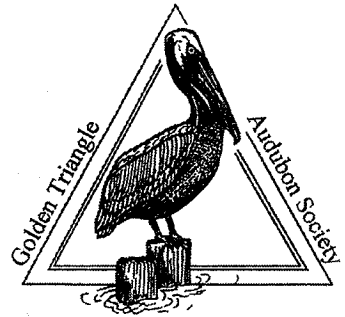


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 27 No 6

June 2021

Good News

We plan to resume in-person Membership Meetings with the August 19 meeting, provided there are no adverse developments in the Covid-19 situation.

Tentatively, the program will be about our trip to Minnesota in June 2019 by Dana Nelson and Harlan Stewart.

Field Trip to Liberty – Dayton Area Saturday, 07 August 2021

During the first half of August each year, Swallow-tailed Kites congregate in the Trinity River bottomlands between Liberty and Dayton for two or three weeks before they migrate south for the winter.

We will meet at 8:00 AM at the McDonalds at 1923 Highway 90 in Liberty. This is on the north side of the Highway at the intersection with Travis Street, one block west of Main St. The trip will probably not last much beyond noon.

We will check the area along Highway 90 between Liberty and Dayton, perhaps several times, and also the Liberty Municipal Park area. The relatively new Knobby Knees trail and boardwalk of the Trinity River NWR can be easily accessed from the Park. The part of the trip looking for kites does not necessitate extensive walking, but the trail does. We will check that area for early migrants and a few other songbirds that may well nest in that area. In addition to the Swallow-tailed Kites, there will be Mississippi Kites flying low in the residential areas of Liberty north of US 90.

The Brown Pelican

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Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Calendar of Events

Important Note: Field Trip notices published here 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 7, 2021. Field Trip to Liberty Area. See Page 1 for details.

Thursday August 19, 2021. Membership Meeting. Tentative program: Trip to Minnesota, June 2019. Dana Nelson and Harlan Stewart. Further detail in next issue.

Saturday August 21, 2019. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. Meet the leaders at the vehicle barrier at Bolivar Flats at 8:30 a.m. Take Highway 124 south from Winnie about 20 miles through High Island. At the shoreline, turn right along Highway 87 and proceed approximately 25 miles through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you come to the intersection with Loop 108. At that intersection, turn left (south – the opposite direction from Loop 108) on Rettilon Road to the beach. If conditions permit, drive onto the sand and turn right to the vehicle barrier (about 1/2 mile). It is about a 90-minute drive from Beaumont or mid-County to the Flats.

Often, after birding the flats, the group proceeds to Fort Travis or to the Big Store to use the facilities and eat lunch. Many participants will bring their lunch, as options to purchase are limited.

The group may stop at Rollover Pass and will probably visit High Island on the way home, checking there for early southbound migrants

To park on the beach, you will need a Galveston County Beach Parking Permit, obtainable for \$10 from most merchants on the Peninsula. (The Big Store opens at 7:00 a.m.)

Thursday September 16, 2021. Membership Meeting. Details in the next issue of the *Brown Pelican* and on the web Site nearer the time

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.

Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues remain at \$20 per year. We are now accepting 2021 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.



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

Great Texas Birding Classic Big Sit

A Golden Triangle Audubon team, organized and coordinated by Christine Sliva, participated in the Big Sit, part of the Great Texas Birding Classic, with excellent support from the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau. In this, teams, not limited in size, try to identify (seen or heard) as many species as possible seen or heard from a 50-ft diameter circle, in a 24-hour period selected by the team. This year we selected the entrance area of Sabine Woods for our circle, picked April 21 as our day and it worked out well. The area has a view of the trees in the entrance area and a clear view across the marsh of Texas Point NWR all the way to the beach of the Gulf of Mexico. This year the total was 96 species, many more than the 58 species recorded on October 17, 2020 from a circle at Cattail Marsh. We will find out the final results sometime in June. The competition in previous years was fierce!

