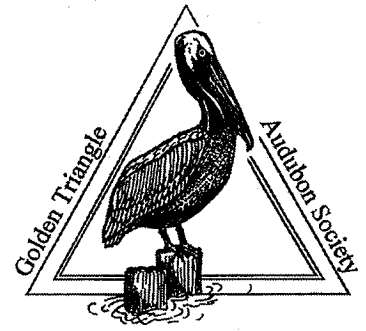


# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 27 No 10

October 2021

**Membership Meeting**  
**Thursday October 21, 2021 7:00 p.m.**  
**Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**Minnesota 2019: Loons, Woodpeckers and More**  
**Dana Nelson and Harlan Stewart**

In June 2019 a group of Golden Triangle Audubon members made an expedition to Northern Minnesota to see breeding Common Loons and other species of the area. We stayed at the Spring Bay Resort, on the western edge of Vermilion Lake. The Covid-19 situation has prevented us from presenting this program until now. We hope this time will work, but check the website before setting out!

The lake has the highest concentrations of breeding Common Loons in the area, and our visit was timed to coincide with the presence of young chicks. A good variety of warblers breeds in the area, including Connecticut Warblers. Both of the North American "three toed" woodpeckers, the American Three-toed and the Black-backed Woodpeckers breed in the area, and we were able to see both species.

In addition to Vermilion Lake and its vicinity, the group visited the famous Sax-Zim Bog northwest of Duluth, made a brief excursion into the Rainey River area of Ontario, Canada, and visited the Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary in Orr, MN operated by the American Bear Association to showcase American Black Bears.

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be available from 6:15 p.m.

## **Sabine Woods Work Day Postponed to Saturday October 9**

Because of the extremely wet conditions and the threat of more heavy rain, we postponed the Sabine Woods Work Day for one week until Saturday October 9. Please join us then if you can.

## *The Brown Pelican*

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Issue number 276

Golden Triangle  
Audubon Society

Web Site for more information  
[www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org)

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## Calendar of Events

*Important Note: Field Trip and other notices published here are subject to last minute changes especially in the current Covid-19 environment. Changes will always be posted on [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org) so check the web site before setting out.*

### Future Programs and Field Trips.

**Saturday October 9, 2021. Sabine Woods Work Day. POSTPONED FROM OCTOBER 2.** We plan to do our usual fall routine maintenance. We will be there from about 7:30 a.m. Normally, we work until about noon. We will supply cold water and soft drinks and hope to be able to provide sandwiches for lunch.

We have a limited number of hand tools but if you have loppers or clippers, please bring them. If you have a heavy duty riding mower and the means to transport it, please let us know in advance so we can coordinate. We may need a chain saw, but probably only one. Bring insect repellent!

For more details, contact John Whittle at [gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com)

**Thursday October 21, 2021. Membership Meeting.** Program on trip to Minnesota by Dana Nelson and Harlan Stewart. See page 1 for details

**Saturday October 23, 2021. 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. Meet 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, and gasoline is not available. Bring drinks.

October 21 is towards the end of fall songbird 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 some past years, this has included Red-breasted

Nuthatch (already seen in Sabine Woods this fall) and Brown Creeper. There are always interesting birds at Sabine Woods! Birding Sabine Woods is relatively easy walking.

**Thursday November 18, 2021. Annual Meeting.** The Annual Meeting of Golden Triangle Audubon Society will take place on November 18, 2021 in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park. At this meeting, we will hold elections for all Officer and At-Large Board positions. To contact the Nominating Committee or to nominate someone, please in the first instance email [gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com)

**Saturday November 20, 2021. 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 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. However, there is considerable concern over the apparent declines in populations of many passerine species in West Jefferson County.

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



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](http://www.earthshare-texas.org)

emerge out of the woodlands, South China Road goes to the right (east then north) and immediately afterwards, on the left, is Johnson Road. Contact Field Trip chair Steve Mayes, gtaudubon@aol.com for further information. This will be largely a "car birding" trip, car pooling desired.

## Fall Migration Count

The Fall Migration Count was conducted on September 18. The preliminary total number of species observed was 161, slightly above the ten year average of 160. We will have a full report in next month's issue.

