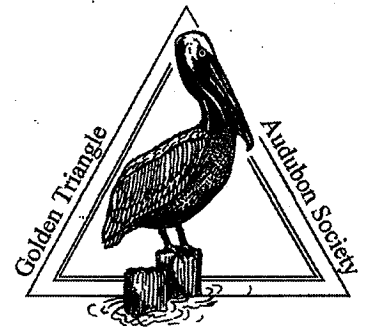


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 25 No. 10

October 2019

Membership Meeting

**Thursday, October 17, 2019, 7:00 PM
Hillcrest Baptist Church
3324 Park Drive, Nederland, Texas**

The Winter Hummingbirds of Southeast Texas Harlan Stewart and Jana Whittle

As many of you know, small numbers of mainly "western" hummingbirds winter in Southeast Texas and along the northern Gulf Coast. Several of our members have been watching and feeding these winter hummingbirds for several years now. We will discuss the species which may be seen, how to identify them, winter flowering plants that can attract and support them, and other aspects of this topic. Directions to the meeting location are below.

We thank the Port Arthur Convention and Visitors Bureau for providing all the refreshments including sandwiches, chips and drinks for this meeting. Doors will be open at 6:00 p.m.

Directions to Hillcrest Baptist Church, our meeting location this month.

From Beaumont and the north

Take US69/96/287 south out of Beaumont to the FM365 exit, keeping left on the feeder road. Take the turnaround lane under the freeway and head back north moving to the right hand lane of the feeder road. In about 1500 feet (1/4 mile), turn right on Park Avenue (just before Carmela's restaurant) and proceed 1200 feet (2/10 mile) to the church parking lot on the left, opposite the Babe Ruth Ball Park. Enter the Gathering Hall through the door on the circular drive on Park Avenue.

From the south

Leave northbound US69/96/287 at the FM365 exit, moving to the right lane and proceeding straight across FM365. Turn right on Park Avenue and follow the remainder of the directions above.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 25, No. 10 October 2019
Issue number 265

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 October 5, 2019. Sabine Woods Work Day. 7:30 a.m. to noon. Contact John Whittle (409-722-4193 or gtaudubon@aol.com) to offer to help or for more details.

Thursday October 17 2019. Membership Meeting. See page 1.

Saturday October 19, 2019. Field Trip to Sabine Woods. Leader Steve Mayes. Meet at Sabine Woods, which is 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on the north side of Highway 87 at 7:30 a.m. Meet at Sabine Woods, which is 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on the north side of Highway 87 at 7:30 a.m. or join the trip in progress in the woods later. Waterproof footwear will probably be a good idea, especially if it is at all wet from previous rain or just heavy early morning dew. Bring mosquito repellent just in case. There are few services available on weekends in Sabine Pass. Bring lunch and drinks.

October 19 is towards the end of fall passerine migration, but often brings a good variety of birds. A cold front may drive down the last of the warblers and the first big push of wintering birds. Some of our winter birds may be arriving, and often the woodland species that winter in the Big Thicket overshoot a little at first. In past years, this has included Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper. There are always interesting birds at Sabine Woods!

The trails are clear and mostly reasonably wide, and, although some care is needed to avoid uneven ground, birding Sabine Woods is relatively easy. There are a number of strategically located benches if you need to rest for a time.

Thursday November 21, 2019. Annual Meeting and Pot-luck Dinner. Bring your favorite bird photos. Full details in next month's issue.

Saturday November 23, 2019. Field Trip to West Jefferson County. In recent years, this has been one of our most successful field trips. The area is well known for its birds of prey, which in past years have included Bald and Golden Eagles, Crested Caracaras and White-tailed Hawks in addition to the more "expected" Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, and American Kestrels. In some years we have seen White-tailed Kites and Merlins. The area suffered extensive flooding during Imelda, so there may be abnormalities in bird populations this year.