Species Recorded:

Mottled Duck; Blue-winged Teal; Neotropic Cormorant; Brown Pelican; Least Bittern; Great Blue Heron; Great Egret; Snowy Egret; Little Blue Heron; Tricolored Heron; Cattle Egret; Green Heron; Yellow-crowned Night-Heron; White Ibis; White-faced Ibis; Roseate Spoonbill; Black Vulture; Turkey Vulture; Osprey; Northern Harrier; Swainson's Hawk; King Rail; Sora; Purple Gallinule; Common Gallinule; Black-

necked Stilt; Greater Yellowlegs; Lesser Yellowlegs; Willet; Laughing Gull; Ring-billed Gull; Foster's Tern; Royal Tern; White-winged Dove; Mourning Dove; Yellow-billed Cuckoo; Chimney Swift; Ruby-throated Hummingbird; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Downy Woodpecker; Crested Caracara; Merlin; Eastern Wood-Pewee; Acadian Flycatcher; Great Crested Flycatcher; Eastern Kingbird; White-eyed Vireo; Yellow-throated Vireo; Blue-headed Vireo; Red-eyed Vireo; Blue Jay; N. Routh-winged Swallow; Purple Martin; Tree Swallow; Bank Swallow; Barn Swallow; Cliff Swallow; Carolina Chickadee; Red-breasted Nuthatch; House Wren; Sedge Wren; Marsh Wren; Carolina Wren; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Veery; Gray-cheeked Thrush; Swainson's Thrush; Wood Thrush; Gray Catbird; Ovenbird; Northern Waterthrush; Blue-winged Warbler; Black-and-white Warbler; Tennessee Warbler; Kentucky Warbler; Common Yellowthroat; Hooded Warbler; Northern Parula; Magnolia Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Yellow-rumped Warbler; Yellow-throated Warbler; Yellow-breasted Chat; Summer Tanager; Scarlet Tanager; Northern Cardinal; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Blue Grosbeak; Indigo Bunting; Red-winged Blackbird; Common Grackle; Boat-tailed Grackle; Great-tailed Grackle; Brown-headed Cowbird; Orchard Oriole; Baltimore Oriole.

Field Trip to Hardin County – 29 May 2021

This field trip is substantially different from the others we run. The focus is on seeking views of the breeding warblers of the southern part of what remains of the Big Thicket. Gore Store Road and Firetower Road (abbreviated from its original name of Smart School Fire Tower Road) have long been noted birding hotspots. As with any natural area, the habitat is constantly changing. Some areas are being clear cut and replanted. This produces a monoculture of same age, same species trees, which, in general is nowhere near as attractive to most bird species as areas with mixed species of mixed age trees. The habitat along these two roads continues to change. The areas along Gore Store Road used to have fairly large pine trees with grassy understory containing tussocks that were favored by the Bachman's Sparrow. All these areas are now very different with extensive thick understory. As of yet, there are not many clear cuts, but these are presumably coming, as all of the land is privately owned and held for timber production. The sides of the roads have a hedge-like composition, and the areas just in from the hedges, where there is often a nice diversity of small trees and large bushes support several species. More than most roads in the area, Firetower Road has many sections that have been clearcut and replanted with pine trees. These areas are of medium size for the most part, but become monocultures none the less. Ten to 15 foot-pine trees are favored by breeding Prairie Warblers, and this is one of the species we typically target.

On Saturday 29 June, 13 birders, many of them participating in a Golden Triangle Audubon Field Trip for the first time, assembled in the north part of Silsbee near the intersection of FM 91 and FM 418. The weather was

exceptionally pleasant with mostly high cloud, a temperature of 72 degrees and virtually no wind. The weather prognosticators suggested no rain until the afternoon, but as seems so often to be the case, what showers actually eventuated were even later than that. Among the birds already making their presence known were, for the location, a high number of House Sparrows. Although Silsbee has traditionally been American Crow country, the first crow to appear was giving the distinctly nasal call of a Fish Crow. Locally Fish Crows are typically found near fresh water in coastal areas, but apparently, they have been working their way up the local rivers, and have apparently reached northern Silsbee. A distant Red-shouldered Hawk was heard calling, and finally a Great Blue Heron lumbered across heading northwest. In years past, we usually found a woodpecker or two on wooden utility poles in the area of the intersection, but nearly all the poles have been replaced by metal ones.

