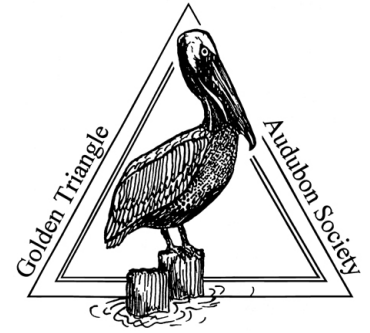


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 28 No 6

June 2022

Summer Break!

Although we have resumed a full program of meetings, there will, as usual, be no membership meetings in June or July. Our next meeting will be on **THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022** at 7:00 p.m. in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont, Texas. Details of the program will be published in the August issue of the *Brown Pelican*.

We are always looking for programs that will be of interest to our members, so please let us know if you have a program to present, or know of someone who can.

The next issue of the *Brown Pelican* will be a combined July/August issue, to be published in early August.

Golden Triangle Audubon Facebook

We have a very active 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. This is a unique opportunity to share your pictures of birds with other members and followers of Golden Triangle Audubon. While we make a special effort to feature unusual birds seen in the Golden Triangle area or nearby, there are no hard and fast rules about what can be contributed. All levels of pictures are welcome, especially of less common birds, and there is a large number of followers from outside the immediate area! 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. You can send your contribution through a Facebook message or in an email directly to the moderators or to gtaudubon@aol.com.

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

Future Programs and Field Trips. *The latest information is always available on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.*

We do not meet in June or July. We will resume with a Membership Meeting on Thursday August 18. As we go to press, details of the program for that meeting have not been finalized. Full details will be in the July/August issue of the Brown Pelican which will be distributed in the first few days of August.

We plan on running a Field Trip to the Liberty area to look for Swallow-tailed kites. The date and full details will be published on the web-site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org and in the July/August issue.

Warblers at Sabine Woods in April 2022

Jana Whittle

Most years different birders ask experienced birders when is the best day to see the most warbler species. As you might guess, it varies greatly from year to year, and depends on the weather, and windspeed and direction. This year has been a year that some people predicted would not have that many warbler species because we had lots of days of south winds. An interesting day that I witnessed was one of those south wind days. At the front of the woods, there were very, very few warbler species, but in the back of the woods there were quite a few. So much for predicting the number of warbler species expected when there are south winds.....

Harlan Stewart looked at a spreadsheet he has been keeping of weather information from the Weather Service at the airport. The data goes back to 2010 - a 12 year period prior to 2022. So for April wind speeds:

44% of all April days pre-2022 had average wind speeds greater than 10 mph. For April 2022, 70%

9% of all April days pre-2022 had average wind speeds greater than 15 mph. For April 2022, 30%

17% of all April days pre-2022 had a maximum wind speed greater than 25 mph. For April 2022 37%

4% of all April days pre-2022 had a maximum wind speed greater than 30 mph. For April 2022 13%

So April 2022 was indeed windy.

Here is a list of number of warbler species for each day of April 2022. I took this info from ebird.org for Sabine Woods. The wind direction was taken from Wunderground at the Beaumont airport. Now you can try to figure out which day to tell those who ask which days are the best time to go to Sabine Woods....

Date	Number of Warbler Sp	Winds	Date	Number of Warbler Sp	Winds
April 1st	12	ENE	April 16th	24	SSE, S & SSW
April 2nd	4	NNE & ENE	April 17th	21	SSE, S, & SSW
April 3rd	7	ENE & SSE	April 18th	17	NNE & N
April 4th	6	SSE	April 19th	24	ENE & E
April 5th	18	SSW	April 20th	23	SSE & SE
April 6th	16	SSW	April 21st	23	SE & ESE
April 7th	15	NNW	April 22nd	21	ESE & SE
April 8th	15	WNW	April 23rd	19	SE & SSE
April 9th	18	S	April 24th	18	SSE
April 10th	7	SSE	April 25th	22	S & SSE
April 11th	16	SE	April 26th	21	N & NE
April 12th	20	SE & SSE	April 27th	23	ENE & ESE
April 13th	15	SSE	April 28th	19	SSE
April 14th	27	ENE	April 29th	15	SSE
April 15th	23	ENE & E	April 30th	14	SSE & S

Field Trip to Hardin County – 21 May 2022

There was an excellent turnout for the Golden Triangle Audubon's annual field trip to the back roads of Hardin County. More than a dozen birders congregated on an early late spring morning awaiting the chance at seeing some of the breeding songbirds of the Big Thicket. But sometimes the good birding starts before the "official" field trip does!

