

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 31 No 6

June 2025

Summer Break!

As usual, be no membership meetings in June or July. Our next meeting will be on THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont, Texas. Details of the program will be published in the next issue of the Brown Pelican and on our web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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.

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Vol. 31, No.6 Jun 2025
Issue number 318

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
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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.

Thursday August 21, 2025. Membership Meeting. Details in next issue.

Saturday August 23, 2025. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. Tentative. Southbound migration of shorebirds should have begun by then! Full details in the next issue.

Golden Triangle Audubon Facebook

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Field Trips

We have decided not to sponsor organized field trips during June and July because the high heat and humidity is not conducive to a safe and enjoyable experience. In the past, we have gone to the Liberty area but this trip was very largely a car birding trip. The target species was the Swallow-tailed Kite, which congregates in the Trinity River bottoms in early August. You can easily cover what we did by driving on US 90 between Liberty and Dayton, and perhaps also visiting the Liberty Municipal Park.

If you are confident you can handle the heat, you might want to walk the Knobby Knees trail of the Trinity River NWR looking for the breeding warblers and flycatchers.

GTAS 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 2025 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 Society 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.

In addition to the costs incurred in producing the print edition of our Newsletter, the *Brown Pelican*, the dues are needed to cover the general expenses incurred in running the organization. Use of the Garden Center for our meeting now incurs a charge.

We would very much encourage you to 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. The newsletter is sent electronically as a PDF file. We often take advantage of the lack of significant space constraints to add supplemental information in the *Brown Pelican*.



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

Spring 2025 Migration Count – 10 May 2025

This is the 30th year that we have conducted a county-wide migration count, since we started in 1995. (We actually did a survey with only one party in 1994.) Nationally, country-wide fledgling counts were conducted from 1992, as the “North American Migration Count” with Brent Ortego as the organizer. The effort went through a number of names, with the organizers of each successive change essentially ignoring the previous iterations. In about 2015, the name “World Migratory Bird Day” with some sponsorship by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, took hold, but Cornell Lab of Ornithology in conjunction with eBird has in recent years started using “Global Big Day” as an alternative or supplemental name. Our counts in Jefferson County have been conducted on a comparable basis throughout this period, although issues with changing land use, and changing access will always reduce the direct comparability when reviewing a large number of years. We have published the county-wide totals virtually every year in the *Brown Pelican*, and are working on a way to make the individual area totals available on the web, although there is a very large number of data points to present, and some changes in the areas necessitated by changing access issues. Issues of the *Brown Pelican* with the total results back to 2000 are already available at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Count Day, (May 10) brought favorable weather although in the middle of a relatively long period of south winds across the Gulf. By early to mid-May, this wind pattern is normal, but there are still large numbers of birds crossing, but without any wind or rain events to persuade them to drop into the Woods upon reaching land, we do not see many of them, and those that do often feed briefly and press on to points further north.

Over the whole county, participants found a good variety of birds. A total of 184 species (provisional total!) was on the high side of normal. Included were Upland Sandpiper, Swallow-tailed Kite and Kiskadee among species not seen often in early May, although it looks as if Kiskadees are in the early stages of expanding north into the near shore areas of the Upper Texas Coast. Since we always conduct this count on a Saturday, the actual date varies between the 8th and the 14th, and this year's date was near the beginning of the range. This may skew the results a little for migratory species. Conditions in the Woods were quite wet, and the ponds were full. The survey of Cattail Marsh had to be a little abbreviated, and the north levee of Pleasure Island is closed for a prolonged period. Our survey of McFaddin Beach was also abbreviated. We did take advantage of the eBird checklists submitted by three locally based parties at Sabine Woods, and reviewed several others.

The duck species seen were much as expected although we need to review the provenance of four Mallards in the western part of the county. Black-bellied Whistling Duck numbers increased again, although we should not put too much emphasis on a single year's count. Mottled Duck numbers were very much within the normal range,

Northern Bobwhites are undoubtedly resident in the county in relatively small numbers, but one on this count was the first recorded since 2019. Yellow-billed Cuckoo numbers were good, the highest is several years. A Chuck-will's Widow was the first seen in many counts. We also recorded more Ruby-throated Hummingbirds than usual.