As usual, we proceeded up FM 92 and turned onto Gore Store Road. The store at that intersection is not called Gore Store anymore, but there is a store. The procedure on this field trip is very much to proceed slowly along the roads, listening for bird calls. When we encounter either a concentration of calls or the call of one of our specific target species on this trip, we pull off to the side of the road and get out and see if we can induce the birds to show. Even more than almost any of our other field trips, we rely on calls and songs to locate and identify the birds. While being careful not to excessively harass the birds, playing the call of a species will often induce a male to patrol the edges of its territory, and perch in view. A brief Screech Owl call will sometimes bring into view a

species that is not calling and was therefore not known up to that point to be present. Typically, a bird that is alerted by a taped call will move around seeking the source of the call. We often have to be satisfied with a brief glimpse, but if we are reasonably quiet and non-threatening to the bird, it may eventually perch on an open branch to allow a longer look.

The first part of Gore Store Road is usually not the best birding, but we got to remind ourselves of the calls of some of the common birds of the area: the American Crow, Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal of course, the ever present Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren and Pima Warbler as well as the migrating species, the Hooded Warbler and White-eyed Vireo. These species are all easily identified by call but seeing them the densely leafed trees and bushes is another matter altogether. The further we got along Gore Store Road, the better the birding. We added Red-eyed Vireo and this was one that we saw well. A bright red male Summer Tanager was more easily seen than most. Yellow-billed Cuckoos called at several places during the trip but were never easily visible. Yellow-breasted Chats were unfortunately content to call from hidden perches. Swainson's Warbler has always been a particular target of this trip, because of its notoriously skulking behavior. We have been increasingly successful in locating this species on migration in Sabine Woods, but the best views many local birders have had of this species have been in late spring in this area. The first one we detected on this day was a long way away, but a little further down the road, after we passed the Little Bighorn Roar and then were in a much less travelled part of the road, one responded vigorously to our efforts, and buzzed the assembled birders two or three feet above our heads before perching briefly in a number of nearby trees so everyone got good looks. A very distant Kentucky Warbler song reminded us to be aware that they nest in the area. As we descended towards the Beech Creek crossing we became aware of a good number of a very attractive blue and purple butterfly perching on the road surface. The butterfly experts among us identified them as Spotted Purples, and we estimated we had seen over 30 by the end of the trip. Our experts called them Great Spotted Purples, but some research suggests the official common name is Red Spotted Purple. They are named after the two or three very small red spots on the hind wings. It seems the butterfly world took lessons from the birding community to name the species after the least conspicuous field mark! This species is actually very similar on a quick view to the Pipevine Swallowtail, also seen nearby and much more familiar to most of us. A hawk turned out to be an immature Red-shouldered Hawk that had apparently argued with too many trees and was missing both wing and tail feathers. We were surprised to hear the descending song of a Prairie Warbler. We were in an area of tall pines, but there were young pines just behind, and the bird apparently came out of those to afford us good looks.

We then reached the Beech Creek bridge, where we always have a good selection of birds willing to be seen. The riparian area is the summer home of several of our target species: Yellow-throated Vireos, Yellow-throated Warblers, Prothonotary Warblers, and Acadian Flycatchers. There were two of each. We spent quite a lot of time there. The male Prothonotary Warbler was in particularly fine plumage, and very accommodating, demonstrating why it was called the

Golden Swamp Warbler in John James Audubon's time/ We retraced our path along Gore Store Road, the only additional species being a Wood Thrush that was heard at we reached the intersection with Firetower Road. However, it was too far away for us to have any chance to lure it closer.