Standing in a parking lot near a pizza place in town would not seem like a good way to get birds but sometimes it turns out that way. Sure, the group started with House Sparrows and Starlings as one might expect. And maybe many would not appreciate the feat of getting both American and Fish Crows in the parking lot but those would not be birders! Barn Swallows zipped over the parking lot while a White-winged Dove sat on a nearby power line and a Northern Mockingbird sang from nearby. One of the very best birds of the trip soon appeared to the delight of the assembled group – a Swallow-tailed Kite! Boldly patterned in black and white with a big, forked tail there are few raptors that make an impression like this bird. The Swallow-tailed Kite had been very rare in Texas within the memory of most of the birders present but has made quite and impressive comeback in the last two decades or so. Swallow-tailed Kites are now an increasingly common part of the summer avifauna of the southeast Texas.

This field trip is strictly roadside birding with no hiking or trails involved. The birders travel a few rural roads that are well established as having a good diversity of birds and stop periodically when something interesting is seen or heard or just at likely spots such as creek crossings or areas of good habitat for particular species. Some birds are seen (or heard) almost throughout the day. White-eyed Vireo was heard at nearly every stop (and many places the group didn't stop) and were seen at more than one. Northern Cardinals were also common as expected and the occasional Mourning Dove was spooked from the roadway by the caravan of birders. This kind of birding is simple on roads with not too much traffic though the occasional local will often stop to see what the group is up to! Luckily, all encounters were friendly and the birders did not encounter any logistical problems on the day.

Some of the common birds of the Big Thicket region were encountered on the field trip. Multiple Carolina Wrens were heard on the day and the group accidentally discovered a nest tucked into a bridge guard rail (which the birders quickly back away from so the parent birds could return). Red-bellied Woodpecker was heard and seen while Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker were heard only. Downy Woodpecker was surprisingly scarce on the trip and Red-headed Woodpecker was not seen on the trip. Carolina Chickadees were noisily encountered on occasion along with a smaller number of Tufted Titmice. Chimney Swifts twittered overhead in spots and Blue Jays flew across the road here and there. Turkey and Black Vulture were both encountered but raptors were hard to come by on this trip. Pine Warblers trilled from the tall trees and a few bright yellow males were seen well by the group.

Some breeding species are specifically targeted on this trip and the birders encountered many of them on the day. Yellow-

throated Vireo sang and showed off a bit for the birders and Red-eyed Vireo was also encountered. Acadian Flycatcher was eventually located and Hooded Warbler, though frequently heard, took some time to get a look at. A Kentucky Warbler gave the group some good looks and a Yellow-throated Warbler showed off very well for all. Indigo Bunting was found pretty easily and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found late in the trip.

Some of the targeted species were not as cooperative as had been hoped. Swainson's Warbler was heard at several stops but only brief looks were had at this secretive bird. Yellow-breasted Chats were heard in more than one spot but would not reveal themselves. Wood Thrush was only noted by its flute-like song and was not seen. Even Hooded Warblers were encountered in fewer numbers than usual though the reason for this is not clear (dry conditions? And earlier than usual trip date?). But at least those birds were detected unlike some other species targeted by this trip. Painted Bunting was never seen or heard on the day which is not the norm. No Northern Parula or Prothonotary Warbler was found when at least one of these species is usually recorded. No Blue Grosbeak or Summer Tanager was detected with the latter species usually a given on this trip. Perhaps the biggest miss was Prairie Warbler. This species is one of the main targets of the Hardin County field trip and has a specific nesting habitat of young pine trees that one must seek out to find them. Though, what appeared to be good nesting areas were located, no Prairie Warblers were heard or seen on the day. The group may have to seek out new areas to search for these birds for future field trips as some of the traditional spots are now too grown up to be used by the birds. It was disappointing but did not diminish the other fine birds seen on the day.

Even though the birding was perhaps not as productive as in many years, it was still a fun field trip. Any trip with good looks at Swallow-tailed Kite, Kentucky Warbler and Yellow-throated Warbler has to be considered a good one! And if the looks at Swainson's Warbler were less than ideal and if Prairie Warbler was missed, these are just reasons to come back and try again next year. Or maybe sooner?