The area is well known as the wintering ground of what has become a large (about 1,000 strong) flock of Sandhill Cranes and is also one of the best places to see sparrows in the area. In wet years, there can be lots of waterfowl including geese and many duck species as well as ibis and other waterbirds. Five years ago's trip found a Mountain Bluebird, which staying all winter.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of FM365 and Johnson Road (on the "north/west" side of Johnson Road at that intersection). From the intersection of Interstate 10 and FM365 in Fannett, proceed along FM365 (towards Nome) for about six miles. Shortly after you emerge out of the woodlands, South China Road goes to the right (east then north) and immediately afterwards, on the left, is Johnson Road. There is a green G and A Turf Farm sign on Johnson Road at the intersection. Contact Steve Mayes, gtaudubon@aol.com for further information.



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

**Golden Triangle Audubon Society
Annual Meeting
Hillcrest Baptist Church
3324 Park Drive, Nederland, TX
Thursday November 21, 2019
7:00 p.m.**

The annual meeting of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society will be held on Thursday November 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Gathering Hall of Hillcrest Baptist Church, 3324 Park Avenue, Nederland, Texas. At this meeting we will hold elections for all officer positions, the President for a two year term 2020-2021, and all other officer and board member positions for a one year term, calendar year 2020.

The chair of the Nominating Committee, outgoing President Dana Nelson, will welcome any suggestions for officers and board members, or you may submit written nominations in advance or make them orally at the meeting. Nominations must be made and seconded by members in good standing, and must be accompanied by evidence from the nominee that the nominee is willing to serve, if elected.

John A. Whittle, Secretary
PO Box 1292
Nederland, Texas 77627
gtaudubon@aol.com

Tropical Storm Imelda

As all local members will know, Tropical Storm Imelda hit Southeast Texas on Thursday September 17. As a result, we had to cancel our September meeting, and also the Migration Count scheduled for Saturday September 19. The program on Northern Minnesota will be rescheduled for early next year.

Our normal meeting place, the Garden Center in Tyrrell Park was flooded with an estimated 16 inches of water in the building. Remediation and restoration work was commenced very quickly, but is not expected to be completed in time for our October and November membership meetings. We are grateful that we have been able to obtain the use of the Gathering Hall at the Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland for these two meetings. This hall has more than adequate capacity, adequate parking, and all the facilities that we normally have in the Garden Center.

Our September field trip was scheduled for the Saturday of the following week (September 28), hoping to catch more of the peak of Broad-winged Hawk migration. The road flooding had drained off and we were able to conduct this field trip as scheduled.

In Sabine Woods, the only lasting effect was the loss of one fairly large oak tree, which exhibited signs of substantial damage in Hurricane Ike in 2008, and one smaller hackberry.

Cattail Marsh Bird Counts -- September 2019

Here are the results of the Cattail Marsh Bird counts in September. The counts on September 15 and 17 were both rained out. This has been a strange fall, and Tropical Storm Imelda caused the water levels in Cattail Marsh to rise. Although there is not much open water pending work on the water hyacinth, Blue-winged Teal arrived on schedule. At least one of our Bald Eagles has been seen over the marsh.

Species/September	3	5	10	12	24	26
Blk-bell. Whistling-Duck	9	12	45	26	35	
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	2	1	4	2	22	2
Mottled Duck						1
Wood Duck	4	3		12		
Blue-winged Teal		2	8	50	42	250
Pied-billed Grebe			1	1		
Mourning Dove	5	2			1	
Chimney Swift			4			
Hummingbird species	1		2			
Rail species	1	1				
Common Gallinule	12	1	16	41	21	5
American Coot			1	3		
Purple Gallinule	1			6	3	
Black-necked Stilt	3	4	2	6		1
Herring Gull			2			
Laughing Gull	156	16	118	51	256	43
Anhinga	2	3	4	40	5	
Neotropic Cormorant	9	20		4	43	11
Great Blue Heron	2	3	1	1		2
Great Egret	3	3	9	9	5	2
Snowy Egret	18	9	3	8	13	20
Little Blue Heron	5	6	3	1	1	7
Tricolored Heron	4	6	4	4	3	5
Cattle Egret	7	40	3	9	1	11
Green Heron		1	1			1

