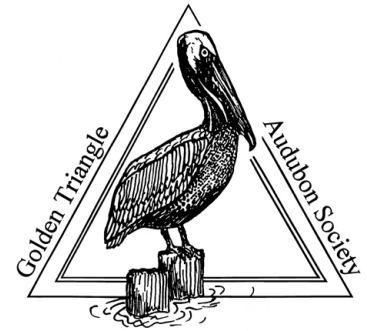


# *The Brown Pelican*



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

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Vol. 28 No 9

September 2022

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**Membership Meeting  
Thursday September 15, 2022 7:00 p.m.  
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**Programs of Shangri-La Gardens and Nature Center**

**Kathleen Nelligan  
Interpretive Programs Manager**

This program will describe the Ruby Lake Bird Habitat Restoration Project, and will also share several upcoming programs, events, and opportunities Shangri La Gardens has to offer for the fall.

Kathleen Nelligan is the Interpretive Programs Manager with Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. She is responsible for curating opportunities for people to connect with the natural ecosystems and local history of the Gardens. Kathleen develops and facilitates a wide range of educational programs and frequently collaborates with the Education Department, Horticulture Department, and Visitor Services Department to develop expressive programming with impactful experiences. Kathleen received her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin—Madison, and earned an M.Ed. in Environmental Education as well as an M.S. in Park and Resource Management from Slippery Rock University.

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments, provided by Port Arthur Convention and Visitors Bureau, will be available from 6:15 p.m.

## *The Brown Pelican*

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Issue number 286

### 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 notices published here are subject to last minute changes. Changes will always be posted on the web site at [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org).*

**Thursday September 15, 2022. Membership Meeting.** Details on page 1 and on the web site.

**Saturday September 17, 2022. Jefferson County Fall Migration Count.** Contact John Whittle at [gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com) for details or to volunteer to help. Several of our regular participants are unable to help this year, and therefore we have several areas not covered so far.

**Saturday September 24, 2022. Field Trip to Smith Point Hawkwatch.**

.Our leaders will be there from about 8:30 a.m. Hopefully, this will be close to a peak in this year's Broad-winged Hawk migration, but there will always be some hawks. Any day from mid-September through mid or late October should produce a good number of migrating hawks.

To reach the Smith Point Hawkwatch site from Winnie, take Highway 124 south towards High Island. After 12 miles, turn right on FM1985 and follow it about 14 1/2 miles until it meets FM562. Follow FM562 14 miles to Smith Point. Continue straight until almost reaching the bay, and turn left, bearing left again to the parking area next to the Hawkwatch Tower on the Candy Abshier Wildlife Management Area. It takes at least 90 minutes from the Golden Triangle to reach the site, more if you stop to bird. This Field Trip is much more a come and go as you wish trip, and help on hawk identification is always available on the tower during Hawkwatch season!

Our leaders may lead a group into the nearby woods looking for migrants, but you may stay on the tower if you wish. Mosquitoes are not normally a problem on the tower. Availability of food and fuel is essentially non-existent in Smith Point, so bring your lunch!

The Smith Point Hawkwatch is conducted every day from August 15 through the end of October by the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory.

Historically, the peak of Broad-wing Hawk migration was September

25, although in recent years at Smith Point, it has tended to be later and less uniform, and sometimes large numbers of Broad-wings have passed through in the first few days of October. Should a cold front pass through, the days immediately following usually have a north wind, and more migrating hawks of all species on those days.

Previous years' results are at <http://hawkcount.org>, so you can do your own analysis! The exact peak day probably depends more on the weather on the migration path from Pennsylvania down to east Texas, and particularly on the two or three days prior. However, predicting is very difficult as there are few Hawkwatches between Pennsylvania and Texas to let us know where the en route hawks are. Almost all migratory hawks come from areas north of Pennsylvania. Broad-wings breed over almost all of the eastern half of the United States, including the Golden Triangle and the southern tier of Canada, even as far west as British Columbia.

For more information, contact Field Trip Chair Steve Mayes ([gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com)).