The following species were noted by the field trip leaders: White-winged Dove (1); Mourning Dove (4); Yellow-billed Cuckoos (2); Chimney Swift (2); Great Blue Heron (1); Cattle Egret (4); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron; White Ibis (32); Black Vulture (6); Turkey Vulture (6); Swallow-tailed Kite (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (3); Downy Woodpecker (1); Pileated Woodpecker (1); Northern Flicker (1); Acadian Flycatcher (1); Great Crested Flycatcher (3); White-eyed Vireo (14); Yellow-throated Vireo (2); Red-eyed Vireo (2); Blue Jay (5); American Crow (9); Fish Crow (1); Barn Swallow (3); Carolina Chickadee (6); Tufted Titmouse (3); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (1); Carolina Wren (4); Northern Mockingbird (2); European Starling (4); House Sparrow (5); Eastern Bluebird (1); Wood Thrush (3); Yellow-breasted Chat (5); Brown-headed Cowbird (2); Common Grackle (3); Swainson's Warbler (3); Kentucky Warbler (2); Hooded Warbler (5); Pine Warbler (5); Yellow-throated Warbler (2); Northern Cardinal (9); Indigo Bunting (3)

Steve Mayes

Spring Migration Count – 14 May 2022

This year, we have tried to begin a long overdue effort to analyze the overall numbers of species seen over a multi-year period as well as our normal comments on individual species.

Spring Migration Count Totals 1997-2022

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Day	14 My	8 My	9 My	11 My	12 My	13 My	14 My	9 My	10 My	11 My	12 My	14 My
Number of individual birds	9104	8376	11474	7904	9366	10834	12551	12604	11345	12089	10040	12026
Number of species	158	169	186	182	162	192	176	180	186	197	189	183
Six year ave number species	175	178	180	180	182	187	185	186	184	180	177	172

	2010	2009	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Date	8 My	9 My	13 My	14 My	8 My	10 My	11 My	12 My	13 My	8 My	9 My	10 My
Number of individual birds	12629	12006	9867	16119	10213	15230	8329	9181	8905	13290	9893	10646
Number of species	181	166	164	166	167	165	144	162	164	168	176	168
Six year ave number species	170	167	161	161	162	163	164					

This year's count produced 158 species, the lowest number of species since 2002, while the number of individual birds was lowish at about 9100. While there is cause for concern, there are some factors to take into consideration. The first is that the count is conducted on International Migratory Bird Day (or Global Big Day as eBird is calling it), the second Saturday in May. This varies from being May 8 to being May 14. This year it was May 14. There can be little doubt that the number of neotropical migrants that stopover in numbers at places we bird drops off markedly after the end of April, and becomes more obvious as May progresses, absent any strong cold fronts reaching the coast, a rare event in May. So the later in May the count is conducted, the fewer the number of migrants we find typically find. The chart above lists the numbers of species and bird from 1997 onwards. The spring count has actually been conducted each year since 1994, but the number of observers in 1994-1996 was very significantly lower than subsequently, and the results for those years are likely not comparable to later years. The chart gives a six-year average, chosen since that includes a full range of May dates in each case, and may be our first indication of a developing trend. There does appear to have been a decrease in the averages of 2015-17 to the current years.

This year, the weeks leading up to early May were marked by an absence of any precipitation, so that the region was very dry. The previous low count in 2002 was also in a year that was also marked by a very dry early spring. This reduces both the insect population and fruit, reducing the propensity of migrants to linger on reaching the immediate coastal areas. This may partially explain the lower numbers of several flycatcher species. And the areas of "permanent" water that do exist are often areas that we are unable to access. This year, there also may well be some lingering effects among local resident species from the February 2021 freeze. On comparing the

2022 count with the 2016 count, also on May 14, this year's 158 was considerably lower than 2016's 176. But a single bird count can never be meaningful by itself, because of the vagaries of weather both on the day of the count and the days immediately preceding it.

By May 14, most ducks remaining are either the resident species or an occasional partially crippled bird, but there were still Blue-winged Teal around. Mottled Ducks were down a little this year, but this may reflect the more restricted areas of suitable habitat in the dry conditions and the birds may just be elsewhere. Interestingly, Black-bellied Whistling Ducks seem to have been more spread out than normal, but are still in high numbers. A Least Grebe that had shown up in Cattail Marsh a day or two prior to the count was not seen on count day, although there is plenty of scope for the secretive species to stay out of sight there.