Modest American Coot and Common Gallinules numbers were perhaps influenced by the conditions at Cattail Marsh with excessive Water Hyacinth and limited time available. The hyacinth is favored by Purple Gallinules, although 79 was fewer than the 106 seen the previous year. Interestingly it was the early 2000s before it was normal to find any in Cattail Marsh, when there was very limited hyacinth.

Most American Golden Plovers have already passed through by count day, so recording four was good. Two Piping Plovers were still in the county on count day, but no Snowy Plovers remained. The last Snowy Plover seen in a spring count was in 2021. Wilson Plovers – two seen -- are always scarce in Jefferson County. Hudsonian Godwits are late migrants, and while it was nice to find one, in the 2020s it was normal to find larger numbers. While White-rumped Sandpipers are always the last of the migrant sandpipers to pass through, but 351 was a high number, especially for so early in May. Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers are not easy to differentiate, but we know that our observers, with “Dowitcher species” presented as an option, are careful when distinguishing the two species. Nevertheless, not recording any Long-billed Dowitchers was unusual although not totally unprecedented. Historically, the numbers of each seen are very variable.

The numbers of gulls and terns were reasonably normal, although Black Skimmers were absent for the fourth year in a row.

We saw a good variety of raptors. To begin at the top, one Bald Eagle was seen in Cattail Marsh where a pair nested as in past years, and another was seen in the southern part of the county. We did not find any White-tailed Kites for the second year in a row. They seem to move from year to year. Mississippi Kites have over the last few years become firmly established in the county in modest numbers. A single White-tailed Hawk, seen almost by chance late in the day just west of Beaumont, was a disappointing total, as we thought the at least one pair had become established in extreme western Jefferson County. Perhaps these hawks were sitting on nests. Six Broad-winged Hawks and a very high eight Swainson's Hawks were both encouraging.

A good number of Red-headed Woodpeckers were roaming West Jefferson County, a little surprising since most of the trees that died in the hurricanes in the first decade of this century have now fallen with many having being removed. Interestingly, there was a very high number of the species seen in Hardin County on the field trip a week later. A Northern Flicker seen in the “middle” of the western part of the county was unusual, as almost all have left by the first few days of May at the latest.

Olive-sided Flycatchers are thought of as more of a species to be expected in the area in the Fall. However, they must pass through in Spring on their way to the breeding grounds concentrated (in the eastern US) along the US-Canada border area, and eBird does show past records along the Southeast Texas coast in early May. We have seen relatively few Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and Eastern Kingbirds on the fence lines in South County this year, and the totals for the entire county were low. The fact that mosquito and other insect populations have been very low in Sabine Woods this spring season is likely not unrelated! The *Empidonax* flycatchers are mostly late migrants

in the spring, and follow the usual pattern of late migrants of pressing on north immediately if they pause on the coastal migrant traps at all. Great Crested Flycatchers nest in Sabine Woods and elsewhere in the area, and were there as usual.

Among the vireos, there was a high number of Red-eyed Vireos, probably largely as a result of the relatively early calendar date of the count. One Blue-headed Vireo was significantly late in leaving. Our observers did report both Philadelphia and Warbling Vireo.

Chickadees and Wrens were present in normal numbers, as were Tufted Titmice in the northern part of the county. Unfortunately, eBird does not require that entries based solely on hearing a bird to be noted as such – all it would take is to show “heard only” in the remarks. eBird has ceased to include in the formal records checklists on which **all** the entries are based only on being reported on the Merlin call recognition app (if that is disclosed by the observer), but that is only part of the problem as there is currently no way to know if one particular entry on a checklist is based on Merlin. Titmice shown in eBird as being in Sabine Woods in April or May are simply not correct. To be charitable, these may be mimic calls by one of the local mockingbirds, but We do know of one thoroughly verified sighting of a Tufted Titmouse in Sabine Woods, and that was a sight record on a Christmas count in 2007, and a report of two in Sabine Pass, also on a Christmas count in 2003.