## 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](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com).

**Saturday October 1, 2022. Sabine Woods Work Day.** 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)

**Saturday October 22, 2022. (Tentative.) 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 no gasoline is available. Bring drinks.

October 22 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 and Brown Creeper. There are always interesting birds at Sabine Woods! Birding Sabine Woods is relatively easy walking.

## Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues are \$20 per year. We are now accepting 2023 dues. You may pay at any membership meeting (checks preferred)

or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page.

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.

As a reminder, dues are voluntary for National Audubon Society (NAS) members living in the Chapter's official territory, which is defined by zip codes, but covers all of Jefferson, Orange and Hardin Counties and one or two zip codes adjacent to these counties. We do also welcome NAS members in other nearby counties although their membership in NAS does not bring them to our attention.

We would very much encourage you receive the Brown Pelican electronically as this saves paper, cost and volunteer time. To start that, simply send an email to [gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com) from the address you want us to use.

## Birding in the Golden Triangle Month by Month

Maybe in other states people notice seasons changing. Here we cannot always tell when the four seasons change but birders here often get excited when certain bird populations migrate through our area.

The wonderful thing about our area is that there are no days that you cannot get to see our local regular birds. Sea Rim State Park and Mc Fadden Beach are great places to see many species of shorebirds, herons and egrets, grackles, White-winged Doves, etc. can be seen all year long.

**January** – Ducks, Bald Eagles, hawks, and some of the places to see them are: west Jefferson County, Cattail Marsh, Pleasure Island, Bridge City, Saltwater Barrier

**February** – Same as January plus Purple Martins start arriving. Bald Eagle eaglets might be hatching out. Many owls nest at this time also.

**March** – Same as February, plus songbird migration starts late in the month at Sabine Woods and hummingbirds pass through our area. Shorebird migration is active.

**April** – Same as March, but songbird migration peaks during the month and hummingbirds pass through. Houston Audubon's Smith Oaks rookery comes to life and stays active for several months. Bald Eagle juveniles will fledge. The remaining migratory ducks fly north

**May** – Same as above, but songbird migration concludes. Most hummingbirds have left for points north by now.

**June** – The rookery is still active.

**July** – You can drive a few hours to watch Purple Martin staging in Houston at two or more different places. Wood

Storks start to arrive. Swallow-tailed Kites start to stage to fly south.

**August** – More Wood Storks arrive, but some hummingbirds start flying back south through our area. Corpus Christi Hawkwatch begins August 1st and Smith Point Hawkwatch begins on the 15th. Kites and hawks can be seen at both places. Shorebirds can be seen on their southbound migrations.

**September** – Ducks, hawks, eagles, and Sandhill Cranes will start to be seen at West Jefferson County towards the end of the month. Cattail Marsh and Pleasure Island both become very active. Both Hawkwatches continue. Ruby-throated Hummingbird migration peaks throughout the area. Often the Bald Eagle pair at Cattail Marsh shows up to inspect and repair their nest. Southbound songbird migration starts in earnest.

**October** – Same as September but most hummingbirds have already flown south. Winter hummingbirds like Rufous, Broad-tailed, Buff-bellied, Anna's, Black-chinned, might start to show up and will often stay through the winter and even up until April. Southbound songbird migration continues.

**November** – Snow Geese join in with the birds listed in September. Both Hawkwatches continue throughout the month, although there are fewer and fewer hawks passing through by now. Bald Eagles often lay eggs in the nest at Cattail Marsh.

**December** – The birds that began to arrive in September peak during this month. Bald Eagles should be sitting on nests.

So, yes, we have our seasons too through birding.

*Jana Whittle*

## Field Trip to Liberty Area – 6 August 2022

About 13 members assembled at the McDonalds in Liberty for our now well-established annual expedition to look for Swallow-tailed Kites. This trip is focused on that one target species. These beautiful white birds, with black flight feathers and long forked tail, have a somewhat limited, but expanding US breeding range. The kites head southward in late July and early August from their nearby breeding areas to their winter homes in northern areas of South America. The kites feed on large flying insects such as dragonflies that are captured and eaten on the wing. When feeding young, small snakes, even tree frogs and lizards, are taken and nestling birds are alleged to be part of the diet.