It is nice to see an increase in Inca Doves; and fewer Rock Pigeons in the urban areas. White-winged Doves are still plentiful in the southern part of the county but were significantly down in other parts.

The Migration Counts show a continuing slow decline in Great Blue Heron numbers, but Snowy Egret numbers remained high, something that has been fairly visible over the last two or three years. It may actually be more pronounced than appears, as Snowy Egrets tend to concentrate in areas of water that are not necessarily accessible in times of drought. Great Egrets were found in good numbers; Cattle Egrets also continued high, defying the presumed shortage of insects in the dry conditions. Numbers of both species of Night-Heron were noticeably up, possibly indicating more active seeking food for young as May progressed.

Black Vultures seemingly have continued to increase; Turkey Vultures on the other hand, seem to have returned to more normal numbers after two exceptionally high years. White-tailed Kites have returned to an "every year"

status. Swallow-tailed Kites have not reached that status quite yet, but two were seen. Mississippi Kites are slowly increasing. The lack of any Northern Harriers probably reflects the late date of the count. Two White-tailed Hawks may be a further indication that the species is still trying to establish a presence in the county. On the other hand, only one Swainson's Hawk may indicate the species is not making much headway in what seemed only a few years ago to be a recolonization of the area. Tentatively, we will ascribe the near absence of Red-tailed Hawks – one was seen – to the late date of the count. Coopers Hawks do spend the summer locally in very small numbers, so finding two, while not totally unexpected was gratifying none the less.

Previously, in March 2020, we analyzed the decline of Loggerhead Shrike populations with a focus on the western part of Jefferson County. The populations there have not recovered. Most of the 32 seen this year were again in the southern half of the county. At least, there may be some hope that the decline has been halted. Another species not seen in normal numbers in the western part of the county was the Eastern Kingbird. The Eastern Kingbird and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher have very similar habitat preferences, and are quite closely related despite the disparate appearances. In our area, the kingbirds are towards the western limit of their range, the Scissor-taileds being fairly close to their eastern limit. Normally, the kingbirds have significantly outnumbered Scissor-taileds almost everywhere in the county. This year, the Scissor-taileds were in normal numbers, mostly in the western part of the county as usual but the kingbirds were almost completely absent from that area. Only an unusually high number of kingbirds in the wooded areas along the coast, for the second year running we might add, prevented them from being in lower total numbers than the Scissor-taileds. Looking back for a few years, it is becoming apparent that since about 2015-2016, Eastern Kingbird numbers have been decreasing in west Jefferson County much in the same way as Loggerhead Shrike numbers have. What is quite puzzling is that Scissor-tailed Flycatcher numbers are seemingly not following this trend. Published information lists the normal summer diets of all three species as almost identical. The kingbirds and Scissor-taileds are totally migratory, where there are shrikes present in Jefferson County throughout the year, although it is not at all clear whether our summer shrikes are the same birds as our winter shrikes. In summer, shrikes feed almost exclusively, it seems, on insects, especially beetles, while in winter the diet is said to include small mammals, amphibians and other non-insect prey. Are these the same birds? We will be watching the numbers carefully over the next two or three counts.

The number of Red-eyed Vireos seen was greatly reduced. The overall population in the United States is

considered to be stable and it remains to be seen whether the local reduction was because of the late date of the count or some other factor. The National Audubon Society's prediction of what will happen in the event of significant Global Warming does show most of the Big Thicket as no longer having breeding Red-eyed Vireos, but only in the extreme case of a 3.0 Celsius degrees (5.4 Fahrenheit degrees) rise. (The total temperature rise since the beginning of the industrial revolution is typically quoted as about one Celsius degree (1.8 Fahrenheit degrees) including a natural trend as the earth warms out of a cold period.

