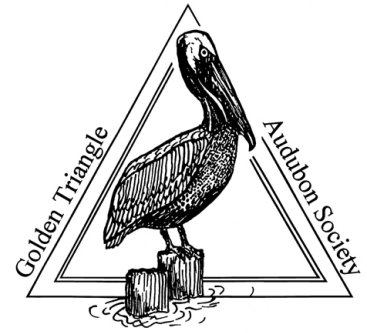


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 28 No 10

October 2022

Membership Meeting
Thursday October 20, 2022 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont

Bears, Bison and Birds
A Photographic Safari
of American National Parks

This program will be in the format of a video slide show, and will consist of National Parks and wildlife native to the areas in and around those National Parks.

Joseph Choate is a lifelong resident of Groves, TX. Growing up as a child, his parents would take the family on vacations to different parts of the country. As an adult, he continues to take vacation trips, notably visiting all 50 state capitols in a seven year period between 2013 and 2019. In that span of time, he has visited 33 National Parks, most of which will be included in the program.

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.

Note: This digital edition of the *Brown Pelican* contains essentially the same content as the printed edition, but reorganized to avoid having any continuation sections on a different pages.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 28, No.10 October 2022
Issue number 287

Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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The Brown Pelican is published monthly except July by the Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292
email: gtaudubon@aol.com

Calendar of Events

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

Saturday October 8, 2022. Sabine Woods Work Day. POSTPONED FROM OCTOBER 1. We plan to do our usual fall routine maintenance. We will be there from about 8:00 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 well 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

Thursday October 20, 2022. Membership Meeting. Details on page 1 and on the web site.

Saturday October 22, 2022. 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 possibly 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 22 is towards the end of fall passerine 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 17, 2022. 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

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.

Saturday November 19, 2022. 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



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

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

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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 from the address you want us to use.

Recent Donations

Golden Triangle Audubon gratefully acknowledges recent donations by the following:

In memory of Donnie Fisher:

Kathy Allford
Michele Domec
Susanne Hathon
Tom Kutac
Pulmonary Critical Care and Sleep
Medicine Consultants PLLC
Sherrie Roden

To the GTAS General Fund or Sabine Woods Fund

Kenneth P. Able
Carol Belser
Dr and Mrs Jimmy Bryan
Debbie and Jack Burnett
Dennis Cooke
Dr Sidney A. Gauthreaux
Sharon K. Hogg
Andrea and James Nauman
Gary and Pat Wayne
Robert B. Westendarp
Lanyce Whitemore
The Bob and Karen Wortham
Charitable Foundation Inc

Grant from SEMPRA

We received a grant from SEMPRA/Port Arthur LNG for invasives removal at Sabine Woods.

Fall 2022 Migration Count – 17 September 2022

The Fall 2022 Migration count was very disappointing, with only 145 species found. (The number is tentative and subject to further checking.) The weather may have been an important factor. It had been a dry early summer followed by a week or so with frequent rains, and then followed by a very dry spell, with only one very heavy rainstorm along the coast of Jefferson County a day or so prior to the count. This probably made for reasonably good birding along the coast and in Sabine Woods in particular, but the inland areas of the county were very dry. On the day itself, the weather conditions would be regarded as excellent for most purposes, dry, little wind and mostly sunny. However, excellent conditions for humans are also excellent for the birds. They are able to find food easily and quickly and so are only active in the morning, and in many cases, only the early morning. Thereafter, they find somewhere to essentially hide, and are more difficult for the birder to detect. The result naturally is that fewer birds are seen. It seems that many of the "water holes" in Jefferson County are somewhat distant from roads. Very few roadside ditches had water in them, contrary to the normal situation, and thus many birds may have moved elsewhere.

A number of our regular participants were out of town on count day, and so we had fewer than we would have liked. The number of parties was minimal and several participants were alone. Particularly in the driving sectors, this probably significantly reduces the number of birds seen and counted.

Both these factors no doubt negatively impacted the overall number of birds seen, and likely are significant factors in the number of species seen. However, there are times when a broader perspective can be gained from the impressions of the participants during the count. These impressions are anecdotal rather than scientific, but because statistically valid bird population data points are only available when large numbers of individual counts are available, in the type of count such as our migration counts, we often resort to anecdotal observations and numbers.

