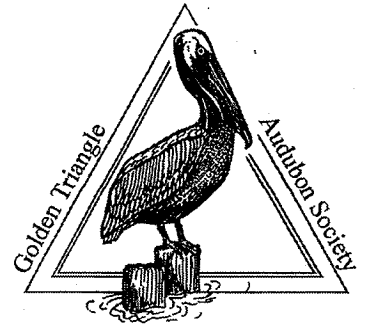


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 27 No 3

March 2021

Field Trip to Bolivar Flats Saturday, March 20, 2021

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 shorebird location. 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 right (west) on TX 87 and proceed 23.5 miles 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 Rettillon Road. At the beach, if conditions permit, turn right (west) and drive about 3/4 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. More if you stop along the way! 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. 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.

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

We normally stop at Fort Travis Park to eat lunch and use the facilities. We may stop at High Island on the way back to check for any "very early" Neotropical songbird migrants. Bring drinks and lunch (or buy locally, 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.

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Golden Triangle
Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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email: gtaudubon@aol.com

Calendar of Events

Important Note: Field Trip notices published here are subject to last minute changes. Changes will always be posted on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Future Programs and Field Trips.

Saturday March 20, 2021. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. See page 1 for details and directions.

Saturday March 27, 2021. 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. 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. Call 722-4193 with any questions.

Saturday April 17, 2021. 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 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 an \$8 sanctuary pass donation at Sabine Woods for those who are **not** members of Golden Tr

Golden Triangle Audubon Facebook

Join us on Facebook! There is a Golden Triangle Audubon group on Facebook, moderated by Jana Whittle and John Mariani. Our aim is to provide a space for people around the Golden Triangle to share pictures, sightings, and other information about birds, other nature, and local birding sites and habitats. All levels of pictures are welcome, especially of less common birds. If you are looking for help with identification, please include the location and date of the picture, as both are important in narrowing the possibilities. Send your contribution through a Facebook message or an email to gtaudubon@aol.com.

trip is especially suited for not-very-experienced birders. Often, we break into smaller groups, with an experienced birder or two in each group.

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.

The insect population may be significant so it will be a good idea to bring insect repellent. Most participants will bring lunch. Facilities in Sabine Pass are limited, and gasoline is **not currently routinely available in Sabine Pass.**



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

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues remain at \$15 per year. We are now accepting 2017 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. 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.

Electronic Delivery of the *Brown Pelican*

We currently mail most copies of the Brown Pelican to members by first class mail. While we certainly do not want to cut off any members who are unable to receive a copy electronically, we encourage you, if you are able, to receive your copy as a pdf attachment to an email. This way, you can save us both expense and volunteer time. To do this please send an email to gtaudubon@aol.com from the email address you want us to use. Be sure to include your name so we can find you in our membership records!

Are the Evening Grosbeaks still to come?

As the winter season approached, there was much speculation concerning the possibility of incursions of some species that do not normally make it anywhere close to the Upper Texas Coast. So far, Purple Finches have been the star of this invasion with large number pushing all the way to the coast of the Gulf. Then Red Crossbills showed up on January 31 in the Sam Houston National Forest south of Huntsville. These birds have been seen through at least February 24 with a gap between February 10 and 21 that likely had more to do with travel conditions than anything else. These crossbills are far removed from any others reported this winter, the next nearest being in the Southern Appalachians from northwestern Georgia through Chattanooga to Knoxville and Asheville, Tennessee. The following thread on LABIRD, lightly edited, raises the possibility that there may still be surprises to come!

Evening Grosbeak disappointment?

From: Paul Conover, Lafayette, LA Thu, 14 Jan 2021

The invasion is certainly in progress for Pine Siskins and Purple Finches, but I'm running out of hope that Evening Grosbeaks will be with them this winter. Looking at records for the new year on eBird, the closest (and southernmost in the East) pin is from NW Mississippi.

Perhaps there are some around that are out there living off the natch on tree seeds, but with so many buffets of bird feeders around, it seems odd that none have been reported from yards yet.

I'm wondering if the early reports of Evening Grosbeak south of their recent winter range were birds that slightly overshot their intended destination like our early burst of Red-breasted Nuthatches that gave us hope of an invasion and then faded.