It times past, Gray-cheeked Thrushes were considered to be fairly rare in spring migration, but there are increasing records in the spring season. Our Migration Count records do show increasing numbers. Historically, local birders considered Gray-cheeked to be if not rare, certainly uncommon and that most *Catharus* thrushes were Swainson's Thrushes. Whether this reflects a better recognition by birders of the variability of plumage characteristics, especially in the head, neck and upper breast is not clear. The majority of Wood Thrushes pass through before May, so the Migration Count often does not record any, but two this year perhaps reflects the relatively early date of the Count.

Bobolinks are not seen particularly often on the count, but often are in areas just off the highway to the west. This year there were some close to the Woods. In fact, there are more eBird records along the highway between Sabine Pass and McFaddin than on the rest of the coast highways on the Upper Texas Coast. Bronzed Cowbirds are becoming more common in the area, and two were seen in the Greater Port Arthur area.

For many birders, the first question that they ask when discussing a particular migrant hotspot is how many warbler species were seen. By the time that the count rolls around, essentially close to mid-May, most birders think that the migration is all but over. It has always been known that if a front with strong north winds clears the coast and continues at least a short distance into the Gulf, the coastal migrant traps fill with migrants. The problem is that cold fronts in May are rare. Even without fronts, with typical south winds over the Gulf and coastal areas, some migrants will drop in for a short period, typically between 4 and 6 p.m., but the genetically imprinted urge to reach the breeding grounds is such that they feed very briefly and press on almost immediately. By mid-May only a somewhat limited variety of species are still migrating, although radar returns are still very heavy and shows us that the absolute number of birds reaching the coastal areas is still very

high. The relatively short time window used by spring migrants means that the migrants still moving on count day is very variable from year to year as the count date varies. Some of the migrants seen on count day are summer residents in parts of the county – Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Hooded Warbler are perhaps the most notable. Some of the warblers still moving through included American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-side Warbler and Yellow Warbler. This year, for the second year in a row, Bay-breasted Warblers were particularly numerous for an unusually long window, compared to some years in the past when the species was present, albeit in large numbers, for only a day or two. There was one Canada Warbler – one seen on count day -- almost the latest migrating warbler. The only later species is the Mourning Warbler, rarely seen in spring migration – the last one on the count was in 2020. Both these species are among the earliest southbound fall migrants, and much more easily found in the early fall. These species have little chance of a second brood or even a “renesting” if the first attempt is unsuccessful or fails through predation!

The warblers are primarily insectivores, while the larger birds, the tanagers, orioles and grosbeaks, are frugivores. The eastern tract of Sabine Woods now has a large number of mulberry trees, mature enough to provide a steady source of fruit for the latter groups. Orchard Orioles arrive early in the spring and some typically nest in Sabine Woods, Baltimore Orioles pass through a little later. This year, in addition to the expected and much appreciated Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, a nice male Western Tanager was present for at least 12 days, including count day, and possibly longer. Rose breasted and Blue Grosbeaks were present in normal numbers, as were Indigo and Painted. Buntings.

WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (264); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (26); DUCK, Wood (8); TEAL, Blue-winged (50); MALLARD (4); DUCK, Mottled (29); BOBWHITE, Northern (1); GREBE, Pied-billed (1); PIGEON, Rock (55); DOVE, Eurasian Collared- (5); DOVE, Inca (3); DOVE, White-winged (51); DOVE, Mourning (169); CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (26); CUCKOO, Black-billed (1); NIGHTHAWK, Common (41); WILL'S-WIDOW, Chuck- (1); SWIFT, Chimney (27); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (22); HUMMINGBIRD, Species (2); RAIL, King (1); RAIL, Clapper (21); SORA (2); GALLINULE, Common (45); COOT, American (3); GALLINULE, Purple (79); STILT, Black-necked (168); AVOCET, American (131); PLOVER, Black-bellied (84); PLOVER, American Golden (4); PLOVER, Wilson's (2); PLOVER, Semipalmated (21); PLOVER, Piping (2); KILLDEER (74); WHIMBREL (42); GODWIT, Hudsonian (1); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (21); SANDPIPER, Stilt (16); SANDERLING (153); SANDPIPER, Least (25); SANDPIPER, White-rumped (351); SANDPIPER, Pectoral (13); SANDPIPER, Semipalmated (25); SANDPIPER, Western (25); SANDPIPER, Peep (77); DOWITCHER, Short-billed (45); DOWITCHER species (45); PHALAROPE, Wilson's (1); SANDPIPER, Spotted (10); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (6); WILLET (41); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (6); YELLOWLEGS species (7); GULL, Laughing (169); TERN, Least (25); TERN, Gull-billed (2); TERN, Caspian (2); TERN, Black (56); TERN, Forster's (45); TERN, Royal (8); TERN, Sandwich (2); ANHINGA (6); CORMORANT, Neotropic (208); CORMORANT species (5); PELICAN, Brown (45); BITTERN, Least (10); HERON, Great Blue (21); HERON, Little Blue (65); HERON, Tricolored (52); EGRET, Reddish (6); EGRET, Cattle (802); HERON, Green (42); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (9); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (38); IBIS, White (168); IBIS, Glossy (1); IBIS, White-faced (102); IBIS, Plegadis species (41); SPOONBILL, Roseate (101); VULTURE, Black (99); VULTURE, Turkey (45); OSPREY (3); KITE, Swallow-tailed (1); KITE, Mississippi (10); EAGLE, Bald (2); HAWK, Red-shouldered (10); HAWK, Broad-winged (6); HAWK, White-tailed (1); HAWK, Swainson's (8); HAWK, Red-tailed (8); OWL, Barred (3); KINGFISHER, Belted (1); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (5);

WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (26); WOODPECKER, Downy (18); FLICKER, Northern (1); WOODPECKER, Pileated (7); CARACARA, Crested (10); FLYCATCHER, Olive-sided (1); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (11); FLYCATCHER, Acadian (4); FLYCATCHER, Empidonax (2); PHOEBE, Eastern (2); FLYCATCHER, Great Crested (23); KISKADEE, Great (1) KINGBIRD, Western (2); KINGBIRD, Eastern (24); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (16); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (29); VIREO, White-eyed (28); VIREO, Yellow-throated (10); VIREO, Blue-headed (1); VIREO, Philadelphia (2); VIREO, Warbling (1); VIREO, Red-eyed (40); JAY, Blue (93); CROW, American (28); CROW, Fish (33); CROW, Species (23); SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged (3); MARTIN, Purple (136); SWALLOW, Tree (31); SWALLOW, Bank (55); SWALLOW, Barn (168); SWALLOW, Cliff (357); CHICKADEE, Carolina (47); TITMOUSE, Tufted (27); WREN, Marsh (13); WREN, Carolina (33); GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray (1); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (74); VEERY (8); THRUSH, Gray-cheeked (5); THRUSH, Swainson's (13); THRUSH, Wood (2); ROBIN, American (4); CATBIRD, Gray (14); THRASHER, Brown (17); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (307); STARLING, European (260); WAXWING, Cedar (23); FINCH, House (27); SPARROW, Seaside (21); SPARROW, Nelson's (2); SPARROW, Savannah (9); CHAT, Yellow-breasted (3); BLACKBIRD, Yellow-headed (1); BOBOLINK (8); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (131); ORIOLE, Orchard (63); ORIOLE, Baltimore (3); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (313); COWBIRD, Bronzed (3); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (80); GRACKLE, Common (109); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed

(128); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (180); GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed (119); GRACKLE species (2); OVENBIRD (4); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (4); WARBLER, Golden-winged (1); WARBLER, Black-and-white (11); WARBLER, Prothonotary (10); WARBLER, Tennessee (8); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (62); WARBLER, Hooded (8); REDSTART, American (21); PARULA, Northern (4); WARBLER, Magnolia (21); WARBLER, Bay-breasted (37); WARBLER, Blackburnian (4); WARBLER, Yellow (18); WARBLER, Chestnut-sided (7); WARBLER, Pine (10); WARBLER, Yellow-throated (1); WARBLER, Black-throated Green (9); WARBLER, Canada (1); TANAGER, Summer (12); TANAGER, Scarlet (5); TANAGER, Western (1); CARDINAL, Northern (189); GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (7); GROSBEAK, Blue (2); BUNTING, Indigo (21); BUNTING, Painted (12); DICKCISSEL (101); SPARROW, House (59); TOTAL INDIVIDUALS (8537); TOTAL SPECIES (184) Number of Observers (14); Number of Parties (10); Number of Party-Hours - Foot (24.2); Number of Party-Hours - Car (50.0); Number of Party-Hours - Stationary (1.0); Total Party-hours (60.4); Number of Party-Miles - Foot (8.7); Number of Party-Miles - Car (318.9); Total Party-Miles (363.0); Participants: Sue Benson, Michael Cooper, Howard and Linda Davis, Sherry Gibson, Kenyan Guidry, John Haynes, Johnnie Johnson, Gary and Denise Kelley, Steve Mayes, Sherrie Roden, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Liz Timmer, John and Jana Whittle.

Warblers at Sabine Woods – Spring 2025

It has been an interesting 2025 spring bird migration season at Sabine Woods. I tried to be fairly consistent in looking at eBird most days to see how many warbler species had been seen most days. Of course, personal responsibilities got in my way on a few days, but at least we have a good sampling to look back on. At times during a year, a new birder or out of town birders ask many of us when is the best time to go to see the most warbler species. One of my answers is normally the last ten days of April and the first ten days of May. But with so many days that included south winds, some days the birds flew straight over Sabine Woods and did not stop this year. As you will see at the end of this report I would have been wrong about the very last part of April.

4-12-25 * 22	4-19-25 * 24	4-22-25 * 24	4-25-25 * 20	5-4-25 * 21
4-16-25 * 24	4-20-25 * 21	4-23-25 * 21	4-26-25 * 20	
4-18-25 * 23	4-21-25 * 24	4-24-25 * 22	5-3-15 * 23	

So for this 2025 spring bird migration season, the majority of the birds stopped at the woods from April 16th to the 26th, and more on the 3rd and 4th of May. If you count every warbler species that has been seen this season, the total is 35 warbler species. They were:

Ovenbird	Tennessee Warbler	Northern Parula	Blackpoll Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler	Orange-crowned Warbler	Yellow Warbler	Pine Warbler
Louisiana Waterthrush	Nashville Warbler	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Yellow-throated Warbler
Northern Waterthrush	Mourning Warbler	Magnolia Warbler	Prairie Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler	Common Yellowthroat	Cape May Warbler	Palm Warbler
Blue-winged Warbler	Kentucky Warbler	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Wilson's Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler	Hooded Warbler	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Canada Warbler
Black and White Warbler	American Redstart	Black-throated Green	
Swainson's Warbler	Cerulean Warbler	Warbler	
	Blackburnian Warbler	Bay-breasted Warbler	

Two warbler species that we have had in years passed are the Townsend's Warbler and the Black-throated Gray Warbler. As far as I know Sabine Woods has had at least 37 warbler species seen and recorded.

None of this information could be possible without birders who post their sightings on eBird. I am grateful for those people, so that we can go back and look at the history of bird migration

In order to see all the warblers listed on eBird that were seen in one day at Sabine Woods, you would have had to be at the woods for at least 8 hours to see most of them. Most of us do not have that stamina or just have too many things going on in our daily lives. Even though it sometimes seemed the woods was slow birding wise, it turns out it was much better than some of us thought, as you will see with the numbers below.

There were 13 days at the wood that had at least 20 warbler species seen. Surprisingly, April 12th was the first day. There were 22 warbler species seen that day. The last day this season with 20 or more warbler species seen was May 4th. Below is a list of days that had at least 20 warbler species seen at the woods.

each year at the woods.