Species/September	3	5	10	12	24	26
Yellow-cr. Night-Heron		2				
White Ibis	31	8	69	5	1	1
White-faced Ibis					36	
Dark Ibis	15	9	65	25		6
Roseate Spoonbill	1	1		18	3	2
Black Vulture	13	16	12	58	35	6
Turkey Vulture	4	23	17	6	4	4
Mississippi Kite	1					1
Bald Eagle					(1)	1
Cooper's Hawk			1		1	1
Broad-winged Hawk				1	2	5
Unidentified hawk		7				
Eastern Kingbird		1				
Crested Caracara	1					
Fish Crow	1		15	3	6	
Barn Swallow	1	1	1			
Swallow species	1	6	14	8	5	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher						1
Red-winged Blackbird	3	3	1	1	4	7
Common Yellowthroat						1
Common Grackle						2
Boat-tailed Grackle		1	1	7	4	3
Great-tailed Grackle		1	1	1		
Grackle species		1	5	5		

North America has lost more than one in four birds in the last 50 years, New Study Says

For the first time, researchers have estimated the volume of total avian loss in the Western Hemisphere—and it's not just threatened species that are declining. Many backyard favorites are also losing ground.

By Jillian Mock

From the Audubon Website, September 19, 2019

Almost anywhere you go, you can find birds. They scurry through the waves on every beach, sing as they wing over every prairie, raise chicks in nests in every wood, and visit every backyard. But while birds remain everywhere, people are actually seeing far fewer of them than just 50 years ago, according to a new study. It estimates that North America is home to nearly three billion fewer birds today compared to 1970—that's more than 1 in 4 birds that have disappeared from the landscape in a mere half a century.

"This was an astounding result, even to us," says lead author and Cornell Lab of Ornithology conservation scientist Ken Rosenberg.

The study, published today in the journal *Science*, marks the first time experts have tried to estimate sheer numbers of avian losses in the Western Hemisphere. Typically, conservation studies focus on a specific species, habitat, region, or type of threat. By taking a higher-level view, the study highlights that many birds we still consider common, ranging from Baltimore Orioles to Dark-eyed Juncos to Barn Swallows, are actually posting heavy population losses over time.

Altogether, the research team—which included collaborators at the American Bird Conservancy, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, U.S. Geological Survey, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and other institutions—analyzed the breeding population of 529 species by pooling data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service waterfowl surveys, and 10 other datasets. They also analyzed more recent data collected by weather radar technology that can track large groups of birds as they migrate to estimate their numbers.

The weather radars indicated a 14 percent decrease in nocturnal spring-migrating birds in the last decade alone, helping the authors to verify the longer-term survey trends—especially for those breeding in remote northern habitats that aren't as well monitored. Using models that incorporated all the data, they estimated the net number of birds lost over time, across various habitats and bird groupings.

Bringing so many different datasets together is tricky work, says Nicole Michel, senior quantitative ecologist at the National Audubon Society, who was not an author of the study but provided some underlying data. The authors had to account for differences in collection methods, location, species elusiveness, and even the attentiveness of the data collectors themselves. Even with this detailed approach, the study didn't capture every North American species, and declines of each

individual species included have varying uncertainty ranges, based on data available. Sea and shorebird data proved particularly limited, says Rosenberg, and many elusive birds had to be left out entirely.

Despite these gaps, the overall picture is clear, especially because the radar and survey data tell the same story of losses, Michel says. "Unfortunately for the birds, I think we can be very confident in these results," she says. Scott Loss, an Oklahoma State University ecologist not directly involved in the study, agreed: "We know birds are in decline, but this is a really sobering picture of that decline," he says.