Fish Crow numbers were significantly up over the last few years, but this was a return to the numbers of the middle of the last decade. Noteworthy, however, is that the crows were found to be wider ranging than they used to be, when the flock that spent time near Cattail Marsh represented the westernmost collection of Fish Crow along the coastal areas of the Upper Texas Coast. American Crow numbers continued a significant downward trend. To some extent, American Crows and other crow species, are associated with agricultural activities, especially those involving livestock. Blue Jay numbers have been remarkably stable over the past five years following what appears to have been a rapid recovery from West Nile Virus which particularly affects crows and other Corvid species/

Purple Martin numbers have been stable over the last seven years or so, mostly housed with human help. Tree Swallows, not always as easy to distinguish from other swallows as one might think, were found in very low numbers this year. The standard bird guides suggest that, while they winter, often in large numbers, along the Texas coast, they do not breed in Texas. If they do not, then there must be a significant number of non-breeding birds or those whose breeding attempts failed as there are always a small number around by late summer. The Cliff Swallow is a relative newcomer to the area, spreading in from the west over the last twenty years. The first birds were seen in 2003 spring count, and numbers peaked at over 2000 in 2016. Cliff Swallows are no longer found on the count in the large numbers that marked the middle of the last decade, but some anecdotal evidence suggests they may now prefer the more numerous smaller bridges to the one or two large bridges that they nested on in 2016 and before, and are thus not as easily found on a count.

For a long time, range maps have indicated that American Robins do not breed along the immediate Upper Texas Coast, although those of us who live here have long known this was not true. Admittedly, they have typically been concentrated in a select few residential areas, but we have until this year always found a number, typically 10 to 20, mostly in Nederland, and in northwest parts of Beaumont. This year the number we found drop

ped to a new low of only three. This follows a low number last fall, leaving us wondering what has happened (and why?) We see no change in habitat but we certainly see and hear fewer robins in our neighborhood. Gray Catbirds are much less conspicuous, but they too seem to be deserting the residential areas of Jefferson County.

Another enigmatic species is the Eastern Meadowlark. We have great difficulty finding them on the fall count, but they are always present in good numbers on the spring counts. This year's 122 was one of the higher numbers we have recorded. The range maps indicate that although they retreat from the northernmost extremities of the range in winter, they do not appear to engage in any significant southward migration. (This is unlike the Western Meadowlark which vacates large swaths of its breeding range in winter, although not moving as far south and east as some published maps! They are quite common on the Texas Panhandle, but very rare along the Texas coastal plain.) We have not determined why they are so hard to find in the fall. Is it because they are hiding or remaining quiet while they undergo their annual molt, which they do each September?

Finally, as this is advertised as a Migration Count, we have a duty to report that there were not very many species of migrants in Sabine Woods. Ten species of warbler would be good almost anywhere else in the country, but is well below what would likely have been seen a week earlier. There were no weather features that would prevent the migrants from simply overflying to points north. The dry conditions had severely restricted the quantity and quality of the natural fruit, so one Summer Tanager was all that was seen.

WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (173); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (63); DUCK, Wood (2); TEAL, Blue-winged (26); DUCK, Mottled (19); SCAUP, Lesser (1); GREBE, Least (cw); GREBE, Pied-billed (5); PIGEON, Rock (42); DOVE, Eurasian Collared- (11); DOVE, Inca (4); DOVE, White-winged (65); DOVE, Mourning (164); CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (16); Nighthawk, Common (18); SWIFT, Chimney (42); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (4); HUMMINGBIRD, Species (3); RAIL, King (8); RAIL, Clapper (49); RAIL, King/Clapper (1); RAIL, Virginia (2); SORA (6); GALLINULE, Common (103); COOT, American (19); GALLINULE, Purple (68); CRANE, Whooping (1); STILT, Black-necked (110); PLOVER, Black-bellied (21); PLOVER, American Golden (3); PLOVER, Wilson's (5); PLOVER, Semipalmated (1); KILLDEER (59); SANDPIPER, Upland (1); WHIMBREL (255); GODWIT, Hudsonian (2); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (58); SANDPIPER, Stilt (6); SANDERLING (612); DUNLIN (102); SANDPIPER, Least (52); SANDPIPER, White-rumped (407); SANDPIPER, Pectoral (2); SANDPIPER, Semipalmated (42); SANDPIPER, Western (5); SANDPIPER, Peep (216); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (19); DOWITCHER, Long-billed (33); DOWITCHER species (3); SANDPIPER, Spotted (5); SANDPIPER, Solitary