On count day this year, when asked, observers along the coast and in the more urban areas generally reported that their impression was that numbers were within the normal large variations encountered in a single count, although many were on the low side of that range. Observers in the non-aquatic open areas, which are mostly in the western part of the county could not help but conclude that there were very markedly fewer birds than normal this year. Any analysis of this is necessarily complex. Away from the coast, although water is still a very important factor, the numbers of birds, evaluated both on a scientific or anecdotal basis, are strongly influenced by the numbers of the common species that are seen. In the western part of the county, one normally expects to see large flocks of "blackbirds" (here expanded to include cowbirds and grackles). They were almost absent on count day this year. Although blackbirds are usually thought of a non-migratory, the "frequency" maps on eBird – the percentage of submitted

checklists that report the species – suggest that there is withdrawal from the northern parts of their ranges in winter and a concomitant move to the south of the birds withdrawing. But this is unlikely to be a major factor in the varying numbers present on count day. Other families that probably are important to observers forming an impression of the numbers of birds present are species such as Cattle Egrets and ibis, both White and "dark" (mostly White-faced). Of these Cattle Egrets are most obviously significantly migratory, with only a few birds remaining locally through winter and only in locations particularly favorable for food and warmth. While there is considerable variation of numbers during the September count, the very fact that they form sizable flocks probably accounts for much of the variation in that just missing a few large flocks can make a large impact on the numbers. One cannot discern much migratory type movement in the ibis species, other than an apparent local movement to the coastal areas in winter, again probably a matter of the warming influence of the Gulf.

Of the less gregarious species, the Northern Mockingbird stands out as the very best local example of a sufficiently numerous non-migratory species for analysis, with essentially no discernable movement between summer and winter. Asking observers for their impression of recent local mockingbird population changes recently has elicited a response that there has not been much change. But a five-year moving average of the fall count numbers shows that that there has been a significant decrease. I believe this apparent paradox is likely explained by the very local distribution of the mockingbirds. Mockingbirds are probably as numerous as normal around human habitation. However, anecdotally, they are much less common in the open areas, those with low bushes especially, away from houses and other areas of human activity. Presumably, human activity results, perhaps not directly, in better habitat for mockingbirds, and these areas are occupied preferentially.

Obviously, there are many migratory passerine species that pass through southeast Texas southbound in the fall. The numbers are relatively small and therefore we cannot expect to draw any meaningful conclusions from the numbers seen, although it is always of interest. Although shorebird fall migration starts very early and for many species is over by Migration Count time, fall passerine migration mostly occurs after the count date. One species of interest, however, is the Eastern Meadowlark. The species is very hard to find in Jefferson County in September - - the 15 this year in one area is not normal. It appears that the meadowlarks that breed in Jefferson County leave for the winter and are replaced by birds from much further north. The breeding birds leave well before the wintering birds arrive. One possible alternative explanation for the absence of meadowlarks in September would be that the birds were hiding while their fall molt was occurring, and that the Jefferson County breeding birds were the local wintering birds. However, this is contraindicated by the fact that the closely related Western Meadowlark clearly winters in the Texas Panhandle and further

west but moves to points west and northwest to breed, leaving none breeding in these areas.

As usual, we will comment on some of the individual species and families with the usual caveat that the vagaries of one individual count – weather and number of observers that we have already touched on – mean that the one count alone does not indicate anything significant. However, we have more than 20 years of counts and trends sometimes come to the forefront, or at least suggest some species that deserve careful attention over the next few years.

Although Mottled Duck numbers were higher than the very low numbers in 2018 and 2021, they were still disturbingly low. Only two Pied-billed Grebes was a very low number, but this may reflect the large amounts of water hyacinth in Cattail Marsh, the most likely place to find the species in the County.

White-winged Doves continue to be in very much reduced numbers over a few years ago although not everyone is upset over that. Mourning and Inca Dove numbers were within norms. One presumably returning Rufous Hummingbird was complemented by the highest number of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in many years.

Two Virginia Rails were the first in recent years. The lack of Common Gallinules may be another consequence of the Cattail Marsh situation. Lower numbers of Black-necked Stilts are a little puzzling, as anecdotally, they seemed more numerous in surrounding areas.