As expected, the study showed that birds that breed in at-risk habitats such as grasslands and the Arctic tundra are declining drastically. Grasslands in particular posted the biggest losses, with more than 700 million breeding individuals lost across 31 species since 1970, a more than 50 percent decline (see habitat breakdown below).

Far more surprising were far-reaching declines across habitats and bird types, says Michel. About 90 percent of the missing birds came from 12 distinct and widespread bird families, including warblers, sparrows, blackbirds, and finches. Common birds found in many different habitats—even introduced, ubiquitous species like European Starlings—experienced some of the steepest drops. Feeder birds like the Dark-eyed Junco declined by nearly 170 million individuals, the study's models estimated, while White-throated Sparrows dropped by more than 90 million.

There isn't one single factor that can account for these pervasive losses, says Rosenberg. Habitat loss is likely an important driver in some biomes, but can't explain the widespread declines on its own, says Arvind Panjabi, avian conservation scientist at Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and a study co-author. Multiple, complex environmental factors including pesticide use, insect declines, and climate change, as well as direct threats like outdoor cats and glass skyscrapers, are also hitting birds from a range of angles. For migratory species, long journeys and changes to winter habitats could pose additional challenges. The study itself doesn't look at causes, but the results point to how human influence over the last 50 years has chipped away at bird populations, says Michel.

"My hope is that this will spawn a greater awareness that we really need to take care of our environment," Panjabi says. "In order to prevent another third of our birds disappearing before too long, we need to change how we do things." Kevin Gaston, an ecologist at the University of Exeter not involved in the work, said such a possibility should concern everyone: "We're undermining the role that these

organisms have in structuring landscapes, in providing ecosystem goods and services and benefits," he says.

But while the results are troubling, there is some good news. Not all birds declined and some species even showed steady gains over time. Waterfowl as a group, for example, saw a population increase of 34 million individuals since 1970, thanks largely to wetland conservation efforts. Raptors, such as the Bald Eagle, also fared better with a gain of 15 million individuals thanks largely to a ban on DDT in 1972. The numbers show that taking steps like wildlife management, habitat restoration, and political action can be effective to save species in steep decline.

The study serves, in many ways, as a wake-up call. By making the dramatic losses concrete, Rosenberg hopes people will be jolted into action. Today, Cornell and its partners (which includes the National Audubon Society) launched the website 3BillionBirds.org to share the findings and promote bird-saving solutions, including seven steps that anyone can take in their own lives.

"The takeaways are that this is disturbing and that we need to do something soon," Michel says. "But we're seeing wonderful reasons for hope as well."

Habitat Breakdown

1. Grasslands: These are among the most threatened biomes on the planet. Loss of habitat to urban and agricultural development, along with liberal pesticide use, has had detrimental effects on the birds that rely on these habitats. The study found that grasslands have **lost nearly 720 million birds** since 1970—a greater than 40 percent decline.

2. Boreal forest: Clearing for oil and gas development, logging, widespread fires, and climate change all threaten boreal forest habitat. It has also historically been difficult to monitor boreal forest species and the threats to them. Some **500 million birds have been lost in this habitat** since 1970—a more than 30 percent decline.

3. Forest Generalist: Habitat loss and fragmentation are a major issue in all forests. Logging, wildfires, and human development all threaten to carve up North America's woods. Warming temperatures could also change the plant composition of forests. About **482 million individuals have been lost since 1970**, a nearly 20 percent loss, according to the study.

4. Habitat Generalist: These birds thrive in at least three different kinds of habitat. The considerable loss of generalists that thrive across biomes and across the continent point to multiple factors chipping away at bird populations gradually, over time. About **417 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a more than 20 percent loss.

5. Eastern Forest: This biome includes all forests south of the boreal forest in Canada and the eastern United States. Many of

these forests were cleared in the 1800s and then regrown in the 1900s. Logging, clearing for development, and climate change all affect these forest landscapes. What's more, many forest songbirds are migratory and winter in Central and South America, where they are facing threats that scientists are just beginning to understand. About **167 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a more than 20 percent loss.