## Camera Auction

The auction of the camera and lens described in the August issue has been postponed again. We expect the camera to be available for inspection at the October meeting with bids closing at the end of the November meeting.

## Field Trip to Smith Point

*(continued from page 6)*

The following species were recorded by the official hawk watch counter and the trip leaders:

White-winged Dove (14); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (15); Laughing Gull (15); Wood Stork (2); Neotropic Cormorant (6); Magnificent Frigatebird (2); American White Pelican (28); Brown Pelican (15); Great Blue Heron (1); Great Egret (2); Snowy Egret (2); Green Heron (1); White Ibis (12); White-faced Ibis (1); Black Vulture (12); Turkey Vulture (8); Osprey (2); Swallow-tailed Kite (3); Mississippi Kite (437); Northern Harrier (7); Sharp-shinned Hawk (39); Cooper's Hawk (48); Broad-winged Hawk (17,746); Swainson's Hawk (2); Red-tailed Hawk (1); American Kestrel (8); Merlin (3); Blue Jay (3); Barn Swallow (10); Cliff/Cave Swallow (1); Swallow sp. (50); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (10); Carolina Wren (1); Northern Mockingbird (1); Common Yellowthroat (5); American Redstart (1); Northern Cardinal (1); Blue Grosbeak (22)

*Steve Mayes*

## September Sightings

*(continued from page 7)*

Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Sep 23	CAL-Old Camp Rd (1) James Smithers
Veery	Sep 15	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Kris Cannon
	Sep 18	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Fran Holmes
	Sep 20-21	HAS-Edith Moore Sanct (1) Letha Slagle, mult obs
Grasshopper Sparrow	Sep 28	HAS-Warren Ranch (1) Cin-Ty Lee, Howard Laidlaw
Clay-colored Sparrow	Sep 11	CAM-Sabine NWR Blue Goose Trail (1) Eric Ripma
Chipping Sparrow	Sep 24-25	CAM-Willow Island (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, mult obs
Nelson's Sparrow	Sep 24	CAM-Sabine NWR Blue Goose Trail (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
	Sep 27	HAS-Baytown NC (1) Ray Porter
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Sep 25	CAL-Fabacher Rd (2) James Smithers
Magnolia Warbler	Sep 6	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Shane Cantrell (early)
Blackburnian Warbler	Sep 11	CAL-Lake Charles 10th St (1) James Smithers
Chestnut-Sided Warbler	Sep 14	HAS-W of NRG Stadium (1) John O'Brien (early)
	Sep 15	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee, Leo Costello
Townsend's Warbler	Sep 15	GAL-Lafittes Cove (1) Robert Becker
Western Tanager	Sep 21	HAS-UH Clear Lake Nature Trl (1) Davis Clay
Pyrrhuloxia	Sep 12	HAS-Edith Moore Sanct (1) David Bartel

**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;; 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.

## Corpus Christi Hawk Watch From the GTAS Facebook Page Published by Jana Whittle · Sep 24

I decided to look over the data for the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch. The hawks from eastern and central Canada that pass over the narrow strip of land between Lakes Huron and Erie are believed to head southwest from over Detroit and most of them reach the Texas Gulf Coast somewhere in the general vicinity of Victoria. There are no "bottlenecks" or mountain ranges (and thus no Hawk Watches) between Detroit and the Texas Coast. (Hawks avoid flying over water, and use the updrafts from mountain slopes.) A large number of hawks are counted over the Detroit area, so when they join the stream of hawks from Eastern Canada, New England and the northeast US, all flying down the Appalachian chain, very large kettles form.. I have put the Corpus Christi totals in the order of when they had the most hawks (includes migrating vultures) during the three month hawk watching seasons.