Plovers, except of course Killdeer, were a bright spot, and mostly on the beach. Black-bellied Plovers were the highest in more than six years, Semi-palmated Plovers were about average while 11 Piping Plovers matched last year's total, continuing an encouraging trend. Snowy Plovers were found, but not in the good numbers of four or five years ago. Egrets and herons were plentiful, with over 2000 Cattle Egrets and good numbers of other herons but many ibis of both species were elsewhere.

The blue skies did not make detecting migrating hawks easy, so most seen were probably residents, although Red-tailed Hawks were surprisingly numerous for so early in the fall, with six seen along and near Highway 73 late in the day in addition to three in the far west part of the county.

In these reviews of counts, we have expressed concern over the dramatic decrease of Loggerhead Shrikes in the western part of the county. To a great extent, this is still a mystery. In the March 2020 *Brown Pelican*, we documented and offered some possible weather reasons for the decline of shrikes in that part of the county in other surveys from 100 in the late 1990s to less than a handful by 2020. Overall shrike numbers increased in 2022 and seem to offer some hope of further recovery.

The identities and numbers of the various warbler, bunting and other songbird are certainly of interest to many, and are included in the species list below, but offer essentially no insight into populations. We will attempt some analysis in our fall migration survey later this year or early next year.

Species and numbers recorded on the count (subject to review by the observers).

WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (110); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (15); TEAL, Blue-winged (165); DUCK, Mottled (18); DUCK species (17); GREBE, Pied-billed (2); PIGEON, Rock (169); COLLARED-DOVE, Eurasian (11); DOVE, Inca (5); DOVE, White-winged (87); DOVE, Mourning (146); CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (2); SWIFT, Chimney (3); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (102); HUMMINGBIRD, Rufous (1); RAIL, King (6); RAIL, Clapper (29); RAIL, Virginia (2); GALLINULE, Common (97); GALLINULE, Purple (29); STILT, Black-necked (36); AVOCET, American (6); PLOVER, Black-bellied (19); KILLDEER (52); PLOVER, Semipalmated (8); PLOVER, Piping (11); PLOVER, Snowy (5); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (2); SANDERLING (34); SANDPIPER, Least (9); SANDPIPER, Buff-breasted (2); SANDPIPER, Pectoral (1); SANDPIPER, Western (3); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (1); SANDPIPER, Spotted (13); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (3); WILLET (21); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (5); GULL, Laughing (1544); GULL, Lesser Black-backed (8); TERN, Least (2); TERN, Caspian (16); TERN, Black (2); TERN, Forster's (57); TERN, Royal (48); SKIMMER, Black (18); STORK, Wood (1); ANHINGA (12); CORMORANT, Neotropic (254); PELICAN, Brown (305); BITTERN, Least (1); HERON, Great Blue (30); EGRET, Great (191); EGRET, Snowy (171); HERON, Little Blue (38); HERON, Tricolored (45); EGRET, Reddish (4); EGRET, Cattle (2069); HERON, Green (14); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (3); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (3); IBIS, White (233); IBIS, White-faced (11); IBIS, Plegadis (36); SPOONBILL, Roseate (29); VULTURE, Black (94); VULTURE, Turkey (67); OSPREY (8); KITE, White-tailed (2); KITE, Mississippi (1); HARRIER, Northern (1); HAWK, Cooper's (1); HAWK, *Accipiter* species (1); HAWK, White-tailed (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (3); HAWK, Broad-winged (1); HAWK, Swainson's (2); HAWK, Red-tailed (9); OWL, Barn (2); OWL, Great Horned (3); KINGFISHER, Belted (5); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (4); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (14); WOODPECKER, Downy (15); WOODPECKER, Pileated (5); CARACARA, Crested (16); MERLIN (3); FALCON, Peregrine (7); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (9); FLYCATCHER, Yellow-bellied (2); FLYCATCHER, Alder (1); FLYCATCHER, Least (2); FLYCATCHER, Empidonax (2); FLYCATCHER, Great Crested (5); KINGBIRD, Tropical (2); KINGBIRD, Eastern (12); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (21); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (36); VIREO, White-eyed (14); VIREO, Warbling (1); VIREO, Red-eyed (2); JAY, Blue (103); CROW, American (15); CROW, Fish (3); SWALLOW, Tree (1); SWALLOW, N Rough-winged (20); SWALLOW, Barn (18); SWALLOW, Cliff (6); SWALLOW, Cliff/Cave (13); CHICKADEE, Carolina (9); TITMOUSE, Tufted (5); WREN, Carolina (18); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (30); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (10); CATBIRD, Gray (6); THRASHER, Brown (2); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (104); STARLING, European (325); FINCH, House (1); SPARROW, Seaside (27); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (16); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (80); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (95); GRACKLE, Common (296); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (130); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (209); GRACKLE, Great-tailed/Boat-tailed (8); BLACKBIRD species (380); OVENBIRD (2); WARBLER, Worm-eating (1); WARBLER, Blue-winged (2); WARBLER, Black-and-white (15); WARBLER, Prothonotary (1); WARBLER,