From: David Muth Thu, 14 Jan 2021

You are giving up too soon. If they make it in numbers, it will be later. Here is the American Birds report from 1984:

Evening Grosbeaks were also well distributed: up to 450 at Greenwell Springs, E. Baton Rouge Jan. 22-May 1 and in other places in the Baton Rouge area; at Midway, Santa Rosa, Fla., one Apr. 30-May 7; Hartselle, Ala., a peak of 50 on Mar. 26; at Muscle Shoals, last one May 5; hundreds around Birmingham through May 1; and in Tennessee, late ones in Nashville May 14 and in South Tunnel, Sumner, May 16.

The huge flock at Greenwell Springs has an early date of January 22, and that is the earliest report in the region.

From: Paul Conover Date: Thu, 14 Jan 2021

The possibility of later migrants sounds encouraging. My biggest hurdle against expecting a late rush is the lack of good flocks nearby (if eBird is any guide). There have been a few sightings in Arkansas and Missouri over the fall-winter, but nothing major. There are better numbers in Tennessee, but in mountainous areas. It seems that if there were good numbers in the woods, there would be more detections to our north. If there's a late rush--and I hope there is--it seems as though it will have to be from much further north, if conifer seed crops get depleted.

From: Nancy L Newfield Fri, 15 Jan 2021

I agree with David. The *1996* occurrence of which I am aware was in late March, into April. I arrived in mid-afternoon and they were not present. Stayed until dark but still they were a no show. Then, there was a light snow overnight and voila, *EVENING GROSBEAKS*. To hope for this species in New Orleans is pure folly, but I just got another large sack of sunflower seed!

From: John Dillon. Athens, LA Fri, 15 Jan 2021

Agreed on the fact that the season is far from over. Check out wind conditions happening in the plains/Midwest today and consider what these winds could do for us in terms of birds, Not sure how much effect it would have on conifer species like EVGR, but I'm still hopeful.

From: Joseph Kennedy Fri, 15 Jan 2021

Back when the grosbeaks reached the north shore in numbers, they did a good bit of tracking with banded birds as many were banded at feeders. Apparently the birds moved down the Appalachians and then spread west. We had them on a CBC trip to Noxubee Refuge before they reached LA. They retraced their arc route going back north rather than flying direct so places like Iowa and Illinois missed them. This was just before the great spruce budworm crash which affected the grosbeaks, purple finches and the specialist wood warblers all of which are increasing with the current bloom of budworms.

A Trip to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

We cancelled our usual field trip to Anahuac NWR this year because of the extreme cold weather and its consequences. When everything had returned to near normal, we made a trip the Refuge (on February 22), and this is a report on what we saw.

On the journey to the Anahuac Refuge from the Golden Triangle, we drove along FM 1941, always a good birding road. Four Red-tailed Hawks was perhaps fewer than we might have expected, but by late February some may have already started their journey back north. The species is capable of enduring cold nights, and some winter as far north as southern Ontario. American Kestrels were numerous as usual, but what was missing were sparrows, usually numerous along the roadside edges.

Arriving at the Visitor Information Station in what is known colloquially as Old Anahauc, we looked for the male Vermilion Flycatcher that has wintered there was several years now. We looked carefully, but it was nowhere to be found. We were consoled by the knowledge that it (and a female) have been seen after the freeze. We set out along the Willows Trail as we usually would on our GTAS trips. A surprise perched on a tree on the edge of the pond at the start of the trail was a male Anhinga. It took off, but quickly came back, and posed for photographs. Although Anhinga have become more common in the area in recent years, they are not often seen on the refuge itself. In the eighties, the only sure place to find them was up Oyster Bayou north of FM1985. Now they can often be seen among other places from Highway 73 perched on the trees on the other side of Alligator Bayou as it more or less surrounds the Motiva Refinery in Port Arthur. Proceeding along the Willows Trail, it was clear that it was quieter than normal, apart from about four conspicuous and quite noisy American Robins. Things did pick up as we neared the pond with the willows that give the trail its name. There were Orange-crowned Warblers calling along with a few Yellow-rumped Warblers. One quiet male Northern Cardinal was also seen. Perhaps the highlight of that part of the trail walk was an immature Red-shouldered Hawk perched on one of the relatively young trees that also posed for photographs. Returning to the VIS, several Swamp Sparrows had become active in the vegetation around the pond. But we did not see or hear any other sparrow or any Ruby-crowned Kinglets or Blue-gray Gnatcatchers that can normally be expected.

