Phoebe (3); Great Kiskadee (1); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue Jay (6); American Crow (4); Tree Swallow (50); Carolina Chickadee (2); House Wren (3); Carolina Wren (3); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (5); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (6); Hermit Thrush (1); American Robin (50); Gray Catbird (4); Brown Thrasher (1); Northern Mockingbird (5); European Starling (1); American Pipit (1); Cedar Waxwing (300); American Goldfinch (1); White-throated Sparrow (3); Savannah Sparrow (5); Swamp Sparrow (5); Red-winged Blackbird (15); Great-tailed Grackle (1); Orange-crowned Warbler (2); Common Yellowthroat (1); Pine Warbler (2); Yellow-rumped Warbler (40); Northern Cardinal (10).

Steve Mayes

Bird Sightings – March 2019

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)

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------|---|
| Chuck-will's-Widow | Feb 2 | JEF-SW (1) SM, MC, JHH |
| Pectoral Sandpiper | Feb 16 | JEF-FM1406 and Willis Rd (1) Cynthia Hudson and Robert Zirl |
| Solitary Sandpiper | Feb 9 | JEF-FM1406 and Willis Rd (1) Bonnie McKenzie, Laura Wilson |
| Wood Stork | Feb 15 | JEF-TP (1) HS |
| | Feb 24 | JEF-SW (3) SH |
| Crested Caracara | Feb 16 | HAI-Old Sour Lake Rd (10) Cynthia Hudson and Robert Zirl |
| Barn Swallow | Feb 17 | TYL-CR4777 (1) Lisa Appelbaum |
| Summer Tanager | Feb 25 | TYL-CR4777 (1) Lisa Appelbaum |
| Black-headed Grosbeak | Feb 2-17 | JEF-Beaumont-Spurlock Rd (1 fem) Shannon Husband, mult obs |

Nearby Counties

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| Cackling Goose | Feb 1 | CAM-Lacassine NER Pool unit (4) William Matthews |
| American Black Duck | Feb 10 | CHA-ANWR, exact location not spec (2) Greg Jackson; no photos |
| | Feb 17 | CHA-ANWR exact location not spec (1) Carl Poldrack (photos too distant to confirm) |
| White-winged Scoter | Feb 9 | CAM-Rockefeller Refuge (1) Kevin Ringelman |
| Black Scoter | Feb 2, 15 | CAM-Peveto Woods (2) Pullen Watkins, Joan Garvey |
| Black Rail | Feb 9 | CAM-LA 82 Just W of Holly Beach (1) John Ball |
| Pectoral Sandpiper | Feb 25 | CAL-Fabacher Rd (1) Russ Ruffing |
| Harris's Hawk | Feb 16 | HAS-Cypress area (10) John Cocanower |
| Chuck-will's-widow | Feb 2 | CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Teresa Connell |
| Franklin's Gull | Feb 9 | GAL-Bob's Road (4) Laura Wilson, Bonnie McKenzie |
| Swallow-tailed Kite | Feb 9 | GAL_Bolivar Ferry (1) Jim Campbell |
| | Feb 18 | HAS-Bunker Hill area (1) Kathryn Dull |
| Least Flycatcher | Feb 2 | CAM-Creole, Trosclair Rd (1) Paul Conover |
| | Feb 10 | CAL-Fabacher Rd (1) John O'Brien |
| Say's Phoebe | Feb 3-17 | CAM-Sweet Lake Land Co HQ (1) Paul Conover, Phillip Wallace, mult obs |
| | Feb 9-12 | HAS-El Franco Lee Park area (1) Marie Asscherick, mult obs |
| Ash-throated Flycatcher | Feb 17 | CAL-Cox Rd (2) Paul Conover, Robt Dobbs |

Commentary. We are back to a more normal volume of rarities this month! However, we only achieved that by again omitting the numerous Purple Finch sightings and deciding that the point has been reached where Glossy Ibis no longer justifies listing every sighting. Note also the nice variety of warblers that do not normally winter that have been seen. It is interesting to note that an expansion of the wintering range of Purple Finch may be occurring. An examination of eBird records shows that there were many more sightings in winter 2017/18 than in winter 2016/17, although this was more pronounced a little west of the Golden Triangle. Winter 2018/19 has brought a very notable increase over 2017/18, and this is apparent along the entire upper Texas and Louisiana coastal areas east to the Florida panhandle.

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--|
| Gt Crested Flycatcher | Feb 10 | CHA-ANWR-Jackson Woodlot (1) Greg Jackson |
| Fork-tailed Flycatcher | Feb 2-3 | CAL-LA108 nr Fabacher Rd (1) Jack Nadon, Timothy White |
| N. Rough-wing. Swallow | Feb 25 | CAL-Ged Lake (1) Russ Ruffing |
| Barn Swallow | Feb 9 | GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Dominic LeCroisette |
| Cliff Swallow | Feb 23 | GAL-Galv Is SP (1) Kyle O'Haver |
| Spotted Towhee | Feb 2 | CAM-Grand Chenier (1) Don Weinell |
| Bullock's Oriole | Feb 6 | HAS-Woodland Hts. Area (1) Mary Goldsby |
| Black-and-white Warbler | Feb 3 | CAM-Oak Grove (1) Van Remsen |
| | Feb 16 | CAM-Willow Is (1) Cathy and Philip DiSalvo, Joan Garvey |
| Tennessee Warbler | Feb 6 | HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Bayard Nicklow (1) |
| Nashville Warbler | Feb 1-17 | LIB-west of FM1008, 6 mi N of Kenefick (1) Colette&Paul Micallef |
| | Feb 22 | HAS-Little Cedar Bayou Pk (1) Dale Wolck |
| American Redstart | Feb 10 | CAM-Creole (1) Paul Conover |
| Northern Parula | Feb 6 | HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Bayard Nicklow |
| | Feb 10 | CAM-Little Chenier Rd (1) Paul Conover |
| | Feb 16 | CAM-Willow Is (1) Cathy and Philip DiSalvo, Joan Garvey |
| Yellow Warbler | Feb 10 | CAM-Little Chenier Rd (1) Paul Conover |
| Yellow-throated Warbler | Feb 10 | CAM-Creole (1) Paul Conover |
| Black-thr. Green Warbler | Feb 3 | CAM-Oak Grove Sanct (1) Van Remsen |
| | Feb 15 | HAS-Memorial City area (1) Sue Orwig |
| | Feb 16 | HAS-FM1960 near Willowbrook (1) Mary Anne Vincent |
| Painted Bunting | Feb 15 | CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Cathy and Philip DiSalvo, Joan Garvey |

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; 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.

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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.