Also, we have very diligent local birders who keep us updated when they have bird sightings. Three species that have been nice to see this year along with warblers, have been a log staying Western Tanager, a wandering Great Kiskadee and a Black-billed Cuckoo.

Jana Whittle

Bird Sightings –May 2025

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records reported to us from nearby Texas counties – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review records for Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-and brief location information if available – (number) – Observer(s). If more precise location information is needed, it can often be obtained by using the bird species map feature to find the sighting in eBird, opening the checklist, and using the map function to display the location as precisely as the observer provided.

Commentary: Our policy of only including migrants that are more than two weeks late is beginning to allow us to focus on “other” rarities. In the spring, the genetically imprinted urge to proceed north to the breeding grounds is very strong and few migrants are seen two weeks or more late. In the fall, we expect there will be more late migrants, as the southbound migrants are likely influenced more by the availability of food than anything else. We don’t get any freezing temperatures in Southeast Texas until at least several weeks after the last late migrants normally have left, so even two weeks late will not be enough to eliminate late fall migrants from the sightings list.

In the last few months there has rarely been space for comments, so we are taking advantage of some space this month to comment on issues other than the individual species that were detected.

Two species deserve comment. Great Kiskadees are being seen more often on the Upper Texas Coast. This year, one was seen (and more often just heard) at Sabine Woods from mid-March through at least mid-May. Based on the sightings of this bird and past instances, the species can be very wide ranging. As a large flycatcher, the species is clearly a strong flier, and we wonder how many or rather how few birds are involved. Do sightings from 30 miles away from the Woods involve the same bird? We may never know unless in the future we encounter a kiskadee with an identifiable plumage abnormality or somehow a bander can capture one locally.

The other species worthy of comment is Western Tanager. Small numbers of this species, mostly females and/or immatures, have been seen in winters on the Upper Texas Coast, for as long as eBird data has been extensive enough to

be useful, probably back to 2000 or 2005. But spring sightings have been much sparser, although a very preliminary analysis hints that we may be seeing increasing numbers in the spring. This bird in Sabine Woods was a beautiful male, seen by a very large number of observers, the facial red seemingly intensifying during its long stay.

Common Ground Dove and American Flamingo are also vying for addition to the list of fairly commonly seen local birds.

One other issue that is in some ways disappointing, but at the same time understandable, and that is the concentration and focus of many birders is on only two or three of the very limited number of the counties we cover. A little further afield, Harris County (population 4.83 million) has more birders than any other comparable sized local area. The ease of travel to Galveston County (population 0.36 million) results in many Harris County domiciled birders doing far more birding in Galveston County than in largely urbanized Harris County. Our main point is not that there is more habitat attractive to birds in the former county – coastal areas inevitably have more birds because so many species of birds are closely associated with water. In compiling this column every month, we become acutely aware that some counties with habitat that looks to us to be bird friendly are apparently simply significantly under-birded. Travel distance from home is obviously a major factor for many, but another is a focus on numbers, typically not absolute numbers of birds, but numbers of different interesting species seen that induces birders to visit a county. These counties are also very sparsely populated. We go months without a single report of a rare species in the counties around “the lakes” (i.e. Tyler and Jasper Counties as well as Angelina, Sabine, and San Augustine). Most of these counties have significant bodies of water.

Just across the state line in Louisiana are a number of parishes with low populations but which generate lots of sightings for this column. The coastal parish, Cameron (population 68,000) has long been known as an ornithological hotspot, Cameron Parish. Calcasieu Parish (population about 200,000), mostly in Lake Charles) also appears to produce more sighting for this column than one might expect from a county without any Gulf shoreline. These Louisiana Parishes are quite large in area, and seem to be birded more intensively than, for example, Orange County.