Heading towards Shoveler Pond, we scanned the "moist soil unit" south of the road. As usual, there was a good number of birds. American Coots were spread over all areas of open water. The most numerous duck there was Northern Pintail, followed by Gadwall and Northern

Shoveler. There was also a pair of Mottled Ducks. A collection of about 40 White Ibis was concentrated on a slightly elevated area.

Reaching Shoveler Pond, it was clear there were plenty of birds to look at. The area north of the northern edge of main pond, between the road and the area known as the Granberry Unit is currently largely open water, and serves as an adjunct to the main pond. It soon became obvious that there were American Coots spread over all available open water. Earlier in the winter, there had usually been some compact rafts of coots, but now, they were all scattered about. Common Gallinules prefer to be on or near the banks, and they were to be found all the way round the Pond. Even though the freeze had beaten down the vegetation in the pond, its duration was not long enough to start freezing the water, and, indeed, the water probably didn't get close to that temperature. So a significant number of insects were able to survive in the low parts of the vegetation, much of it dead and rotting. All the way round Shoveler Pond, there were numbers of calling Yellow-rumped Warblers. Mostly, they seemed to be flycatching, but none of the other passerines that are expected to be in the area joined them.

Continuing along the north edge of the Pond, our attention was drawn to a pair of scaup. The head of the male especially showed no peak, and indeed was somewhat flat. The "nails" on the bills were noticeably larger. The vermiculations on the back appeared sharper than usual for scaup. It is always difficult to be sure unless the wing stripe is seen in flight, but we concluded that this was a pair of Greater Scaup. Greater Scaup are said to be more commonly found in salt water in winter, but Shoveler Pond is close to the salt water of East Bay, and in any case, there have been confirmed examples of Greater Scaup well inland at Cattail Marsh in Beaumont.

A number of Blue-winged Teal were hiding in the vegetation. Most Blue-wings winter south of Texas but some can always be found in sheltered ponds as at Anahuac. Green-winged Teal wintering in Southeast Texas greatly outnumber Blue-wings, but usually in Shoveler Pond, the reverse is true. It is not clear why this should be, but it has been consistent over many years. Looking out from the northeast corner, we saw a very large flock of White Ibis, estimated at 1750 working the levee around the Granberry Unit. Proceeding down the western edge, there were more Pied-billed Grebes, some Gadwall, and of course, Northern Shovelers, although

the numbers were muted compared to the numbers seen in the Pond in early days of the Refuge. On this day, the water level was on the high side which discourages shovelers. Out on a berm in the middle of the Pond were two resting Caspian Terns, looking distinctly out of place, but this is a common location for them..

Walking along the boardwalk that snakes out into the center of the Pond, we were rewarded with a tunning pair of Cinnamon Teal, male and female, sticking close to each other, but not too far from the boardwalk. This species seems to be slowly expanding eastward. Apart from the well-established small population that has wintered in Cattail Marsh in Beaumont for the past few years, birds began to pop up at Cameron Prairie NWR in Louisiana a couple of years back, and this year, one has appeared still further east at Lacassine NWR. Finding the species at Shoveler Pond is becoming more common, and in addition to this pair, we saw another male further round the Pond. There were also more Yellow-rumped Warblers than anywhere else in the Pond.

Along the northeast-southwest levee, there were many more Common Gallinule. Along one of the interior berms, there were Roseate Spoonbills, as there has been most of the hunter. There were about 35 in one compact group. This is also where most of the Green-winged Teal that we saw were located. These berms are usually well populated by Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, but we did not see one on this day!

American alligators usually go into holes when it gets cold, and we were surprised to see several large alligators on the banks, even though the temperature was only about 60 degrees. One large alligator was resting on a long log with five Red-eared Slider turtle in the same area, a few inches from the mouth of the alligator. Perhaps it was not warm enough for either to be active, but the turtles looked to be in some danger! The eastern area of the pond is usually where any Ring-necked Ducks that are present can be found, and about 15 were actively feeding in two or three groups..