(1); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (4); WILLET (58); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (22); YELLOWLEGS species (1); GULL, Laughing (54); GULL, Ring-billed (1); TERN, Least (46); TERN, Gull-billed (1); TERN, Caspian (6); TERN, Black (76); TERN, Common (6); TERN, Forster's (12); TERN, Royal (69); TERN, Sandwich (1); ANHINGA (3); CORMORANT, Neotropical (177); CORMORANT species (1); PELICAN, Brown (26); BITTERN, Least (6); HERON, Great Blue (6); EGRET, Great (253); EGRET, Snowy (71); HERON, Little Blue (87); HERON, Tricolored (23); EGRET, Cattle (832); HERON, Green (37); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (12); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (54); IBIS, White (295); IBIS, White-faced (106); IBIS, Plegadis species (215); SPOONBILL, Roseate (33); VULTURE, Black (116); VULTURE, Turkey (55); OSPREY (4); KITE, White-tailed (2); KITE, Swallow-tailed (2); KITE, Mississippi (9); HAWK, Cooper's (2); EAGLE, Bald (1); HAWK, White-tailed (2); HAWK, Red-shouldered (10); HAWK, Swainson's (1); HAWK, Red-tailed (1); KINGFISHER, Belted (1); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (2); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (18); WOODPECKER, Downy (16); WOODPECKER, Pileated (4); CARACARA, Crested (10); FALCON, Peregrine (1); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (4); FLYCATCHER, Great Crested (14); KINGBIRD, Eastern (28); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (23); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (32); VIREO, White-eyed (21); VIREO, Yellow-throated (5); VIREO, Red-eyed (6); JAY, Blue (94); CROW, American (12); CROW, Fish (35); CROW, Species (9); SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged (2); MARTIN, Purple (112); SWALLOW, Tree (2); SWALLOW, Bank (6); SWALLOW, Barn (142); SWALLOW, Cliff (269); CHICKADEE, Carolina (37); TITMOUSE, Tufted (15); WREN, Marsh (8); WREN, Carolina (36); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (9); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (29); VEERY (1); THRUSH, Gray-checked (1); THRUSH, Swainson's (5); ROBIN, American (3); CATBIRD, Gray (2); THRASHER, Brown (9); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (248); STARLING, European (239); FINCH, House (10); SPARROW, Seaside (14); SPARROW, Nelson's; (2); CHAT, Yellow-breasted (1); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (122); ORIOLE, Orchard (48); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (387); COWBIRD, Bronzed (2); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (79); GRACKLE, Common (83); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (141); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (277); GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed (81); GRACKLE species (177); OVENBIRD (1); WARBLER, Worm-eating (1); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (2); WARBLER, Prothonotary (2); WARBLER, Tennessee (1); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (37); WARBLER, Hooded (1); REDSTART, American (3); WARBLER, Magnolia (2); WARBLER, Bay-breasted (1); WARBLER, Yellow (5); WARBLER, Pine (15); TANAGER, Summer (1); CARDINAL, Northern (133); GROSBEAK, Blue (2); BUNTING, Painted (4); DICKCISSEL (169); SPARROW, House (56); TOTAL INDIVIDUALS (9104); TOTAL SPECIES (158); Number of Observers (17); Number of Parties (9); Total Party-hours (66.3); Total Party-Miles (367.7).

Participants: Howard and Linda Davis, Ashley Fuselier, Sherry Gibson, Marilyn Guidry, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Gary and Denise Kelley, Steve Mayes, Matt O'Sullivan, Sherrie Roden, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Elizabeth Timmer, John and Jana Whittle.

Bird Sightings – May 2022

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. In most cases, we do not include birds that are "heard only" or probably hybrids.

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: Inevitably, May brings a few migrants that have not departed for points north as they normally would or are possibly just very late in migrating.

Mention might be made of Wood Storks. Before about 1985, there were very few Wood Storks breeding along the coasts of the Yucatan Peninsula. Since then, colonies have expanded along both coasts, especially the Gulf Coast. In what was assumed, likely correctly, to be post-breeding dispersal from the Yucatan colonies, storks began to be seen along the coastal plain of Texas in August. Now, they are being seen at any time of the year as the lists for the last few months show.