The first area we always check is the stretch of Highway 90 between Liberty and Dayton. The highway has wide ditches on both sides, and trees that are becoming quite tall. This suits the kites which typically hunt at tree-top height, flying in circles. On migration in Southeast Texas, the main prey item seems to be dragonflies. The early and mid-summer was quite dry, perhaps even very dry, but more frequent rains in the previous two weeks seemed to moisten up the roadside habitat, and brought out a hatch of newly metamorphosed adult dragonflies. Some members of the group reported one or more kites near the eastern end of the target stretch, while at least two seen flying unusually high near the western end by most of the members of the party. There were a few other species, in the area, including a number of Black Vultures, and some Cattle and Great Egret. Also, three Forster's Tern were over a distant body of water, and an American Crow flew by calling to confirm it was not a Fish Crow. Overall, this part of the trip was a little disappointing.

The second location for observing Swallow-tailed Kites in years past was next on the agenda. The Liberty Municipal Park is in the northern part of Liberty, and has an expansive view to the north across the Trinity River bottomlands over what is now mostly part of the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge. Our arrival there coincided with a rather heavy rain shower, but it passed in a few minutes. A rather bedraggled Mississippi Kite perched briefly in one of the larger trees in the park. The normal format of this field trip includes a traverse of the Knobby Knees trail of the NWR as a side trip. We set out along the first part of the trail, hearing an Acadian Flycatcher, and seeing a Great Egret and a Tricolored Heron. Then a shower, not particularly large and not readily visible on radar, began, and it was necessary to shelter briefly under a nice thickly foliated tree and then hastily retreat to the shelter of our vehicles, for the sake of our cameras and binoculars if not of our persons. In and around the park were some Northern Mockingbirds, a Killdeer, four more American Crows, two or more Northern Cardinals, and even a pair of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks shepherding a flotilla of nine fairly-recently-hatched ducklings around the far reaches of one of the ponds within the park.

With some rain around, not particularly heavy but enough to dissuade most of the birds and birders from doing what they prefer to do, a decision was made to try another transit of Highway 90, and then proceed to JAX Hamburgers for an early lunch. While lunch has traditionally marked the end of the field trip, we caucused and outlined the plan for the return to the

Golden Triangle. Most of the remaining group decided to follow what appeared to be the best plan.

First, we drove Highway 90 from Liberty to Dayton yet again, but this time, we hit the jackpot. There was a minimum of eight kites in two or perhaps it was three groups, feeding at tree-top height on both sides of the highway. Most of them were repeatedly circling over almost the same area, giving us great views of the birds. The tail feathers of the kites grow longer as they get older, and on that basis, many of those present were immature birds. There were even other species around, including an Anhinga, rather unusual in that particular area, flying west to east north of the road. There were Cattle Egrets and other normal inhabitants of the bottomlands. But most unusual of all for that part of the area, a Pileated Woodpecker flew across the Highway, south to north.

Along Highway 90, just inside Jefferson County, where there are tall trees south of the highway (which actually overlook a pond), there were perched Wood Storks. It is only possible to see some of the available perches because the trees nearer the side of the Highway have grown so tall and thick. But the timing of our arrival was fortuitous. As we stopped to look at the storks, they started a few at a time to leave their perches and were fortunate enough to find a strong thermal almost directly over the highway. They circled inside the thermal, gaining height all the time, until there was a kettle of about 30 storks, with probably another 30 still on the trees. This location has been a stork roost in August for several years now, and a few had been noticed on the way to Liberty in the morning. Not leaving the roost until the middle of the day – it was around 1:00 pm – is much later than usual, possibly influenced by the rain showers earlier in the morning.