2004 - 1,030,849	2016 - 681,998	2008 - 452,191
1998 - 992,950	2007 - 649,622	2000 - 444,484
2001 - 897,519	2015 - 632,497	2013 - 441,924
1997 - 841,138	2019 - 602,556	2012 - 389,366
2006 - 825,916	2011 - 536,353	2010 - 381,302
2003 - 727,899	2002 - 528,539	2018 - 343,826
2020 - 690,074	2014 - 461,014	2017 - 276,155
1999 - 687,014	2007 - 457,477	

The largest one day totals were:

Sep 28, 2004 — 520,351 hawks	Sep 22, 2014 — 87,968 hawks
Sep 26, 2001 — 446,420 hawks	Sep 29, 2010 — 87,689 hawks
Sep 26, 1998 — 306,991 hawks	Sep 25, 2008 — 86,483 hawks
Sep 28, 1997 — 302,294 hawks	Sep 28, 2020 — 85,185 hawks
Sep 27, 2006 — 164,809 hawks	Oct 27, 2015 — 84,363 hawks
Sep 29, 2002 — 124,586 hawks	Sep 26, 2019 — 79,500 hawks
Sep 27, 2016 — 121,895 hawks	Sep 23, 1999 — 72,887 hawks
Sep 23, 2003 — 119,466 hawks	Sep 28, 2017 — 72,338 hawks
Sep 19, 2000 — 111,540 hawks	Sep 30, 2005 — 72,233 hawks
Sep 30, 2011 — 107,816 hawks	Sep 22, 2013 — 56,220 hawks
Sep 22, 2007 — 97,228 hawks	Oct 4, 2018 — 41,275 hawks
Sep 28, 2009 — 92,755 hawks	Sep 20, 2012 — 31,940 hawks

The Oct 27, 2015 total includes 83,997 migrating Turkey Vultures – a most unusual event.

# The Birdlife of Southeast Texas in Oberholser – Part 3

*by Steve Mayes*

Welcome to the third and final installment of interesting records from Oberholser's Bird Life of Texas – or at least interesting to me! This article mostly centers on records from the Golden Triangle area with a few diversions. In this installment, we will wrap up the records from the books and look at a few hypothetical records as well.

The first is not very surprising but still noteworthy. Oberholser records Horned Lark from the Spring in Jefferson County though he does not specify the year(s) of the sighting. This bird breeds at least as close as Galveston County and has been recorded in more recent times but these sightings remain frustratingly few and far between. Perhaps the beach areas in Jefferson County are lacking something that Larks like or perhaps they just tend to occupy the hard to access areas along the closed portion of Highway 87. Either way, this remains a hard to get bird in Jefferson County.

Oberholser also has a couple of interesting notes on swallows. The first is a Violet-green Swallow record from Spring in Hardin County. This is an awful good record for a largely wooded county but not completely surprising. This western species has been recorded in Jefferson County and, like all swallows, is a very capable flier and capable of turning up almost anywhere. And migration time (like Spring) would be the most likely time for such a record. Cave Swallow had not yet been recorded in our area in the time of Oberholser. In fact, the species had not been recorded anywhere east of San Antonio! Even at this time however, it seems that Cave Swallow habits were changing. The first record of Cave Swallows using manmade culverts for nesting instead of caves was in 1973 in central Texas. Still, it was not until 1989 that the first birds were found breeding in the boast house at Sea Rim State Park. Now, of course, they are quite common breeders in the area along with their cousins the Cliff Swallow. Cliff Swallows had already started colonizing east Texas during Oberholser's time.

Some other interesting but not too surprising records from Oberholser include records of White-breasted Nuthatch and Bewick's Wren. Oberholser

records White-breasted Nuthatch from Hardin County which seems likely and that it used to be a more common species in southeast Texas but has become less common in the area since 1950 though the reasons are not clear. Bewick's Wren is recorded as breeding near Beaumont in July of 1916. This is a species that used to be more common in the southeastern United States but that population has greatly diminished in recent decades and certainly no longer breeds in east Texas. Records of Bewick's Wren of any kind in east Texas are rare these days and usually occur in the Fall or Winter.

A more exciting record was that of a Clark's Nutcracker from Cedar Bayou in Liberty County on November 7, 1958. There is a more recent sight record from Smith Point so perhaps this is a bird to keep our eyes out for in the Fall after a strong front.

Less welcome records are those of European Starlings and House Sparrows. The second record of European Starling for Texas was recorded in Beaumont on January 8, 1926. Southeast Texas was the third area of Texas to record House Sparrow with our first record in January 1882. Now these species are all over our area and cause a lot of problems for our native species – especially those that nest in cavities. Eastern Bluebirds and Purple Martins are prime examples of birds greatly affected by these aggressive invaders.