Core Counties (listed above)

Gadwall	May 26-27	JEF-TP (1) HS
Common Loon	May 6	ORA-Sabine Riv nr Bludworth Marine (1) Marilyn Guidry
Virginia Rail	May 14	JEF-TP (2) SH
Whimbrel	May 24	JEF-SRSP (3) Adam Lassak (marginally late)
Ladder-back W'pecker	May 10	JEF-Big Hill Rd (1) John Berner
Bank Swallow	May 30	JEF-TP (1) HS
American Goldfinch	May 21	JEF-TP (1) Liz Sullivan
Yellow-headed Blackbird	May 22	JEF-Backridge Rd (1) Francia Screen

Nearby Counties

Northern Shoveler	May 30 (2)	Judson Lassiter
Surf Scoter	May 2	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) David Sarkozi, Ron Grabyan
Groove-billed Ani	May 14	GAL-League City (1) Mattie Elsik
Greater Roadrunner	May 7	CHA-Double Bayou Park (1) Stuart Nelson, Richard Gibbons
Chuck-will's-Widow	May 18	GAL-HI-Gast Red Bay (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Virginia Rail	May 24	GAL-Moody Gardens (1) Greg Whittaker
American Golden Plover	May 18	GAL-HI Beach (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Franklin's Gull	May 28	HAI-El Jardin Pk (2) Andrew Hamlett, Dale Wolck
Iceland Gull	May 8	GAL-Rollover Pass (1) Kendra Kocab
Common Tern	May 1, 8	HAS-El Jardin Park (6) Andrew Hamlett, Richard Rulander
Common Loon	May 31	GAL-Sportsman's Rd (1) Kristine Rivers
Wood Stork	May 1	HAS-Warren Ranch Lake (6) Drew Dickert
	May 2	HAS-Geo Bush Park (3) David Bradford, Timothy White
	May 10-11	HAS-El Franco Lee Park (2) Marie Asscherick
Glossy Ibis	May 14	HAI-Sheldon Lake SP (1) Ray Porter
Merlin	May 8	CHA-ANWR Yellow Rail Prairie Kendra Kocab (1)
	May 8	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Justin Bower
Bald Eagle	May 4	CAM-Little Chenier Rd (1 ad) Cheryl Huner
Yellow-bell. Sapsucker	May 2	HAS-Edith Moore (1 juv) Leo Costello
Yellow-bell. Flycatcher	May 26	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Robert Becker
Alder Flycatcher	May 26	HAS-J P Landing Park (1) mult obs (ID by song)

Least Flycatcher	May 25	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Dean Silvers
Couch's Kingbird	May 3-28	HAS-Pine Forest CC area (2) Timothy White, mult obs
	May 13	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee
	May 23-31	HAS-Peckham Park (2) Karen Goodger, Peter Schmidt, mult obs
Western Kingbird	May 3	CAM-Pine Pasture Rd area (1) Kathy Rhodes, Judy Robichaux (location given in text is on CAM side of Pine Pasture)
Black-whiskered Vireo	May 7	CAM-Willow Island (1) Paul Conover
Tree Swallow	May 30	GAL-League City (2) Alicia Watt
House Wren	May 17	HAS-Edith Moore Sanct (1) Nina Rach
Sedge Wren	May 15	HAS-Robt Stuart Park (1) James Rieman
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	May 7	CAM-Willow Is (1) James Beck
	May 19	HAS-Clear Lake Pine Brook Wetlands (1) Celena Bustos
	May 24	HAS-Nassau Bay Peninsula WR (1) Davis Clay, Lisa Hardcastle
	May 25	HAS-J H Jones Park (2) Chris Ketola
Dark-eyed Junco	May 13	HAS-Buffalo Bayou Park (2) Douglas Downard
Yellow-headed Blackbird	May 5	CAL-Friesen Rd (1) Cheryl Huner
Northern Waterthrush	May 25	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Dean Silvers
Brewster's Warbler	May 5-6	HAS-Edith Moore (1) Todd McGrath, Kim Canning, Dan Coleman, mult obs
Mourning Warbler	May 25	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Fred Collins, Andy Jordan
	May 26	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (12) Robert Becker
Prairie Warbler	May 7	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) mult obs
Canada Warbler	May 25-26	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Paul Sivon, Dean Silvers
Bobolink	May 28	CAM-Hackberry (1) James Smithers
Scarlet Tanager	May 21	HAS-Johnny Goyen Park (1) George Hagle

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.

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Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various forms of Internet distribution.

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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.