Firetower Road yielded more birds of species we had already seen, especially White-eyed Vireos, Yellow-breasted Chats, Hooded Warblers and Carolina Chickadees. There was interest by some in what appeared to be a Mole Cricket that was crossing the road in front of us. Although it was crossing the road, the habitat was not at all right for the cricket. Was it perhaps the rather similar larval stage of the Spotted Purple? We did add Painted Bunting, but as a distant song, and there was another distant Kentucky Warbler. In recent years, we have found it worthwhile to go northwest on the first mile of Matigwa Road. It did not disappoint this year. We were rewarded with very good looks at a Kentucky Warbler. An Indigo Bunting was also seen. After we turned around and approached Firetower Road again, we were surprised to see a nice adult Red-tailed Hawk, and then, in short order, an Eastern Kingbird and the call of a Great Crested Flycatcher.

The southern part of Firetower Road has more residences, but did not produce the additional species that it has in past years. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen by a few of the group, but the real surprise was a *Buteo* perched near the top of a tree. It was an adult Swainson's Hawk. This species is not often seen so far north in the area.

As much an exploratory experience as anything was a trip up Old Kountze Road and then Ben D, Smith Road, which represents an alternative route back to FM 92 and the starting point. The only new species was a calling Downy Woodpecker, but by then it was getting close to noon and bird activity was decreasing. There were calls of many of the species we had already seen.

The leaders recorded 41 species, including a good selection of the target species, including six warbler species. While this is a small total compared to the 25 or so migrating species seen on the April field trip in Sabine Woods, it is a very respectable total, and probably reflects all the warbler species commonly breeding in Hardin County except Northern Parula. Northern Parulas routinely breed in the Turkey Creek Unit of the Big Thicket National Preserve and elsewhere nearby, they exhibit a strong preference for trees, especially live oaks, with Spanish Moss. There are not areas with Spanish Moss in the normal route of this field trip. Many of the birds were heard only, but this is inevitable in the heavily wooded area..

Birds seen or heard

Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Wood Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-breasted Chat, Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Summer Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Painted Bunting, House Sparrow.

John A. Whittle

Spring Migration Count – 8 May 2021

This was the 28th running of our Jefferson County Spring Migration Count on what has become the Global Big Day of Birding, the second Saturday in May. Always we worry about weather, not the tropical storms and hurricanes that have played havoc with some of our fall counts, but the every May lines of severe weather that can cut a couple of hours out of the birding day and make some of the unpaved roads potentially difficult. But we needn't have worried, the weather was not an issue. Because the date was chosen long ago to be near the peak of migration in the northeast part of the US, it is a little later than would be ideal, but then if it were earlier we would probably have difficulty recruiting participants to carry out the count, as everyone would want to be at Sabine Woods!

After adding in six species reported in various eBird checklists that we have confidence in, the total species count stands at a rather low 169, subject to further revision if we learn more about some other sightings in eBird checklists. The number of species we detect is highly dependent on the number of migrants arriving on count day or the day before. The number of migrant songbird species was not particularly high on count day this year. The total number of individual birds at 8376 was quite low. Likely we are looking at some of the effects of the mid-February winter storm and freeze. Many of the species believed to have been hardest hit are winter residents that breed much further north, and so would not have been expected to still be in the area. There are not a lot of year round resident species, but we can perhaps look at numbers of those that there are. A full evaluation is hindered by us not knowing in any detail about movements of many of the species that are seen year round in our area. In the case of some species, the birds we see in winter breed further north, with the entire population shifting north in spring and back south in the fall. However, the freeze extended south into Mexico, and to the extent birds died on their wintering grounds, the number coming north in spring will be diminished. Winter mortality of first year passerine birds is very high, believed to be about 90 percent in normal years, mainly on account of the difficulties encountered by the inexperienced young birds in finding food in winter. The freeze probably damaged food sources, but the effect on the overall populations may be limited. Certainly, the insectivores among our wintering birds – species such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Eastern Phoebe – were hard hit locally with birds weakened by lack of food freezing to death. Next year's count will tell us more.

Half of Cattail Marsh was inaccessible due to work on the levees, so perhaps we should not read too much into the low numbers of both species of Whistling-Ducks. Mottled Duck numbers seem to have leveled off in the last three year, breaking a significant downward trend in prior years.