There were coots scattered everywhere, but we were unable to find the Surf Scoter that had been reported. Nor could we find the wintering Least Bittern that had been seen in the days immediately prior. We did find some Neotropic Cormorants, a few Great Egrets and some Snowy Egrets.

We did not cover the rest of "Old Anahuac" as thoroughly, but on the moist soil unit on the east side, about 250 dark ibis were feeding actively. They were just a little too far out to do a thorough check, but we did not see any birds that we thought might be Glossy rather than White-faced Ibis. While we were driving along the road to Frozen Point, a small flock of seven Greater White-fronted Geese flew by. Two Red-tailed Hawks were also seen. On the way back up the access road we counted an additional four Red-tails, whereas we had

only noted one on the way in. Perhaps they were spending their nights out of sight in sheltered areas lower down to get away from the cold winds.

Heading east along FM1985, there were several Red-tailed Hawks and a few American Kestrels, but nothing else of note. Again, if there were sparrows in the grass and vegetation on the sis of the road, they chose to remain hidden. Turning in to the Skillern Tract, it initially seemed very quiet, but after we disembarked from our vehicle in the parking lot, crossed East Bay Bayou, and started up the trail, we heard the unmistakable sound of a large flock Snow Geese. Moving back to an open area, we saw two flocks, totaling an estimated 2000 birds, rapidly descending into a nearby section of the East Unit. Most were, of course Snow Geese, but at least five Ross's Geese were identified as they spiraled down to the marsh. We watched this spectacle until the last goose had landed.

We returned to the trail, and headed out towards the overlook. Although quieter than it often is, there were some birds to be detected. Our presence disturbed three Mourning Doves uncharacteristically perched deep in the small trees. Orange-crowned Warblers also advertised their presence, while a small number of Yellow-rumped Warblers were working the larger trees. But we did not find any sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets or Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Leaving the parking area, we scanned the wet moist soil areas to the west of the road that looked near ideal shorebird habitat, and indeed, there was a group of Lesser Yellowlegs. Probably wintering birds, as it was a little too early for there to be migrants. The Lesser Yellowlegs are commonly found in flocks, unlike the more common wintering Greater Yellowlegs that tend to be more loners. Scattered over the drier parts of the fields were a large number, probably about 65 in all, of White Ibis.

Heading along FM1985 again, one of the three Red-tailed Hawks was a dark morph, which always seem sharper looking, lacking the white markings on the back commonly found on the (normal) light morph.

We spent a little more time in Chambers County, without find any truly noteworthy birds. We did find another flock of Snow Geese, probably about 1,500, on the ground just west of Jenkins Road. Fields in this area have frequently been favored by geese in the last month or two. But we were disappointed and a little concerned over the lack of both sparrows and many of the smaller insectivorous species such as Eastern Phoebe and other species already mentioned. In any year, February is perhaps the slowest birding month in Southeast Texas (apart from July) as some wintering birds have already left (likely regretting this when the deep freeze hit) but there are very, very few migrants from the south to replace them.

John A. Whittle

Bird Sightings – February 2021

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records reported to us from 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: Another lengthy report this month. Many of the rare birds are species that do not normally winter. The sheer number of Western Tanagers is remarkable. We have presented all of the Purple Finch reports from our core counties and all of those in the Greater Houston area except Harris County, in which there were simply too many. Nevertheless, we hope these reports provide a picture of the extent of the incursion. A sudden invasion of Fox Sparrows in mid-month was also interesting. Other species worthy of note include Black-headed Grosbeak and Least Bittern.

Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Feb 13	HAI-Silsbee (8) Jana Winberg (rare inland)
Eastern Whip-poor-will	JEF-SW (1)	Howard Davis, Ashley Fuselier
Broad-tail. Hummingbird	Feb12-15	JEF-Port Arthur-Griffing Park (1) Greg Jackson (continuing)
Pectoral Sandpiper	Feb 3	JEF-McFaddin Beach (1) Art MacKinnon
Least Bittern	Feb 18	JEF-McFaddin NWR (1) Jimmy Bryan
Ladder-back W'pecker	Feb 16	JAS-10 miles ENE of Colmesneil (1) Stephanie Hall
Common Raven	Feb 27	SAB-FM276 at Toledo Bend Res (1) Theresa MCKay