Another area we searched as a result of knowing history was the turf farm on Highway 326 just north of Highway 90. There were just under about 100 small shorebirds that appeared to be Buff-breasted Sandpipers working the mostly disturbed areas of the farm when we passed by about 7:20 pm. When we returned to conduct a more leisurely inspection of the birds on the farm, we unfortunately found that the number of birds had greatly decreased, and that they had moved further away from our vantage point on the side of the highway. Nevertheless, we estimated there were still about 15 Buff-breasted Sandpipers as well as about eight Pectoral Sandpipers, in addition to the "expected" Killdeer and Cattle Egret. This illustrated a common problem for birders with shorebirds, especially the "grasspiper" species. Reports of a concentration of birds does not mean that they will still be there a few hours later!

Altogether it was a good field trip. As we have often found to be the case, less than ideal weather conditions probably resulted in our seeing more birds! We suspect that in good weather, the birds are able to feed very efficiently in the early morning, before we typically reach their neighborhoods, and then they stay hidden and inactive for most of the rest of the day. We encountered, albeit on the third try, a nice concentration of Swallow-tailed Kites. The sandpipers and Wood Storks in an area of Jefferson County that almost all participants passed through were a plus. An important value of

our field trips is showing participants local habitat areas where interesting birds can be seen, and other logistical matters to enable them to plan their own trips to places that interest them that they can explore at their own pace on another occasion.

#### **Birds seen by leaders (Liberty to end at Turf Farm):**

**Liberty Area:** Black-bellied Whistling Duck (2 ad, 9 juv), Mourning Dove (2), Killdeer (1), Forster's Tern (3), Great Egret (5), Tricolored Heron (1), Cattle Egret (13), White Ibis (30), Swallow-tailed Kites (12+), Pileated Woodpecker (1) Black Vulture (2), American Crow (5), Purple Martin (3), Carolina Wren (1), Northern Mockingbird (6), European Starling (15), Acadian Flycatcher (1), Northern Cardinal (2), House Sparrow (3).

#### **Jefferson County (US90 areas)**

Killdeer (4), Buff-breasted Sandpiper (about 100), Pectoral Sandpiper (8), Wood Stork (about 50), Snowy Egret (1), Cattle Egret (about 40), Black Vulture (1)

*John A. Whittle*

## **Swallow-tailed Kite Migration**

Swallow-tailed Kites have always been more numerous in Florida, especially in the Everglades. In Southeast Texas, sightings were rare until perhaps the 1990s. From then, there appears to have been a slow increase, although the increase may have tailed off in the last few years. The species is conspicuous, but eBird records are sparse before 2010, not just for the kites but for all species.

While both the Smith Point Hawkwatch and the Corpus Christi Hawkwatch are well positioned to observe migrating Swallow-tailed Kites, Smith Point Watch is only conducted from August 15, and probably misses some of the early migrating kites, leaving the Corpus Christi Watch, which starts on August 1 as the best data set. The season total at Corpus was about 100 in 2015-2017, about 150 thereafter up to 2021. This year, up to August 28, Corpus has recorded 227. Somewhat paradoxically, Smith Point had only recorded 28 by August 28 this year while the average of the eight previous years was around 75 for the same time period. Perhaps the local weather patterns, with significant rain showers almost every day in the second half of August had something to do with it?

However, we must comment on the 2022 results of the Florida Keys Hawkwatch, likely the best located watch for counting kites migrating south from Florida. The Florida Keys Hawkwatch is currently conducted on Little Crawl Key, a few miles northeast of Marathon, and thus half way down the Keys between Key Largo and Key West. This particular count has a very short history, so comparisons are difficult. In 2021, the peak day for Swallow-tailed Kites was August 20 with 214. Between August 17 and 23 that year, the total count was 314. Fast forward to 2022, when the peak day was August 17 with an incredible 1438 kites in one day! The totals for August 13 to 19 was 3180. There must have been some shift in migration pattern or routes, because there is no way that the total population could have increased 10-fold in one year. It does bode well for the species, however, and we look forward to August 2023 results!