Eurasian Collared-Dove numbers continued a noticeable downward trend, while White-winged Dove numbers were about 1/3 of recent averages. Interestingly enough, Mourning Dove numbers were similar to those of the last few years. The White-winged Doves had driven the Mourning Doves out to the agricultural areas of the county over the last decade or so, and they apparently were able to survive the freeze well.

Black-necked Stilt numbers were low, but American Avocets were very high, concentrated in the Pleasure Island/Ship Channel areas. Perhaps the "early" count date found birds that had not yet commenced their northward migration. American Golden Plover migration is usually concentrated towards the beginning of their migration window and we do not usually find them on this count, but this year, for the second consecutive year, we found a few in the rice fields in west Jefferson County. We found all the expected small plovers including a Piping Plover for the second consecutive year. Numbers were not large, but most have usually departed for points north by count day, and access to large stretches of beach continues not to be available.

Sandpiper numbers were down across the board, but many of those may reflect lack of access to beach areas, and also limited access in Cattail Marsh. May 8 may be a little early for large numbers of White-rumped Sandpipers in the rice fields. Yellowlegs of both species, however, were found in normal numbers. This could suggest that the water in many of the rice fields was deeper than the shorter legged shorebirds can handle. This would include Long-billed Dowitchers, Pectoral Sandpipers and others. It was disappointing not to find any Wilson's Phalaropes on count day, although they were recorded in normal numbers during count week.

Gulls and terns were fairly normal. A good number of gulls had to go as unidentified as to species. A large number of Black Terns was notable. Brown Pelicans were found in average numbers, an encouraging sign after many reports of dead pelicans after the big freeze. A few American White Pelicans were recorded for the first time in several years.

Perhaps the most interesting raptor observation was an adult Bald Eagle initially standing in a moist field just outside New Bethel. We know that White-tailed Hawks have nested in the extreme western part of the county but neither the adults nor any young birds were seen. Small numbers of both Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks are an encouraging sign that both species are still present in the county. Crested Caracara populations seem to have stabilized. A Peregrine Falcon was seen, not something that happens every year on this count.

Flycatcher numbers were disappointing and we have to wonder if insect populations have not recovered from the big freeze. Particularly of concern was the almost complete absence of Eastern Wood-Pewees on count day, although there were several reports during count week. Loggerhead Shrikes are still declining, but since the local birds seem to feed mostly on larger insects, they too may be casualties of the aftermath of the freeze. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Eastern Kingbirds, our two breeding flycatchers were down in number. Swallows, including Purple Martins, were down. Barn and Cliff Swallows seemed particularly reduced. European Starling numbers were the lowest in many years. Starlings are omnivorous, but insects (and other small forms of life) and berries are prominent in their diet, and all were significantly affected by the freeze. The birds themselves do survive in areas where very cold weather is routine, but those birds are more acclimatized, and experienced in finding food

that is available in such cold areas. Blackbird and grackle species seemed very normal.

Always an item of interest is the number of warbler species. This year's count day total was quite low, but not quite as low as 2018. When the count week species are included, the warbler diversity was reasonably normal. The larger "woodland" species were mostly found, but in somewhat reduced numbers, orioles, grosbeaks, tanagers and the like.

One count's numbers should not have too much weight placed on them, but this year, without any obvious weather issues around count day, the numbers may be the best reading of the effects of the big freeze that we will have. The passerine birds, with a normal high winter mortality of young birds due to food source issues should rebound in one or two years, as this year's crop will have less competition for food and consequent lowered mortality. Larger birds normally will take longer to recover with lower clutch sizes and longer pre-adult times. Future counts will help us evaluate.

PARTICIPANTS: Christine Sliva, Sherry Gibson, Claudia Gilson, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, John Mariani, Sherrie Roden, Linda and Howard Davis, Denise and Gary Kelley, Steve Mayes, Harlan Stewart, Jana and John Whittle.