Purple Finch

Feb 1-28	ANG-SE Lufkin (4) Donna Beck	
Feb 1-28	ANG-SW Lufkin (10) Gary Hunter	
Feb 1-26	JAS-W of CR51 (up to 18) Phillip Hight	
Feb 1	JEF-Beaumont Caldwell area (1) Barbara Riley	
Feb 2-28	ANG-Westwood Bend area N of Granville (7) Katrina Echols	
Feb 5-27	SAB-Shacklefoot Dr (1) Jean Nichols	
Feb 7	JEF-TP (1 fem) SM	
Feb 1-15	HAI-Sour Lake (19) John Park	
Feb 12-13	HAI-nr FM421 4 miles west of Lumberton (1) Kelly Walker	
Feb 1215	HAI-2 miles NW of Kountze (1) Nancy Angell	
Feb 12-20	JAS-6 miles S of Jasper (4) Laura Clark	
Feb 12-16	JEF-Beaumont (4) Barbara Riley	
Feb 12	ORA-Bridge City (1) Laura Baker	
Feb 13-20	HAI-Silsbee (3) Jana Winberg	
Feb 13-25	SAB-Hemphill (5) David Bell	
Feb 13	JEF-Beaumont off TX105 (1) Jessica McGee	
Feb 14-18	JEF-Beaumont (2) SH	
Feb 15-19	JAS-FM252 2 miles S of Jasper (5) Claire Boutte	
Feb 15	TYL-3 mile N of Colmesneil (4) Charles Smith	
Feb 17	HAI-FM421 nr TX 326 (1) Brandie Mitchell	
Feb 17-20	SAA-FM1751 nr TX103 (1) Kathy Chandler	
Feb 19	NEW-South Toledo Band (1) Brian Murphu	
Feb 21	JAS-CR139 SW of Jasper (4) Fred Lyons	
Feb 23	HAI-Lumberton Peck Rd (2) Richard Liebler	
Feb 23	JEF-Beaumont (6) Ryan Leibach	
Lapland:Longspur	Feb18	ANG-CR193A (1) Ashley Wahlberg
Fox Sparrow	Feb 17	JEF-Beaumont (1) SH
	Feb 18	JEF-Texas Point NWR (Jimmy Bryan)
	Feb 20	JEF-SW (8) SM, Thomas Hellweg
	Feb 21	JEF-Texas Pt NWR (1) Ron Weeks
Northern Parula	Feb 22	JEF-John Berner
	Feb 16	JAS-10 miles ENE of Colmesneil (1) Stephanie Hal
Yellow-throated Warbler	Feb 1-7	JEF-Groves (1) Howard Davis

Black-headed Grosbeak	Feb 1-18	JAS-CR139 SW of Jasper (1) Fred Lyons
Painted Bunting	Feb 15	JEF-Nederland-Spurlock Rd (1 male) Mad March
	Feb 17-24	JEF-Central Gardens (1 male) HS