Tennessee (1); WARBLER, Nashville (1); WARBLER, Mourning (1); YELLOWTHROAT, Com. (4); WARBLER, Hooded (2); REDSTART, American (3); PARULA, Northern (1); WARBLER, Magnolia (1); WARBLER, Blackburnian (2); WARBLER, Yellow (2); WARBLER, Pine (4); WARBLER, Canada (4); WARBLER, Wilson's (3); CARDINAL, Northern (44); GROSBEAK, Blue (18); BUNTING, Painted (3); SPARROW, House (45)
TOTAL individual birds (8856);

Number of species (145); Number of Observers (32); Number of Parties (16); Number of Party-Hours (54.0); Party hours on foot (16.2); Miles on foot (8.3); Party-hours by automobile (39.0); Miles by automobile (331.3); Party-hours stationary/ (0.3); feeder watching
Participants: Linda and Howard Davis, John Haynes, Thomas Hellweg, Paul Hromadka, Steven Mayes, Greg Reynolds, Gina Rico, Sherrie Roden, Dania Sanchez, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Jana and John Whittle

Field Trip to Smith Point – 24 September 2022

The hawk watch at Smith Point is a great place to learn to identify raptors. There is no better place in southeast Texas to study these birds in flight (where they are usually seen) and learn the key field marks and behaviors that identify each species. This can be true even when the day is slow which can happen at Smith Point if the winds are wrong and the hawks just aren't coming. Such was the case on September 24.

Broad-winged Hawks are the staple of the Smith Point hawk watch and usually produce the biggest number of birds. Broad-wings are small hawks (about the size of a crow) in the genus *Buteo*. This genus includes many of our familiar hawks are generally soaring birds with broad wings and short tails. Broad-winged Hawks have slightly pointed wings (for a *Buteo*) and adults will have a dark trailing edge to the underwing. Most birds are white underneath with a variable amount of streaking/spotting though a small percentage of the population are dark morph birds. The tails have distinct bands though this is much more obvious on adult birds. Broad-wings soar often though they nest in wooded areas (often on the edges). They can often be heard giving a high-pitched whistle call. They do nest in southeast Texas and their numbers seem to be increasing here but most of the birds seen at Smith Point are migrants from the far north. ON a good day at Smith Point, thousands of Broad-winged Hawks may be seen flying over. On the field trip day, there were only a few unfortunately.

Another staple of the hawk watch at Smith Point is the Mississippi Kite. It can also be seen passing over this site in large numbers. These are small hawks but with long pointed wings and a longish tail making them appear a little larger than they really are. Adults are pale with white heads and gray bodies. Tails are black and wings are dark but with pale secondaries when seen from above. Immature birds are heavily streaked underneath and have a banded tail but are shaped just like the adults. They will give a two-note whistle. They may be seen catching dragonflies and other large insects in flight. Mississippi Kites may be mistaken for a falcon but soar more often without the powerful direct flights and stoops often seen with a Peregrine. Mississippi Kites are mostly migrants in the area but there are increasing number of nesting birds in the summer. The group did get to see several groups of soaring Mississippi Kites on the field trip with immature birds comprising most of the birds.

Falcons can often be seen from Smith Point as well. Small American Kestrels have a very rapid wing beat, almost floppy but will also soar. Merlins have a more powerful wing beat and often a fast direct flight. They seem to soar less than kestrels. Though not much larger than kestrels, Merlins have a larger build and just appear as a bigger, huskier bird in flight or perched. Peregrines are significantly larger and will soar or use a powerful direct, flapping flight accompanied by deep stoops after prey. Falcons have long, pointed wings with those of kestrels appearing thinner and Merlins and Peregrines broader. All have longer tails than buteos and have a variable amount of banding on the tails. Kestrels nest just north of the coast but all the species are more easily encountered in this area during migration or in winter. The field trip group got to enjoy American Kestrel and Merlin but no Peregrines on the day.