As far as warblers go, Oberholser lists a few of breeders that may be of interest. Black and White Warbler is reported as a breeder for Jefferson County. As this species is probably still a somewhat rare breeder in Hardin County that is not too surprising though the species probably no longer breeds in Jefferson County. American Redstart as a breeder in Liberty County is also not surprising as the species may still breed there and in Hardin County at least in small numbers. The fact that Yellow Warbler is reported as a former breeder for Hardin and possibly Jefferson County is more surprising. This species no longer breeds anywhere close to southeast Texas if, in fact, it ever did. Could these records be mistaken identifications of Prothonotary Warblers? Yellow Warblers are also known to be among the last

breeders to pass through in the Spring so perhaps a few lingering birds in early June made someone think they were breeders? Impossible to know for sure.

Orioles also produce a couple of interesting tidbits in Oberholser. He lists a sight record for Scott's Oriole from Hardin County from January 15-16, 1957. Certainly, an odd record for Hardin! Baltimore Oriole is reported as a breeding bird for Jefferson County as late as 1914 and summer records were recorded from Liberty and Hardin County as well. This species still breeds in small numbers in northeast Texas but no longer occurs as a summer bird in our area. It is unclear why the species no longer breeds here but its breeding range has been retreating northward in other parts of the country in recent decades as well.

The House Finch has become a familiar sight at backyard feeders in southeast Texas in recent years in defiance of the predictions of Oberholser. Although he notes the species as casual (non-breeders) along the upper Texas coast he believed that "permanent establishment in Texas east of Austin seems doubtful". I suppose that is because this was originally a western bird more accustomed to drier climates but the species seems to have adapted to humid southeast Texas with some success!

Oberholser notes Lark Sparrow as a breeder for Jefferson and Hardin Counties and this could still be true in very small numbers. He also notes Bachman's Sparrow as a breeder for Hardin and Orange Counties and there is no doubt that this was once true. Lumber harvesting and development largely put an end to that though the species is still a low density breeder in Hardin County. The fact that not one but two specimens of Golden-crowned Sparrow exist from Orange County is much more surprising! They were collected on March 15 and April 4, 1887 and represent the only records of the species for our area.

Then there are records that even Oberholser is skeptical of though I expect a few of them might actually have been real. The first is a sight record of a female Jamaican Becard from Galveston Island on September 23, 1951. The bird was supposedly studied at close range and occurred after the passage of a hurricane that passed over Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands – possible? Less likely is the sight record of a Harpy Eagle from the border area in 1878. Though this species once occurred in Mexico, the

dense rain forests this huge raptor favors did not occur anywhere close to south Texas even in those days. This is likely a case of mistaken identity. A Thick-billed Parrot reported from south Texas in 1858 by the son of John J. Audubon is also likely a mistake. Small number of this species once populated southern Arizona but it probably never occurred in Texas. Likely, he mistook a different parrot species. A record of a Social Flycatcher from 1957 seems very likely however. This species has now been identified in Texas on a couple of occasions and its range extends to northern Mexico. A record of Lesser Greenlet, a small vireo relative, seems possible. This species does occur in eastern Mexico and is quite common in the tropics. Maybe it occasionally strays north? It is a pretty plain bird and could be easily overlooked. Another record with some possibility is that of "Bahama Honeycreeper" better known these days as the Bananaquit. It occurs in parts of southeastern Mexico including the Yucatan. One could imagine a hurricane blowing one of these tiny nectar feeders into Texas at some point. A couple colorful species also have hypothetical records in Oberholser. Golden-browed Warbler is listed though the year of the sighting is not noted. This species is similar to Rufous-capped Warbler which does occur in Texas so it could be a case of mistaken identity but Golden-browed also occurs in Mexico within a couple of hundred miles from Texas so it is possible. Finally, he lists a record of "Blue-headed Euphonia" from 1841. This species is now known as Elegant Euphonia and would certainly be a welcome addition to the Texas avifauna. Also, like the Golden-browed Warbler, it does occur in Mexico fairly close to the Texas border. There seems no reason why this species could not show up. If it does, hopefully someone will have a camera!