Nearby Counties

Cackling Goose	Feb 7-	CAM-III Plant Rd (23) mult obs
Cinnamon Teal	Feb 2-23	CAM-Lacassine NWR Pool Unit (1) Kathy Rhodes, mult obs
Surf Scoter	Feb 6	HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) Daniel Kraushaar
	Feb 20-21	CHA-ANWR Shoveler Pond (1 fem) Michael Allen, mult obs
Black Scoter	Feb 1-13	HAS-Bay Oaks Harbor area (1) Letha Slaigle, Sara Bettencourt, mul obs
	Feb 19	HAS-Ash Point (1) Chris Bailey
Western Grebe	Feb 6-11	HAS-Baytown (1) Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
	Feb 23	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Cullem Hans, Ian Davies, Ash Ferlito, Seth Strimas-Mackey
Anna's Hummingbird	Feb 1-8	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Randy Frederick, Dave Patton,
	Feb 7	HAS-Friendswood (1) Andrew Hamlett
Black-chin Hummingbird	Feb 22	LIB-Liberty (1 male) Mike Riley
Broad-tail. Hummingbird	Feb 1-28	GAL-Dickinson (1) mult obs
	Feb 6	CAL-Moss Bluff (1) Erik Johnson
	Feb 12-14	CAL-Lake Charles10th St (1)
Allen's Hummingbird	Feb 27-28	GAL-Dickinson (1) Ro Weeks, Jane Murtishaw
Broad-bill Hummingbird	Feb 2-17	CHA-Baytown (1) David Hanson
Buff-bell. Hummingbird	Feb 1-2	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Randy Frederick, Dave Patton
Brown Booby	Feb 14	HAS-Houston 1 mi NE of Memorial Park (1) Dan Coleman
Least Bittern	Feb 6	CAL-Intracoastal Park (3) James Smithers, John Garrett
	Feb 23-28	GAL-High Is-Smith Oaks (1) Ian Davies, mult obs
Whooping Crane	Feb 2-27	CHA-Oak Island Rd (2) mult obs
Pectoral Sandpiper	Feb 17	GAL-Texas City Dike (1) Brian Berry, Indie Dirk
	Feb 19	GAL-Port Bolivar (1) Ian Davies
	Feb 20	GAL-Texas City (1) Ian Davies
	Feb 21	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Ian Davies
	Feb 23	GAL-Smith Oaks (14 flyby) Ian Davies
Harris's Hawk	Feb 2-28	HAS-Sheldon Lake SP (1) mult obs
Red-naped Sapsucker	Feb 8-9	HAS-Taylor Lake Village Park (1) mult obs

Ladder-back. W'pecker	Feb 1 Feb 20	HAS-Memprial (2) Julie Curre HAS-Warren Ranch (1) J Berner, Timothy White, Stephen Gast
Least Flycatcher	Feb 7	CAL-Off Hwy14 S of Hayes (1) John Garrett, James Smithers
Great Kiskadee	Feb 3-28	CAM-Hackberry (2) Kathy Rhodes, mult obs
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Feb 6-12	HAS-Horsepen Creek Park (1) Howard Smith
Philadelphia Vireo	Feb 7	HAS-Galveston Is SP (1) Paul Sivon
Violet-green Swallow	Feb 27	GAL-Galveston Is SP (10 Paul Nelson)
Wood Thrush	Feb 7	HAS-Lake Houston (1) Bernie Jacoby
Western Meadowlark	Feb 7 Feb 8	HAS-Geo Bush Park, NE Corner (1) Timothy White HAS-Paul Rushing Park (1) Timothy White

Purple Finch

Feb 1-28	HAS-Houston numerous locations, mult obs	
Feb 1-28	LIB- FM1008 area N of Kenefick (up to 16) Colette and Paul Micallef	
Feb 1-14	GAL-Santa Fe (1) Ross Foreman	
Feb 3-20	CHA-Cotton Lake Rd (2) Paul Fagala	
Feb 4-27	CHA Baytown (2) David Hanson	
Feb 6	GAL-Friendswood (1) Jodi Henricks	
Feb 9,21	GAL-Dickinson (5) Dennis Cooke	
Feb 12-15	LIB-CR460 (up to 23) Barbara Tilton	
Feb 13-16	LIB-Wallisville Rd (2) Shelli Ellerbe	
Feb 13-14	GAL-Friendswood (3) Karen Ross	
Feb 13	LIB-Liberty (1) Margaret Taylor	
Feb 14	GAL-Friendswood (1) Todd McGrath	
Feb 14	GAL-League City (1) Tammy Schultz	
Feb 15	LIB-Liberty (1) Mike Riley	
Feb 15	GAL-Alvin (1) Cindy Nabors	
Feb 21	HAS-Lake Houston Wilderness Park (2) Cin-Ty Lee	
Feb 22	LIB-Liberty (37) Mike Riley	
Feb 23	LIB-CR2321 (3) Glen Lindeman	
Feb 27-28	GAL-Hitchcock (1) Kris Cannon	
Lesser Goldfinch	Feb 24	HAS-Atascocita (1) Lisa and Li Li
Lark Bunting	Feb 20	HAS-Warren Ranch (1) John Berner, Timothy White, Stephen Gast
Clay-colored Sparrow	Feb 2-10	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Fred Collins, mult obs
Fox Sparrow	Feb 15-18	CAL-Lake Charles 10th St (1) Cyndi Simon, John Garrett
	Feb 16	LIB- FM1008 area N of Kenefick (3) Colette and Paul Micallef
	Feb 19-28	GAL-High Is-Smith Oaks (1) Ian Davies, mult obs
Dk-eyed (Oregon) Junco	Feb 16-17	HAS-Baytown (1) Mickey Redus
Spotted Towhee	Feb 6	HAS-J. H. Jones Park (1) Ken Beene, Richard Patila
Hooded Oriole	Feb 2-27	HAS-NASA Parkway/Kirby Bend area (1) mult obs
Bullock's Oriole	Feb 14 Feb 24 Feb 25	HAS-Baytown (1) Gene Campbell LIB-Liberty (1) Charles Post HAS-El Lago area (1) Philip Robinson
Baltimore Oriole	Feb 1 Feb 3 Feb 5 Feb 15 Feb 16-17 Feb 24-28	HAS-Katy (1) Timothy Freiday, Iliana Mock HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Fred Collins, Kendra Kocab, mult obs HAS-Houston Northside Village area (1) Johnathan Britt HAS-Houston Northside Village area (1) Jonathan Britt HAS-Houston just W of Memorial Park (1) Diana Strassmann HAS-Houston Champion Forest (1 female) Ross Silcock
Rusty Blackbird	Feb 25-28	GAL-High Is Smith Oaks (7) mult obs