Accipiters are often encountered at Smith Point though

sorting out their identity better than that can be challenging. *Accipiter* is a genus of often forest dwelling, bird eating hawks. There are two species that occur in this area and they look very similar to one another. These are the smaller Sharp-shinned Hawk and the larger Cooper's Hawk. Both have shorter, broader wings than *Buteos* with longer tails. There is strong sexual dimorphism in both species with the female birds being significantly larger than the males. This can lead to some confusion as a large female Sharp-shinned Hawk is almost as large as a small male Cooper's Hawk but there are some differences. Cooper's Hawks soar more often than Sharpies with slower wing beats while Sharpies often have quick, snappy wing beats. Cooper's usually show a rounded tip to the tail while Sharpies usually show a squared off or notched tail tip. The head of a Cooper's Hawk will extend well out from the front of the wings which often show a fairly straight leading edge to the wings. With Sharpies, the head often does not seem to extend beyond the wings and the leading edge of the wings is often pushed forward and not straight. Both species are common migrants and winter birds in the area and small numbers of Cooper's Hawks nest locally as well. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were both seen on the field trip day.

There were other raptor species seen on the field trip day. These included Crested Caracara, Osprey and Red-shouldered Hawk. Caracaras are odd looking, and oddly shaped raptors. With white on the head, tail and wings, they are usually easily recognizable and give a distinct cross shape in flight. Ospreys are large and long-winged and often present an almost gull-like shape in flight. Red-shouldered Hawks are buteos that call almost constantly and always show a pale to white crescent in their wings in flight. They have banded tails and may have rusty coloring (adults) or variable streaking (immatures) underneath. Caracaras and Red-shouldered Hawks are common in the area all year while Ospreys are mostly seen in the winter.

This trip always gives participants the chance to study hawks in flight. Learning to sort out *Buteos* from *Accipiters* and *Falcons* from *Kites* and *harriers* is the best way to start the identification process. Once the bird can be narrowed down to its genus or group, the species can then be more easily determined. Smith Point is a great venue for learning to do this and the official hawk counter is always a great resource for help in identifying tricky individuals. So even on slow days, the Smith Point hawk watch is always a great field trip. And with soaring Magnificent Frigatebirds, migrating warblers and swarms of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds around as well, this year's field trip was a certainly a success.

The following is a combination of the official hawk counter's list for the day of the field trip along with GTAS observations:

American White Pelican (18); Brown Pelican (4); Magnificent Frigatebird (3); Anhinga (30); Great Blue Heron (1); Great Egret (2); Snowy Egret (1); White Ibis (20); White-faced Ibis (5); Wood Stork (3); Osprey (2); Mississippi Kite (37); Northern Harrier (2); Sharp-shinned Hawk (13); Cooper's Hawk (12); Broad-winged Hawk (26); Red-tailed Hawk (1); Swainson's Hawk (2); Red-shouldered Hawk (2); Crested Caracara (1); American Kestrel (3); Merlin (3); Peregrine Falcon (1); Laughing Gull (10); Ruby-throated Hummingbird (60); Western Kingbird (1); Eastern Kingbird (24); Olive-sided Flycatcher (1); Warbling Vireo (2); Blue Jay (5); Northern Rough-winged Swallow (2); Barn Swallow (2); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (5); European Starling (1); Yellow Warbler (3); Northern Cardinal (1); Blue Grosbeak (10); Dickcissel (9)

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: Not much room for commentary this month. The most interesting this month were the birds offshore on September 20: the Cory's Shearwater and the Masked Booby. Most other reports are of migrants seen outside the normal fall migration dates.