So, these have been some of the records from Oberholser's Bird Life of Texas that I found interesting. If you ever have the chance, I urge you to peruse these volumes. They are a wonderful account of the birds of Texas and give far more details that I was able to convey in these articles. Some of the accounts are quite sad as they represent species that no longer occur in Texas or, in some cases, anywhere. Still, it is a fascinating read and I hope I have peaked your interest to study these old record and to get out and make some new records for Texas. Or maybe just confirm one of old record!

# Field Trip to Smith Point Hawk Watch – 25 September 2021

The Smith Point Hawk Watch is always a boom or bust affair but who knew that it could be both in one day? This was the case for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society's September field trip to Candy Abshire Wildlife Management Area for the annual Fall hawk watch. Would the birders see hoards of Broad-winged Hawks streaming overhead? Or be shut out of large numbers as happens some years? How about both!

The field trip this year seemed to be set up at an ideal time. A couple of days after a strong front passes through the area is usually exactly what you are looking for as the hawks are pushed down by the front but usually lag behind its leading edge by a day or two. Coupled with the field trip date coinciding with the traditional peak of the Broad-winged migration seemed like a good combination. That fact that thousands of hawks passed though a few days earlier also bode well. More that a dozen birders from the Golden Triangle Audubon Society arrived hoping for the best. And things started out well.

A nice flock of immature Mississippi Kites arrived in Smith Point the day before the field trip and spent the night in the large oaks near the hawk watch tower. As the sun rose, the kites began to mill about and gave many great looks to the assembled birders. The streaked plumage and banded tails of these young kites is quite different from the elegant gray and black plumage of the adult birds but the falcon like profile and elegant circling flight was still obvious. This is one of the things that makes Smith Point such a great spot – the chance to study raptors of different ages and plumages at close range. There is no better place to learn your raptors than Smith Point on a good fall day!

Accipiters are often seen early in the mornings during the Fall. Sharp-shinned Hawks especially are often on the move far earlier than the larger, soaring hawks. Perhaps that is because they are less dependent on thermals to form to allow them to migrate or, perhaps they just like to be on the move before those larger raptors are around to avoid becoming lunch! Either way, it is better to get to the hawk tower early if you want to study Sharp-shinned Hawks. Cooper's Hawks may be on the move early as well but also occur more later in the day as they will often soar on thermals with the buteos. On this day, several of both species were observed with the Sharp-shinned being the more common.

A few Broad-winged Hawks started soaring through a little later in the morning. Eventually a small kettle or two, mixed with the kites, was seen. These crow-sized buteos are the most common raptor species at the Smith Point hawk watch and can occur here in the thousands on the right day. The species has become more common as a breeder in southeast Texas in the past twenty years or so but are at their most numerous in our area during fall migration. Any day in September could produce large numbers of these hawks but the days after a front are usually the best time to look. Still, on this day, few hawks were evident before lunch time.

A few other raptors were noted in the morning including a tiny American Kestrel and a slightly larger Merlin. These small falcons are quite common in our area in the fall and winter. An Osprey was seen hauling a fish to some perch for his breakfast. A Northern Harrier or two passed through and these were among the first of the fall for most present. This species will

become quite common in the coming weeks. A beautiful Swallow-tailed Kite was seen soaring high up with other birds. Although it would have been appreciated if the bird had come down lower for a closer look, the view was still exciting. Many of the birders present still remember the days when this was an extremely rare bird for the area. Luckily, these elegant raptors are now seen much more often and even nest in the area.

Non-raptors were also noted on the day. Blue Grosbeaks were seen on the fields and trees surrounding the hawk tower. An Olive-sided Flycatcher perched atop a dead snag nearby looking for insect prey. A Wood Stork or two came soaring by the tower, giving quite close looks to the assembled crowd. This species can sometimes come through Smith Point in huge numbers much like the hawks but such was not the case on this day. Plenty of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds fought over the feeders stationed on the hawk tower. This included an adult male or two but were mostly young birds. But young or old, there is nothing that hummingbirds love more than fighting! It makes for an entertaining spectacle even when there are no hawks to be seen. A Magnificent Frigatebird was sighted over Trinity Bay and Smith Point is usually an excellent place to look for this species. Plenty of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers passed through the tower area and were easily seen by any who cared to look. The only warblers located were the Common Yellowthroats near the parking lot and a single American Redstart located by a group that hiked out to the nearby oak mottes. Smith Point can be an excellent place for land bird migrants but there were few on the day of the field trip. Swallows zipped by the tower but most were too high and too fast to identify. Most of the low flying ones appeared to Barn Swallows. Numerous waterbirds including Brown Pelicans, American White Pelicans, Great and Snowy Egrets and Neotropical Cormorants were seen around the tower as well.