6. Western Forest: Western forests are all those south of the boreal in western Canada and the United States, and including the mountain forests of northern Mexico. Wildfire is a bigger threat in western forests than it is in eastern forests. These forests also face threats from logging, clearing for development, fragmentation, and climate change. About **140 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a nearly 30 percent loss.

7. Arctic Tundra: Climate change looms large over the tundra and is the primary threat to this nesting habitat for many birds. Warming temperatures melt permafrost and threaten to put migrating birds out of sync with the food they depend on during the brief northern summer. About **80 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—a more than 20 percent loss—though there is a wide range of uncertainty in this habitat due to data collection challenges.

8. Arid Lands: Land clearing for urban expansion is a big threat to this habitat, as major southwestern cities like Phoenix grow. Oil and gas development also threaten to take out swaths of this habitat. About **35 million birds have been lost since 1970**, the study estimates—about a 15 percent loss.

9. Coasts: Human activity—like driving on the beach, letting dogs and kids run loose on the beach, bringing gull-attracting food to the beach—can disturb birds attempting to incubate eggs and raise chicks. Climate-related factors pose a threat as well, as sea-level rise encroaches on nesting grounds and an uptick in tropical storms washes out beaches. The study estimates about **6 million birds** have been lost in this habitat since 1970. However, many coastal birds weren't included in the analysis because there wasn't enough robust population data, says Rosenberg. And some species the scientists looked at, like Oystercatchers, actually showed population increases over time.

10. Wetlands: Some wetland species, waterfowl in particular, have seen population gains over the last few decades due in large part to political action and careful land management and restoration. Not all wetland birds have thrived, however. Marsh birds in particular have struggled as their habitat is drained for development, the ocean encroaches on coastal marshes, and contamination of chemicals and heavy metals as well as invasive species make these habitats less than suitable. The study estimates that **this habitat has gained 20 million birds since 1970**, an increase by more than 10 percent.

Field Trip to Smith Point Hawk Watch – 28 September 2019

Each September, we plan our field trip to the Hawk Watch for late in the month, hoping to catch the peak of Broad-winged Hawk migration. The attraction is that, more than any other hawk species, by the time they reach the southern United States, Broad-wings are migrating in impressive large kettles, making extensive use of thermals where possible. Unfortunately, as we feel constrained to do our field trip on a Saturday, our chances of hitting the very best day are not particularly high. Even those of us with the freedom to go to the Hawk Watch on any day have not had a lot of luck picking that day! However, we console ourselves with the knowledge that the few days prior to and after the peak day have a good number of migrating hawks, and there are several other species of hawk that pass through in September and October with much less pronounced peaks. Historically, the peak day in Texas for migrating Broad-winged Hawks was considered to be September 25, but in several recent years, the peak has been as late as in the first week of October.

Broad-winged Hawks breed throughout the eastern United States, even as far south and west as our area (in small numbers). The breeding range extends to southern Canada from southern Quebec and southern Ontario westwards to southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. The species winters from the southwest of Mexico southward to northern South America. Concentrations of migrating hawks are counted every year in Duluth, MN, Detroit, MI and across the northeastern states, especially Pennsylvania. Further south the hawks are funneled across a much narrower front around Corpus Christi where upwards of a million are counted each fall. Still further south, the Broad-wings and several other migrating raptor species squeeze into the narrow coastal plain at Veracruz between the Gulf of Mexico and the Sierra Madre Oriental mountain range where they are counted again.

The hawks from the eastern US often funnel into Smith Point because the hawks are generally unwilling to cross even relatively narrow bodies of water. They often mill around over Smith Point, and usually retreat back to the northeast and go around the shores of Trinity Bay before continuing south. However, depending on the winds between the eastern US and Texas, some may drift west far enough before turning south again and miss Smith Point altogether.