*John A. Whittle*

## **Field Trip to Bolivar Flats – 20 August 2022**

Hoping to dodge the predicted rain showers, more than a dozen birders assembled at the vehicle barrier at Bolivar Flats. Though the summer has been a dry one for all of Texas, rain had become more frequent in southeast Texas in recent days and more was predicted for the day of the Bolivar Flats field trip. There are many advantages to an August field trip to Bolivar Flats – no bugs, sea breeze and lots of birds. But there is nowhere to hide if it starts raining! Luckily, the weather held out and the group got to experience some of the best birding spots on the upper Texas coast.

Bolivar Flats always produces. No matter the time of year, there are always birds to be seen and this day was no exception. A Long-billed Curlew started things off near the parking area and there was a Ring-billed Gull sitting on the beach nearby. Two more Long-billed Curlews were seen further into the Flats. Two dark morph Reddish Egrets danced in the shallow surf while white morph birds were seen further down the beach later on. Sanderlings worked the water line along with Willets and the Laughing Gulls were everywhere. With that promising start, the group moved further out on the flats.

The middle portion of the beach, between the water and the dunes, was active with plovers. Wilson's Plovers were first spotted with their large bills and pinkish legs. A Piping Plover was found next recognized by its paler back, small stubby bill and orange or orange/yellow legs. A little more searching revealed Snowy Plovers, similar in color to the Piping but with dull grayish legs and a longer, thinner bill. Last of the small plovers found was the Semipalmated Plover. Structurally very similar to Piping but much darker in coloration, plenty of these birds were found further down the beach. Wilson's Plovers are summer breeding visitors to the Flats while the other small plovers are winter visitors. But like many shorebirds, they return very early in the "fall" and are usually readily found by the beginning of August. Larger Black-bellied Plovers were also found in numbers and in an array of plumages. Some were in full breeding plumage with their black bellies easily seen while others were already in their dull winter plumage with white bellies. It was easy to see why these birds are referred to as "Gray Plovers" in the UK where they are largely seen in winter plumage.

Least Sandpipers were soon seen at fairly close range with their yellow legs easily visible and Western Sandpipers were later seen well showing black legs and drooping bills characteristic of the species. Colorful Ruddy Turnstones were found in small numbers flipping over shells and other debris in search of prey. A couple of Marbled Godwits were found in a shallow pool probing the mud with their long bills. A Whimbrel was spotted among the dunes with its shorter bill, striped head and duller plumage distinguishing it from the Long-billed Curlew seen earlier. In recent years, Whimbrels have been present essentially year-round in the beach areas of Jefferson and Galveston County. A group of Short-billed Dowitchers allowed surprisingly close approach as they loafed in the beach with their black and white tails (more white than black) displayed helping to rule out Long-billed Dowitcher. Long-billed Dowitchers are much more common than Short-billed in our area generally prefers fresh water habitats but birds may turn up anywhere during migration. The calls are very different, with a flock of Long-billeds each usually giving a relatively high-pitched single note call while feeding, sounding almost chattering, while Short-billed are generally much quieter while feeding with typically a mellow three note call only when disturbed.

Two Black Skimmers flew by the group giving good looks to most of the birders. Between the east beach areas of Galveston and Bolivar Flats, there is usually at least one large flock of this species, often resting on the sand/mud with many lying down in a distinctly un-birdlike posture. Royal Terns were the most common terns on the beach but there were other species scattered among them. A few large Caspian Terns were spotted with their large reddish bills picked from the yellow-orange bills of the Royals. Sandwich Terns were seen and their black bills tipped in yellow. Small Black Terns were spotted in a variety of plumage ranging from all black to having very little black left on them. A few even smaller Least Terns were also present on the flats. Unusually, Forster's Terns were in short supply, and although there are certainly fewer around in summer, the species is classified as common even during that season. A distant, large, dark gull gave the group something to puzzle over for a while. Larger than a Laughing Gull but not as large as a Herring with a yellow bill with a red spot on it and pinkish legs. The bird had a dark mantle and was consistent in size with a Lesser Black-backed Gull but then should have had yellow legs in what appeared to be adult or near adult plumage. A few good telephoto shots and some slightly closer looks showed the bird might not have been quite as adult as first thought and so the pinkish legs, which could be seen on an immature Lesser Black-backed, were perhaps more understandable. The group settled on Lesser Black-backed Gull as the most likely identity of the bird. This is a species that has been