Still, raptors are the stars of the show at Smith Point and despite a good start with all of the Mississippi Kites in the morning, the day was beginning to look a bit dead. By 1pm, the raptors had pretty much dried up and there was not much to look at. With no birds and unclear prospects, many of the birders chose to call it a day and head for home. The patient birders stuck it out and hoped for more to come. They would be rewarded. After about 1:30pm, the first wave of Broad-winged Hawks started passing through. More than 7000 birds were present by 2pm! [*Unfortunately, the large kettles did not come directly overhead, but passed by some distance to the north, and were impressive none the less – Ed*] And they were not done. By the end of the day, the official hawk counter would tally more than 17,000 Broad-wings! This qualified as one of the biggest days ever at Smith Point and was a thrill to all of those still present for the show.

So, boom and bust. Bust for those of us who left too early and boom for those birders that had the patience to stick it out. It is just a reminder of how good Smith Point can be in the fall and also a reminder that patience is a virtue in birding as in most things in life! Next year, I expect more birders will stick a bit longer on the Golden Triangle Audubon's 2022 trip to Smith Point!

*(continued on page 3)*



# Bird Sightings – September 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:** Very few reports of rare birds until late in the month. A few species from just west or just south of our area appeared, and later in the month some significantly early expected winter residents.

However, Sabine Woods produced several notable birds. A Pacific-Slope Flycatcher on Sep. 19 (only) was persuaded to call to distinguish it from the visually identical Cordilleran Flycatcher. While the Pacific-Slope Flycatcher is

more prone to wander, there are few sightings in east Texas that have been confirmed since the now two species were recognized as a split of the Western Flycatcher. A Black-throated Blue Warbler was more cooperative, staying for five days, while a Black-throated Gary Warbler on Sep. 23 was another one-day visitor. A female plumaged Cape May Warbler was present Sep. 24. An early Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen and heard from September 20 on.

Harlan Stewart's yard in Nederland hosted not only one male Rufous Hummingbird likely to be a returning bird, but a second male took up residence, and was joined late in the month by an immature male. There are also anecdotal reports of a number of other Rufous and Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds this year.

Hurricane Nicholas came up the Central Texas Coast Sep. 14 as a Category 1 hurricane, and quickly lost its upper wind structure. There were many sightings of groups of Magnificent Frigatebirds in Harris County well north of the coast.

We have decided not to include species level identifications of *Empidonax* flycatchers that are reported in the eBird alerts. It remains to be seen how many will make it through the eBird review process.

## Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

Common Ground-Dove	Sep 30	HAI-Sandyland (1) Art Mackinnon
Rufous Hummingbird	thru Sep 30	JEF-Nederland (up to 3) HS ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
Rufous/Allen's H'bird	Sep 18	JEF-Groves (1) Sherrie Roden
Franklin's Gull	Sep 30	HAI-Sandylands (1) Art Mackinnon
Lsr Black-backed Gull	Sep 18,25	JEF-SRSP (1) SM, Caley Thomas
Crested Caracara	Sep 30	HAI-Sandylands (1) Art Mackinnon
Pacific Slope Flycatcher	Sep 19	JEF-SW (1) Matt O'Sullivan. JHH, SM, JAW, Greg Jackson
Tropical Kingbird	Sep 17-30	JEF-TX87 E of Sabine Woods to Old Cemetery (2) mult obs
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Sep 18	JEF-Pilot Station Road (10 SM
	Sep 20	JEF-SW (1) JAW heard only
	Sep 22	JEF-SW (1) SM,
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Sep 13	ANG-Lufkin (1) Gary Hunter
Cape May Warbler	Sep 24	JEF-SW (1 fem) SM, mult obs
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	Sep 15-19	JEF-SW (1 male) Ashley Fuselier, mult obs
Black-thr. Gray Warbler	Sep 23	JEF-SW (1) Ashley Fuselier, JHH
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Sep 23	JEF-SW (1) Greg Jackson