September 2022 Core Counties (listed above)

Lsr Black-backed Gull	Sep 22	JEF-SRSP (1) Greg Jackson
Tropical Kingbird	Sep 8-18	JEF-Old Sabine Cemetery/Island Operating heliport (4) mult obs
	Sep 17	JEF-Backridge Rd (2) JHH
Townsend's Warbler	Sep 8	JAS-State Fish Hatchery (1) Gabe Hargrove

Nearby Counties

Snow Goose	Sep 22	GAL-Texas City (1) Walt steves
Cinnamon Teal	Sep 29	CHA-ANWR (exact location not given) (1) Justin Bower
Groove-billed Ani	Sep 5-13	HAS-El Franco Lee Park (1) Brad Lirette, mult obs
Black-chinned H'bird	Sep 2	GAL-High Island (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
	Sep 10	CHA-Smith Point Hawk Watch (2) Joseph Kennedy
Broad-tailed H'bird	Sep 10	CHA-Smith Point Hawk Watch (2) Joseph Kennedy
	Sep 27-28	HAS-Memorial Area (1) Sue Orwig
Virginia Rail	Sep 15	HAS-Baytown NC (1) Ray Porter, David Hansoon
Amer Golden Plover	Oct 1	GAL-Fort Travis (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Red Knot	Sep 22	HAS-El Jardin Park (1) Andrew Hamlett
Dunlin	Sep 5	HAS-El Jardin Beach (1) Brian Berry (early)
White-rump Sandpiper	Aug 30	CAM-Holly Beach (1) Dale Hamilton
Buff-breast Sandpiper	Sep 18	CAL-Lake Charles Swimming Beach (1) James Smithers (late)
Wilson's Snipe	Sep 6	GAL-Texas City Preserve (1) Scott Buckel, Brenda Gonzales
Pomarine Jaeger	Sep 2-18	GAL-8-mile beach/7 1/2 Mile Ponds (1) Keith Alderman mult obs
	Sep 8-15	GAL-Galveston Is SP (1) Dean Silvers
	Sep 22-30	GAL-East Beach (1) mult obs
Bonaparte's Gull	Sep 1	CHA ANWR "Boat Launch" (1) Patrick Higgins
Short-billed Gull	Sep 13	GAL-Fishing Pier (1) Nan Campbell
Common Tern	Sep 4-5	HAS-El Jardin Beach (1) Stacey Berg, mult obs (early)
Gt Black-Backed Gull	Sep 4	GAL-East Beach (1) Bryan Cotter
	Sep 15	GAL-8-mile beach (1) Jamie Schulbert

	Sep 18	GAL-East Beach (1) Philip Robinson
Sooty Tern	Sep 17	GAL-Port Bolivar ferry landing (1) Greg Whittaker
	Sep 20	GAL-Flower Gdns-West Bank (1) Clayton Leopold
Cory's Shearwater	Sep 20	GAL- Flower Gdns-West Bank (1) Clayton Leopold
Masked Booby	Sep 20	GAL- Flower Gdns-West Bank (1) Clayton Leopold
Glossy Ibis	Sep 26	HAS-Pine Gully Pk (1) Emily Neale
Yellow-bell Sapsucker	Sep 27	HAS-Klein Memorial Pk (1) Billy Baty
Merlin	Sep 11	CAM-Deep Bayou Road (1) Garrett Rhyne, Nick Ramsey, Esme Rosen
Alder Flycatcher	Sep 7	CAL-Corbina Rd (1) David Booth (ID by voice)
	Sep25	CAL-Nelson Rd Boat Launch (1) James Smithers (with recording of call)
Eastern Phoebe	Sep 27	CAM- Hwy 82 betw Johnson Bayou & Holly Beach (1) Charlotte Chehotsky
	Sep 30	CAM-Oak Grove Sanct. (1) Andrew From
Say's Phoebe	Sep 19	GAL-Bulkhead on GIWW (1) Dean Silvers
Vermilion Flycatcher	Sep 3	CAL-SE Lake Charles (1 fem) Charlotte Chehotsky
	Sep 10	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Jamie Schubert
Couch's Kingbird	Sep 2	HAS-Green Trails Village (1) Kevin Smith
	Sep 2-22	HAS-Pine Forest Country Club (2) Timothy White
Western Kingbird	Sep 16	CAM-Chalkley Rd (1) Darlene Eschete, Kathy Rhodes
Bell's Vireo	Sep 1-3	CHA-Cotton Lake Road (1) Paul Fagala mult obs
	Sep 6	GAL-Lafitte;s Cove (1) Kris Cannon
	Sep 13	CAM-Hwy 82 E of Johnson Bayou (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, mult obs
	Sep 27	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee (1) mult obs
Blue Headed Vireo	Sep 5	HAS-Clear Lake-Pine Brook Wetlands (1) Richard Rulander
Brown-head. Nuthatch	Sep 11	CHA-ANWR nr VIS (1) Norman Welsh