Bolivar Flats is the best place in the area to find Horned Larks. This is an easy species to find in many parts of the west but gets much rarer as a birder travels east. By the time one gets to southeast Texas, the bird is only found in beach dune areas which are the closest approximation to their dry sandy habitats found out west. Still, the birds can sometimes be hard to get a good look at. But on this day, the Larks were cooperative. They could be seen grabbing insects from the vegetation along the dune line and running between tufts of vegetation. At one point, an adult bird was seen feeding a begging juvenile. This was definitely one of the high points of the day.

With a rain cloud fast approaching, the group left the flats for a lunch stop and some additional birding stops. Bob's Road produced Anhinga, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Osprey. Yacht Basin Road hosted a Little Blue Heron. Rollover Pass (or what is left of it) gave us two American Oystercatchers which are always a treat along with more Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Black Terns and lots of Brown Pelicans.

A final stop at High Island's Smith Oaks Sanctuary produced a few birds and lots of mosquito bites! Still, good looks were had at Yellow Warbler, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and the Cattle Egrets and Neotropic Cormorants still nesting in the rookery. On this note, the birders ended the day more than satisfied with the haul of birds that the trip produced. It is little wonder that Bolivar Flats and the other spots birded on the day are renowned as some of the best birding areas in the country. Southeast Texas birders are lucky to have such easy access to so many good birding areas. Smith Point is another of these famous birding spots and will be the site of the Golden Triangle Audubon's September field trip, so join the group for another great trip next month!

The following species were recorded by trip leaders:

Mourning Dove (15); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (1); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (2); Common Nighthawk (5); Black-necked Stilt (2); American Oystercatcher (3); Black-bellied Plover (66); Snowy Plover (6); Wilson's Plover (35); Semipalmated Plover (75); Piping Plover (5); Killdeer (7); Whimbrel (2); Long-billed Curlew (3); Marbled Godwit (8); Ruddy Turnstone (7); Sanderling (110); Least Sandpiper (15); Western Sandpiper (25); Greater Yellowlegs (1); Short-billed Dowitcher (10); Willet (37); Laughing Gull (90); Ring-billed Gull (3); Lesser Black-backed Gull (1); Least Tern (8); Caspian Tern (3); Black Tern (26); Forster's Tern (2); Royal Tern (130); Sandwich Tern (2); Black Skimmer (2); Anhinga (1); Neotropic Cormorant (43); Brown Pelican (80); Great Blue Heron (5); Great Egret (6); Snowy Egret (3); Little Blue Heron (1); Tricolored Heron (1); Reddish Egret (13); Cattle Egret (50); White Ibis (10); Roseate Spoonbill (1); Turkey Vulture (3); Osprey (1); Crested Caracara (1); Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (1); Blue Jay (2); Horned Lark (6); Carolina Wren (3); Northern Mockingbird (1); Barn Swallow (5); Cave Swallow (2); European Starling (30); Red-winged Blackbird (5); Boat-tailed Grackle (40); Great-tailed Grackle (10); Boat-tailed/Great-tailed Grackle (5); Yellow Warbler (3); Northern Cardinal (5)

*Steve Mayes*

# Bird Sightings – August 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:** August is always a difficult month. There are always a few migrants, likely in most cases birds whose breeding attempts failed leading to their heading south "early," that qualify for inclusion in this column as being very early. We continue to use the Birder's Checklist of the Upper Texas

Coast 9th Edition as our guide as to what is rare or very rare on the date in question. This is old (2008), but it is the only checklist that covers most of the area we cover using the consistent criteria. There are recent changes in bird distribution since 2008 that are well known and we do make adjustments for most of those, although we try not to be too quick to stop reporting recent colonizers, as there are still birders interested in knowing where they may be seen. Also, we make adjustments for the counties to our north and east that are not covered in the Upper Texas Coast checklist. There are some species that do occur regularly in limited numbers in part of the area we cover, but are regarded as very rare in others, and we do try to report sightings in areas where they are rare. Often there is an "east-west" difference, but the area we cover also extends quite a long way north. For some species seen in the northern tier of our area at some times of the year, we use our judgment as to whether a sighting is noteworthy enough to warrant inclusion in this column. The purpose of this column is to draw attention to sightings that are rare or very rare in the counties where they are seen.