## Nearby Counties

Anna's Hummingbird	Sep9	HAS-Downtown (1 found dead) Kary Bledsoe
Broad-tailed Humm'bird	Sep 16-26	HAS-Memorial area (1) Sue Orwing
Limpkin	Sep 2-28	HAS-Sheldon Lake SP (1) mult obs
Sandhill Crane	Sep 12	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (9) Christine Smith (very early)
Common Loon	Sep 22	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Stuart Nelson, Cin-Ty Lee
Brown Booby	Sep 1-27	HAS-Baytown Nat Ctr (2) Robert Rogillio, mult obs
	Sep 3	CAL-Lake Charles Swimming beach (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, David Booth
White-rump. Sandpiper	Sep 12	CAM-Holly Beach (1) David Booth

Lsr Black-backed Gull	Sep 5	CHA-Atkinson Is (1) Jay Packer, Drew Dickert
Sabine's Gull	Sep 28	GAL-Offshore Galveston Is (1) Ron Weeks
Sooty Tern	Sep 2	GAL-Hwy 197 Ponds (1) Allen Hardee
Magnificent Frigatebird	Sep 13-14	HAS-Morgan's Point (23) John Berner, Stuart Nelson (large nbr); numerous reports of groups of 8 on Sep14 over W Houston
	Sep 14	LIB-Liberty Hwy 90 (1) Shelli Ellerbe
American Bittern	Sep 1	HAS-Rice U (1) Cin-Ty Lee
	Sep 12	HAS-El Franco Lee Park (1) Steve Rogow
Glossy Ibis	Sep 24	HAS-Sheldon Lake (1) Judy Behrens
White-tailed Hawk	Sep 1	CAL-Tom Segal Rd (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, Kirsten Livingston
Ladder-back. W'pecker	Sep 28	HAS-Warren Ranch (3) mult obs
Hairy Woodpecker	Sep 12	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Timothy Freiday
Western Wood-Pewee	Sep 10-11	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Michael Muscheme, mult obs
Eastern Phoebe	Sep 24-28	CAM-Willow Is (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, mult obs
Say's Phoebe	Sep 18	HAS-San Jacinto Battleground (1) Dale Wolck
	Sep 25-26	CAM-Willow Is (1) Rosemary Seidler, Charlie Lyon, Brad Price
Great Kiskadee	Sep 2	CHA-JJ Mayes (1) John Berner
Bell's Vireo	Sep 6-9,27	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Letha Slagle, mult obs, Jim Hinson
	Sep 6	HAS-Rice U (1) Cin-Ty Lee
	Sep10-17	CAL-Lake Charles 10th St (1) James Smithers, mult obs
Purple Martin	Sep 26	CAL-Lake Charles (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Sep 22	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Debbie McMullen, Fred Collins, mult obs
	Sep 22	HAS-Friendswood (1) Chris Bick
Bewick's Wren	Sep 26	HAS-Warren Ranch (1) John Berner, Cin-Ty Lee

*Continued on page 3*

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

## FIRST CLASS MAIL

### NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

#### Membership Form

To join the National Audubon Society, please complete this form and return with Introductory Membership fee of \$20 (payable to the National Audubon Society, or indicate you wish to be billed) to National Audubon Society, Memberships, PO Box 97194, Washington, DC 20090-7194. To use this form to give a membership as a gift, please complete the form and indicate your name in the appropriate space. Payment should accompany gift memberships.

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Golden Triangle Audubon C1ZW250Z

### *Brown Pelican* SUBSCRIPTION/ MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail to Golden Triangle Audubon Society (GTAS), P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292 or bring to any Membership Meeting. National Audubon Society (NAS) members with addresses within our official territory are automatically GTAS members without further payment, but are asked to contribute \$20 if they are able since we only receive a very small amount from NAS after the first year.

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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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](http://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.