Nashville Warbler	Feb 3-24	HAS-Memorial area (1) Sue Orwig
	Feb 24	Has-Baldwin Park area (1) Tony Dang
Yellow Warbler	Feb 6-7	CAL-Intracoastal Park (3) James Smithers, John Garrett, multobs
Yellow-throated Warbler	Feb 14-19	CAL-Lake Charles (1) Dan Plummer
	Feb 24-25	CAL-S Lake Charles (1) Paul Zimmerman
Black-thr. Gray Warbler	Feb 2-9	HAS-Peckham Park-Katy (1) mult obs
Painted Redstart	Feb 1-21	HAS-S Dairy Ashford (1) mult obs
Western Tanager	Feb 1-15	HAS-Memorial area (1) Sandi Templeton
	Feb 12-13	GAL-League City (1 male) Cindy Constantine
	Feb 13	HAS-Briarforest area (1) Samantha Samantha
	Feb 22	HAS-Houston Harvest Bend area (1 male) Jim Hinson, Candy McNamee
	Feb 24	HAS-Southwest Houston (1) Dana Turner
	Feb 25-26	HAS-Houston Willowbrook (1 male) Candy McNamee
	Feb 26	HAS-Houston Hedwig Village (1 male) Ben Hulsey
Pyrrhuloxia	Feb 2-21	HAS-Artist Boat Preserve (1) mult obs
Black-headed Grosbeak	Feb 2-28	CHA-Baytown (2) mult obs
	Feb 10	CHA-Mont Belvieu (1) Barbara Tilton
	Feb 15	HAS-Houston nr Beltway 8 at Buffalo Bayou (1) Michelle Foss

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; BF – Bolivar Flats; 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; NEW – Newton County; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Is, Port Arthur; PW – Phillip Wallace; SAA – San Augustine Co.; SAB – Sabine County; SH – Sheila Hebert; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TYL – Tyler County; WJC – West Jefferson County.

Baltimore versus Bullock's Oriole

Last month we reported as a Bullock's Oriole an oriole in Nederland that was entered in eBird by the observer as a Baltimore Oriole. Subsequently, the eBird reviewer accepted the ID as a Baltimore Oriole. We apologize for having changed the species without consulting anyone else.

Interestingly, a number of other Baltimore Orioles have been confirmed in the Greater Houston area as well as a few that have been decided to be Bullock's Orioles. The two species were until fairly recently considered a single species, the Northern Oriole. We do not have space here for a full discussion of the differences. Historically, most orioles seen in winter in the area have been determined to be Bullock's Orioles, but the situation seems to have reversed this winter.

As a reminder, the Rare Bird Alerts in eBird report the species as initially entered in eBird by the observer, without any review. Occasionally, when a species that is very rare in the area is reported without any supporting details or comments we simply disregard the report pending further information. We will continue that process but will not change any IDs.

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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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.

Many rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on Facebook Texbirds or on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds. It is not necessary to subscribe 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.