## August 2022

### Core Counties (listed above)

Least Grebe	Aug 19-22	JAS-Fish Hatchery (1) Gabrielle Hargrove, Laura Clark, Fred Lyons
Reddish Egret	Aug 18	SAA-Sam Rayburn TX147 (1) David Bell
Tropical Kingbird	Aug 6-30	JEF-Old Sabine Cemetery (4) Timothy and Iliana Freiday, Steve Mayes, mult obs
Philadelphia Vireo	Aug 25	JEF-SW (1) JAW
Gray Catbird	Aug 1	ORA-Hwy1442 NW of Bridge City (1) Jeremy Kelone
Worm-eating Warbler	Aug 26	JEF-SW (2) JAW, mult obs
American Redstart	Aug 13	JEF-SW (1) SM
Blk-thr Green Warbler	Aug 13	JEF-SW (1) SM

### Nearby Counties

Northern Shoveler	Aug 10	GAL-Texas City Preserve (1) Debbie Repasz
Least Grebe	Aug 25	GAL-League City (2) Geordie Eschenbach
	Aug 26-30	GAL-League City (2) Steve Rogow, Dennis Cooke, mult obs
Sora	Aug 2	GAL-Sweetwater Nature Preserve (1) Debbie Repasz
Limpkin	Aug 21	CAL-Katie Barnes, James Smithers
	Aug 22	CAL-Lorraine Park (2) James Adger
Hudsonian Godwit	Aug 10	HAS-Warren Ranch Lake (1) Timothy Freiday
Pomarine Jaeger	Aug 2-23	GAL-Apfel Park (1) mult obs
Parasitic Jaeger	Aug 17	GAL-East Beach (1) Wyatt Egelhoff, Jean Paris
Franklin's Gull	Aug 5	GAL-Apfel Park (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Gt. Black-backed Gull	Aug 4-7	GAL-Rollover Pass (1) (Wyatt Egelhoff, multi obs
	Aug 17-23	GAL-Apfel Park/East Beach (1) Perez Reyes, mult obs
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Aug 23	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Wyatt Egelhoff

White-tailed Hawk	Aug 13	CAL-Friesen Rd (1) James Smithers
	Aug 22	CAL-Tom Stegall Rd (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
Broad-winged Hawk	Aug 18	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
American Kestrel	Aug 2	GAL- Sweetwater Nature Preserve (1) Debbie Repasz
Merlin	Aug 4	GAL-SE of High Is (1) Mike Austin
Peregrine Falcon	Aug 7	HAS-Buffalo Bayou Park (1) Julie Francis
Alder Flycatcher	Aug 5	HAS-Baytown NC (2)
	Aug 13	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Charles Lyon, Melissa Weaver
Couch's Kingbird	Aug 30	HAS-Pine Forest Country Club (1) Timothy White
Bell's Vireo	Aug 11	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Richard Liebler
Gray Catbird	Aug 1	CAM-Chalkley Rd (1) David Booth
	Aug 13	CAM-Mae's Beach (1) James Smithers
Savannah Sparrow	Aug 10, 31	GAL--Texas City Preserve (1) Debbie Repasz
Ovenbird	Aug 15-17	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Richard Liebler, mult obs
	Aug 17-18	GAL-48th St nr Seawall (1) Patty Wood
Worm-eating Warbler	Aug 13	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Elle Bow
Tennessee Warbler	Aug 26	GA-Dickinson (1) Fred Collins
American Redstart	Aug 14	JEF-SW (2) Charles Lyon, Melissa Weaver
Wilson's Warbler	Aug 15	GAL_Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Western Tanager	Aug 12	HAS-Memorial area (1) Sue Orwig

**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.

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

## FIRST CLASS MAIL

### NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

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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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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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\_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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.