Cedar Waxwing	Sep 17	CAL-Lake Charles 10th St (1) James Smithers	Golden-wing Warbler	Sep 5	HAS- Armand Bayou NC (1) Farokh Jamalyaria
Savannah Sparrow	Sep 7	GAL-Texas City Preserve (2) Debbie Repasz	Lawrence's Warbler	Sep 4	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Farokh Jamalyana
Yellow-head Blackbird	Sep 20	HAS-Longenbaugh/Porter End (2) Jim Hinson	MacGillivray's x Mourning Warbler (hybrid)	Sep 13	CAM- Hwy 82 betw Johnson Bayou & Holly Beach (1) mult obs
	Sep 21	CHA-FM1941 nr S Pear Orchard (1 fem) John and Jana Whittle	Cerulean Warbler	Sep 4	HAS-Hermann Park (1) Sarah Flournoy, Don Verser
Bobolink	Sep 13	CHA-Smith Point HW (3) Joseph Kennedy		Sep 5	HAS- Armand Bayou NC (1 fem)) Farokh Jamalyaria
	Sep 29	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff	Magnolia Warbler	Sep 5-6	HAS- Harmann Park (1) Robert Rogilio, mult obs (early)
Golden-wing Warbler	Sep 5	HAS- Armand Bayou NC (1) Farokh Jamalyaria	Bay-breasted Warbler	Sep 21	CHA-ANWR exact location unspecified (1 male) Brooks K (no details)
Lawrence's Warbler	Sep 4	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Farokh Jamalyana		Sep 26	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Jamie Schubert
MacGillivray's x Mourning Warbler (hybrid)	Sep 13	CAM- Hwy 82 betw Johnson Bayou & Holly Beach (1) mult obs	Blackburnian Warbler	Sep 5	HAS-Braeswood Place (1) Steacy Berg
Cerulean Warbler	Sep 4	HAS-Hermann Park (1) Sarah Flournoy, Don Verser	Blackpoll Warbler	Sep 5	HAS-F C Randolph Park (1) Linda Zeller
	Sep 5	HAS- Armand Bayou NC (1 fem)) Farokh Jamalyaria	Palm Warbler	Sep 27	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Magnolia Warbler	Sep 5-6	HAS- Harmann Park (1) Robert Rogilio, mult obs (early)	Prairie Warbler	Oct 1	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Brian Anderson
Bay-breasted Warbler	Sep 21	CHA-ANWR exact location unspecified (1 male) Brooks K (no details)	Blk-thr Gray Warbler	Sep 27	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
	Sep 26	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Jamie Schubert		Sep 30-Oct 1	JEF-SW (1) SM, JHH, mult obs
Blackburnian Warbler	Sep 5	HAS-Braeswood Place (1) Steacy Berg	Scarlet Tanager	Sep 15	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee
Blackpoll Warbler	Sep 5	HAS-F C Randolph Park (1) Linda Zeller	Black-head Grosbeak	Sep 20	HAS-Geo Bush Park area (1 fem) Kevin Smith
Palm Warbler	Sep 27	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff	Rose-breast Grosbeak	Sep 27	HAS-Klein Mem Pk (1) Billie Baily
Prairie Warbler	Oct 1	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Brian Anderson	Bobolink	Sep 29	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff
Blk-thr Gray Warbler	Sep 27	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff			
	Sep 30-Oct 1	JEF-SW (1) SM, JHH, mult obs			
Scarlet Tanager	Sep 15	HAS-Rice Univ (1) Cin-Ty Lee			
Black-head Grosbeak	Sep 20	HAS-Geo Bush Park area (1 fem) Kevin Smith			
Rose-breast Grosbeak	Sep 27	HAS-Klein Mem Pk (1) Billie Baily			
Bobolink	Sep 29	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) Wyatt Egelhoff			

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

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RARE BIRD ALERTS

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

The Texas-wide Rare Bird Alert, maintained by Houston Audubon Society, is available on their web-site at <http://www.houstonaudubon.org/> Email alerts are also available for a fee.

Many rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on Facebook Texbirds or on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds. It is not necessary to subscribe to view the archives, which include all recent postings.

Detailed information/maps on birding sites in Texas is available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirds.org/birdingLocations.php>. This leads you to the maps of the various eBird hotspots. You can also subscribe (free) on eBird for email alerts for all rare birds reported in a specific county.