As this is written in early October, it is not clear what happened to all the Broad-wings this year. So far, very few Broad-wings have passed over Smith Point so far, and the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch at Hazel Bazemore Park has counted only a fraction of the normal number. The weather situation in our area has been somewhat unusual with south winds prevailing without break for more than ten days. Hawks generally do not migrate into adverse winds. An uptick in Broad-wing numbers in the last two days of September suggests they are currently still en route in the United States awaiting more favorable winds but it is possible many bypassed the count sites to the west.

With all that has been going on in recent days, it was perhaps to be expected that it would be a relatively small group of members that assembled at Smith Point. The group was immediately entertained by two Merlins antagonizing the

local Blue Jays, or possibly vice versa. It was not easy to tell which! The Merlins may well have been immature birds, hatched this year.

Otherwise, the group had initially to be satisfied with using the vantage point on the tower to survey the other bird life in the area. It was hard to miss the approximately 45 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds swarming around the feeders on the hawk watch tower. Magnificent Frigatebirds, dispersing from the breeding grounds off the Yucatan Coast or on the Dry Tortugas, roost in Trinity Bay during late summer and early fall. Two were seen as they set out for their day's activity. A third, bird, an immature was seen in the early afternoon.

Sharp-shinned Hawks generally migrate in a straight-forward manner under their own wing power, mostly choosing to press on regardless of the wind (within reason!) They often dominate the count during the first two or three hours of the day, and turned out to be the most numerous hawk of the day. They generally came through as single birds or in loose groups of no more than two or three.

The larger Cooper's Hawk, also members of the *Accipiter* family, generally come through in numbers in October, but the few that were seen on the day, probably "local" birds – representatives of the very few that breed locally.

A couple of Caspian Terns passed over. At about 10:30, the first and really only significant kettle of raptors arrived – 16 Mississippi Kites. Surprisingly large number of this species pass through each fall. This group was a little unusual in that it comprised mostly adults. By late September, most are usually young birds. A distant Peregrine Falcon gave unsatisfactory looks at this swift moving falcon, but later in the morning, two others separately passed much closer right over the tower.

A pleasant surprise came at 10:45 when a Swallow-tailed Kite was spotted in a loose small group of Mississippi Kites. The forks of the tail were of modest length, suggesting that it was probably a young bird. Nevertheless, the species is a notoriously early migrant, the majority being south of the US by the early September. This bird stayed around for a while, giving good views but never coming directly over the tower. Almost an hour later, three more were seen in the distance and identified with the aid of telescopes.

The first American Kestrel of the day came through at 11:20 and the day's total of 20, the first day with the number into double figures, indicated that Kestrel migration was starting in earnest.

Other birds seen during the day included two Northern Harriers, one Red-tailed Hawk and some Ospreys.. One Swainson's Hawk, looking very much like a young bird, passed over around 11:25. Not as many raptors as on many of our previous Hawk Watch field trips, but enough to keep us entertained during the day.

The official count of raptors for the day from Bob Baez: Broad-winged Hawk (13), Red-tailed Hawk (1), Swainson's Hawk (1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (48), Cooper's Hawk (6), Mississippi Kite (43), Swallow-tailed Kite (4), American Kestrel (20), Peregrine Falcon (4), Merlin (5), Osprey (4), Northern Harrier (2).

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings –September 2019

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records for nearby Texas counties– 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.

Commentary: It has been a long time since we had space on this page for much commentary. We have explained some aspects of this first issue before, but this month, we have space to present a comprehensive account. There is some judgement required in deciding what constitutes a rare bird for the purposes of this page. The first indicator that we look at is whether the bird is flagged as rare in eBird. That is not the final word, however, as in some counties and parishes, the eBird reviewer has set some species to rare that would not really justify such status so that observers are prompted to enter details or a photo, perhaps feeling that more common species are being misidentified in some cases. If in doubt, we may also refer to Eubanks, Behrstock and Weeks *Birdlife of Houston, Galveston and the Upper Texas Coast*, with due