SPECIES SEEN: WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (75); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (2); DUCK, Wood (2); TEAL, Blue-winged (82); TEAL, Cinnamon (3); TEAL, Cinnamon/Teal hybrid (1); SHOVELER, Northern (4); DUCK, Mottled (27); GREBE, Pied-billed (1); PIGEON, Rock (32); DOVE, Eurasian Collared- (9); DOVE, Inca (3); DOVE, White-winged (61); DOVE, Mourning (163); CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (21); Nighthawk, Common (13); SWIFT, Chimney (23); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (8); HUMMINGBIRD, Species (3); RAIL, King (2); RAIL, Clapper (28); SORA (8); GALLINULE, Common (56); COOT, American (42); GALLINULE, Purple (19); CRANE, Whooping (1); STILT, Black-necked (61); AVOCET, American (155); PLOVER, Black-bellied (25); PLOVER, American Golden (6); PLOVER, Snowy (1); PLOVER, Wilson's (4); PLOVER, Semipalmated (3); PLOVER, Piping (1); KILLDEER (93); WHIMBREL (108); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (31); SANDPIPER, Stilt (1); SANDERLING (246); DUNLIN (10); SANDPIPER, Least (21); SANDPIPER, White-rumped (16); SANDPIPER, Pectoral (5); SANDPIPER, Semipalmated (7); SANDPIPER, Peep (42); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (18); DOWITCHER species (3); SANDPIPER, Spotted (14); SANDPIPER, Solitary (2); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (8); WILLET (26); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (49); YELLOWLEGS species (19); GULL, Laughing (323); GULL, Ring-billed (3); GULL, Herring (7); GULL species (250); TERN, Least (59); TERN, Gull-billed (1); TERN, Caspian (3); TERN, Black (252); TERN, Forster's (60); TERN, Royal (17); TERN, Sandwich (9); SKIMMER, Black (15); ANHINGA (1); CORMORANT, Neotropic (138); CORMORANT, Double-crested (1); CORMORANT species (2); PELICAN, American White (4); PELICAN, Brown (40); BITTERN, Least (2);

HERON, Great Blue (7); EGRET, Great (124); EGRET, Snowy (112); HERON, Little Blue (53); HERON, Tricolored (23); EGRET, Cattle (790); HERON, Green (28); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (2); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (28); IBIS, White (292); IBIS, White-faced (1); IBIS, Plegadis species (94); SPOONBILL, Roseate (2); VULTURE, Black (105); VULTURE, Turkey (144); OSPREY (3); KITE, White-tailed (1); KITE, Mississippi (6); HARRIER, Northern (3); EAGLE, Bald (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (5); HAWK, Broad-winged (2); HAWK, Swainson's (4); HAWK, Red-tailed (5); HAWK species (2); OWL, Barn (1); OWL, Great Horned (3); KINGFISHER, Belted (1); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (1); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (26); WOODPECKER, Downy (14); WOODPECKER, Pileated (8); CARACARA, Crested (10); FALCON, Peregrine (1); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (1); FLYCATCHER, Acadian (2); PHOEBE, Eastern (2); FLYCATCHER, Great Crested (26); KINGBIRD, Eastern (34); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (15); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (25); VIREO, White-eyed (9); VIREO, Yellow-throated (2); VIREO, Philadelphia (1); VIREO, Red-eyed (13); JAY, Blue (96); CROW, American (12); CROW, Fish (20); CROW, Species (18); SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged (1); MARTIN, Purple (118); SWALLOW, Tree (35); SWALLOW, Bank (7); SWALLOW, Barn (106); SWALLOW, Cliff (364); SWALLOW, Cave (7); SWALLOW species (18); CHICKADEE, Carolina (28); WREN, Marsh (24); WREN, Carolina (26); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (45); VEERY (1); THRUSH, Swainson's (4); ROBIN, American (13); CATBIRD, Gray (9); THRASHER, Brown (13); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (255); STARLING, European (173); WAXWING, Cedar (5); FINCH, House (12); SPARROW, Seaside (11); SPARROW, Nelson's (4); SPARROW, Savannah (5); BOBOLINK (1); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (56); ORIOLE, Orchard (32); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (413); COWBIRD, Bronzed (5); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (79); GRACKLE, Common (80); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (135); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (470); GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed (86); GRACKLE species (83); BLACKBIRD species (200); OVENBIRD (1); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (2); WARBLER, Prothonotary (5); WARBLER, Tennessee (2); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (39); WARBLER, Hooded (4); REDSTART, American (4); PARULA, Northern (4); WARBLER, Magnolia (5); WARBLER, Bay-breasted (2); WARBLER, Blackburnian (1); WARBLER, Yellow (6); WARBLER, Chestnut-sided (1); WARBLER, Pine (9); TANAGER, Summer (5); TANAGER, Scarlet (3); TANAGER, Western (1); CARDINAL, Northern (116); GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (2); GROSBEAK, Blue (1); BUNTING, Indigo (7); BUNTING, Painted (3); DICKCISSEL (139); SPARROW, House (51).