deference to the fact that the accounts in that well researched work are now more than ten years old, and are focused on less than the full area that we consider, that extends northwards to Toledo Bend and Sam Rayburn and eastwards into the two (large) parishes in Louisiana that are contiguous to Texas. Especially for some of the "more common" birds that are rare or verging on rare at certain times of the year, we often consult the *Birder's Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast 9th Edition* compiled by Brad Lirette, David Sarkozi and Ron Weeks, but this is also more than ten years old. We find that the fact that the occurrence is listed separately for each week of the year is valuable in making decisions. However, this does not cover any county or parish in that part of our traditional extended coverage area that is north or east of Jefferson County. For the more northern of such counties (Angelina, Jasper, Newton, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler, for which we know of no published check lists), we use our best judgement informed by a review of records in eBird, but will be happier when there are more eBird records to review.

The White-crowned Pigeon was a new bird to the area, but unfortunately a one day wonder. The Black-throated Gray Warbler is a species that seems to be being seen more often on the Upper Texas Coast. The listing also shows some sightings of other warblers that are much rarer in the fall than in the spring as their migration route shift substantially to the east. As we remarked last month, the Brown Booby will soon be promoted to simply "uncommon."

Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Ring-necked Duck	Sep 2, 25	JEF-TP (1) HS
Lsr Black-backed Gull	Sep 21	SAA-SH147 Causeway Sam Rayburn Res. (1) Gary Hunter, John Smelser mult obs (reported as Gt. Black-backed Gull by one observer)
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	Sep 20-21	JEF-SW (1) JHH, mult obs
Black-thr. Gray Warbler	Sep 29	JEF-SW (1) JAW, JHH, SM, SH
Black-headed Grosbeak	Sep 6-22	ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter et al

Nearby Counties

White-crowned Pigeon	Sep 4	GAL-Galveston, Cove Lane (1) Kyle O'Haver et al
Lesser Nighthawk	Sep 3	CHA-Smith Point Hawk Watch (1) Justin Bosler
Sabine's Gull	Sep 7	CAM-Brousaard Beach (1 ad) Justin Bosler
Brown Booby	Sep 1	GAL-Bolivar Ferry (1) Trish McIntosh
	Sep 6, 25	GAL-West Bay N 29 12--26 W94 56.47-96 (2) Sue Heath, Dean Silvers, Greg Whiyyaker, mult obs
	Sep 7-28	GAL-Sportsman's Rd (1) cont. bird Geoff Butcher, Greg Cook, mult obs
	Sep 29	GAL-John Paul Landing Park (1) Mike and Sarah Kuzio, mult obs
Couch's Kingbird	Sep 10-29	HAS-Pine Forest Country Club (1) Stephen Gast, Timothy White
	Sep 18	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Jim Hinson
	Sep 20	HAS-nr. George Bush Park (Kevin Smith)
	Sep 22-24	HAS-Peckham Park (1) Trevor Lancon, Bill Wright

Chihuahuan Raven	Sep 21	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Jay Huner
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Sep 14-25	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Megan Ahlgren, Simon Kiacz, mult obs
Swainson's Warbler	Sep 20 Sep 14	HAS-Tomball (1) Emily Stoudt HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Andrew Hamlett, Farokh Jamalyaria
Cerulean Warbler	Sep 1	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Jim Hinson
	Sep 21	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Lynn Hathaway, Marybeth Lima
	Sep 23	HAS-Village Grove Park (1) Dale Wolck
Blackburnian Warbler	Sep 17 Sep 26 Sep 29	CAL-Hayes (2) Sam Jolly HAS-Houston Zoo (1) Tim Junker HAS-Village Grove Park (2) Farokh Jamalyaria
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Sep 17	HAS-Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve (5) Mary Anne Weber

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; HI – High Island; 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; NEW – Newton County; 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 County.

Golden Triangle Audubon Society
P. O. Box 1292
Nederland, Texas 77627-1292

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Subscriptions from NAS Members with mailing addresses outside our official territory, and others wishing to subscribe are \$20 per year (Jan-Dec).

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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.