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS (8376); TOTAL SPECIES (169); Observers (15); Parties (8); Party-hours (72.8); Party-Miles (450.9).

The following species were seen and adequately documented as necessary during count week (three days prior and three days after count day): Lesser Scaup; Northern Bobwhite; Western Sandpiper; Long-billed Dowitcher; Wilson's Phalarope; Franklin's Gull; Swallow-tailed Kite; Glossy Ibis; Eastern Screech-Owl; Traill's Flycatcher; Least Flycatcher; Warbling Vireo; Baltimore Oriole; Black-and-White Warbler; Mourning Warbler; Black-throated Green Warbler; Canada Warbler.

John A. Whittle

May Sightings *(continued from page.7)*

Black-thr. Blue Warbler	May 1-4	CAM- Sabine NWR (1) Rosemary Seidler, mult obs
	May 2	AL-Ward Line Rd (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
Prairie Warbler	May 1	CAM-Willow Is (1) harlotte Chehotsky, James Smithers
Black-headed Grosbeak	May 2	HAS-Rice Unv (1) Cin-Ty Lee

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; 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.

Bird Sightings – May 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: Two items below are worthy of comment. Although the Pine Siskins have been around all winter this year, it is interesting to see so many still around in late May. The local checklist we use classifies the species as very rare after the end of March. Perhaps those that wintered here this year will come back next year! The five reports of Yellow-green Vireo are also unprecedented, and we need to carefully check all "Red-eyed Vireos" for the next year or even more to be sure they are not Yellow-green (or Black-whiskered Vireos).

Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Ring-necked Duck	May 10-18	JEF-TP Cell 2 (1 fem) HS
Double-crest. Cormorant	May 1	HAI-Hwy 326 just N of FM421 (1) David Sarkozi, mult obs
Roseate Spoonbill	May 5	ANG- SW Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
Sharp-shinned Hawk	May 23	ANG- SW Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
Crested Caracara	May 25	HAI-Old Sour Lake Rd (1) Bob Friedrichs
Brown Creeper	May 12	ANG- SW Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	May 14	JEF-SW (1) JAW
American Goldfinch	May 21-22	JAS-S of Jasper (2) Laura Clark
Black-thr. Green Warbler	May 27	JAS-W of CR51 (2) Phillip High
Western Tanager	May 6	ANG SW Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
	May 6-10	JEF-SW Jodi Chambers, Sally Palmer, mult obs

Nearby Counties

Surf Scoter	May 30	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Damian Wilson, Ad Konings (on eggs)
Common Goldeneye	May 1-8	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Port Bolivar (1) continuing
Lesser Nighthawk	May 1-2	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Paul Conover, mult obs
	May 2-5	CM-Willow Is (2) Paul Conover, mult obs
Calliope Hummingbird	May 4	HAS-Northwest Houston (1) Ken Hartman
Buff-bellied Hummingbird	thru May 11	GAL-Santa Fe (1) Ross Foreman
Wilson's Snipe	May 6	CHA-ANWR Shoveler Pond (1) Ethan Ellis
Iceland Gull (Thayer's)	May 1	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) continuing
Brown Booby	May 24	HAS-N of Barker Reservoir (1) Bob Honig
Northern Harrier	May 26	HAS-E of Cypress (1) Jill McGowan
Sharp-shinned Hawk	May 25	GAL-Galv Is SP (1) Robert Becker
White-tailed Hawk	May 2	CAM-Tom Stegal Rd (1) Irvin Louque
Yellow-bell. Sapsucker	May 1	HAS-Edith Moore (1) Chris Bailey
Ladder-back. W'pecker	May 18	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) continuing
Great Kiskadee	May 16	CHA-Wallisville (1) Jessica Jia
Couch's Kingbird	May 10-11	HAS-Pine Forest CC (4) Timothy White, Davis Bradford
	May 13	HAS-Archbishop Fiorenza Park (1) Steve Metchis

Yellow-green Vireo

	May 2-8	CAM-Willow Is (1) Paul Conover, mult obs
	May 5	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) Simon Kiacz, Bill Eisele
	May 6	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Richard Rulander
	May 5-13	GAL-Indian Beach Rd (1) Jim Stevenson, mult obs
	May 14	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Marybeth Lima
Black-whiskered Vireo	May 5-7	GAL-Shaman Rd (1) Greg Minnery, mult obs
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	May 21	HAS-Spring Valley (1) Nina Rach

Townsend's Solitaire	May 6-8	CAM-Willow Is (1) Charlotte Chehotsky (1) mult obs
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Pine Siskin

	May 3-9	GAL-Dickinson (1) Jane Murtishaw
	May 7-24	HAS-E Cypress (7) Elliott Ginger (stragglers from winter)
	May 7-28	HAS-Briar Forest (2) Karl Poetzi (stragglers from winter)
	May 8	HAS-Humble (2) Mary Lopinto
	May 8	HAS-W of Woodlands (3) Sam Toscano
	May 8	HAS-E of Cypress (1) Charles Sammons
	May 8	GAL-Friendswood (6) William Schaefer
	May 12-16	HAS-Geo Bush Park area (10) Kevin Smith
	May 12-29	HAS-Bear Creek Park area (10) Ken Hartman
	May 13	HAS-Houston Champion Forest (1) Ross Silcock
	May 24-25	HAS-E of Pearland (2) Judy Behrens and Mike Austin
	May 24	HAS-Fairwood (1) John Cocanower
	May 24	CAL-French Settlement (3) Beth Kramer
Lesser Goldfinch	May 31	HAS-Friendswood (1) Stwnw Berenzweig
American Goldfinch	May 1	GAL-Airport (1) Richard Liebler
	May 27	CAL-French Settlement (1) Beth Kramer
Chipping Sparrow	May 2	CAM-Willow Is (2) James Beck, Mark Meunier, Joan Garvey
Clay-colored Sparrow	May 2	HAS-Briar Forest Area (1) Karl Poetzi
	May 2-4	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
	May 7	GAL-Dos Vacas Metchis (1) Paul Sivon, mult obs
Green-tailed Towhee	May 1-5	GAL-Dos Vacas Metchis (1) continuing
Eastern Towhee	May 1-5	HAS-W of Tomball (1) Cindy Cain
	May 2	HAS-N of Cypress, W of Tomball (1) Cindy Crane
	May 2	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee,
Yellow-headed Blackbird	May 6	HAS-J P Landing Park (1) Fred Collins, mult obs
	May 14	CAM-Chalkley Rd (1) Tom Finnie
Bullock's Oriole	May 1-2	GAL- Smith Oaks (1) Kris Cannon
Bobolink	May 21	GAL-Port Bolivar (1) John O'Brien
	May 23	GAL-Galveston Is SP (1) Garrett Sheets
	May 26	HAS-J P Landing Park (1) Bayard Nicklow
Worm-eating Warbler	May 13	JEF-Pt Neches (1) Michelle Holland
Louisiana Waterthrush	May 2	CAM-Sabine NWR Wetland Walkway (1) Deanna Griggs
	May 2	CHA-ANWR (exact location not specified) (1) David Hanson
	May 2	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Shane Cantrell
Brewster's Warbler	May 5	GAL-Lafittes Cove (1) Ashley and Anita Meagher
Yellow Warbler	May 29	GAL-North Deer Is (1) Chance Boatright

(continued on page 6)

Golden Triangle Audubon Society
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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.