Local Counties

Canada Goose	May 15	HAI-Sandylands Sanctuary (2) Charlotte Reemts	Northern Flicker	May 31	TYL-Big Thicket-Pitcher Plant Trail (1) WE
Green-winged Teal	May 29	JEF-TP (1) HS	Peregrine Falcon	May 20	SAA-TX147 Causeway, Sam Rayburn (1) David Wolf
Wilson’s Snipe	May 3	JEF-SW (1) Steve Glover, Greg Cook	Great Kiskadee	thru May 13+	SW (1) mult obs
Whimbrel	May 29	JEF-SRSP (1) Mark Fisher	Blue-headed Vireo	May 12	JAS-Sam Rayburn Twin Dikes Park (1) Claude Durand
Harris’s Hawk	May 25	JEF-west of northern IH 10-US 69 interchange (1) Eric Beall (unconf)	Red-breasted Nuthatch	May 2- 4	JEF-SW (1) mult obs
Yellow-bell Sapsucker	May 19	JEF-SW (1) Dania Sanchez	Brewster’s Warbler	May 4	JEF-SW (1) Troy Hibbitts

Western Tanager May 3-15 JEF-SW(1) mult obs

Nearby Counties

Snow Goose	May 15	HAS-Bliss Meadows Park (1) Marie Asscherick
Green-winged Teal	May 26	HAS-Mitchell Nature Preserve (1) Michael Williams
Common Ground-Dove	May 3	CAL-Corbina Rd (1) Caitlin McCormick
	May 4	GAL-Pelican Is TAMUG (1) Jeff Sexton
American Flamingo	May 18	CHA-Fairview Rd (1) WE
	May 3	GAL-Pelican Is area (9) Greg Whitaker, Bonnie Berard, Shane Cantrell
	May 22	GAL-Jamaica Beach Kahala Dr (1) WE
Parasitic Jaeger	May 19	GAL-Bolivar side Ferry Landing (1) Barb Matthews, Steve Schmit
Common Tern	May 4	HAS-Morgan's Pt (1) Steve Glover
	May 13	CAL-Israel Lafleur Park (1) David Booth
	May 15-16	HAS-Sylvan Beach Park (4) Richard Rulander, Andrew Hamlett
	May 18	HAS-Morgan's Point (2) Richard Rulander
Iceland Gull	May 19	GAL-Texas City Dike (1) Dean Silvers
Wood Stork	May 3	GAL-57-acre Park (5) Geordie Eschengach
	May 2	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (3) Farokh Jamalyaria
Masked Booby	May 30	GAL-offshore ~ 20 mi SSE of Galveston (1) Shane Cantrell
American Bittern	May 12	CAM-Lacassine Wildlife Loop (1) Deanna Griggs
Glossy Ibis	May 15	CAL-Fred Vail Rd (1) Caitlin McCormick
Belted Kingfisher	May 11	CAL-LA27 N of Holly Beach (1) Esme Rosen, Karthik Thrikkadeeri
Ladder-back W'pecker	May 29	HAS- J P Landing Park (1) mult obs
Yellow-head Caracara	thru May 14, 29+	GAL-FM3005 at 89th St and fishing pier area (1) mult obs, cont
Northern Harrier	May 15	HAS-Johnson Space Ctr (1) Steven Berenzweig
American Kestrel	May 18	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertas 1) WE
Merlin	May 4	CHA-FM1985 near ANWR entrance Rd (1) mult obs
	May 3-4	GAL-Settegast Rd (1) mult obs
Peregrine Falcon	May 23	HAS-Eldridge West Oaks area (1) Steve Dammer
Eastern Phoebe	May 17	HAS-Archbishop Fiorenza Park (1) Tanner Nielsen
	May 21-31	HAS-Kleb Woods (1) Megan Ahlgren
	May 22	HAS-Mitchell Preserve (1) Sarah S
	May 21-22	HAS-Kleb Woods (8) Megan Ahlgren
Western Flycatcher	May 21	GAL-Corps Woods (1) Abhishek Prasad
Ash-throated Flycatcher	May 3	GAL-Settegast Rd (1) Paul Sivon
Great Kiskadee	May 5	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) mult obs
	May 4	CHA-TX124 at Spindletop Bayou (1) Graham Redgrave
	May 11	CAL-Charlie Moss Rd (1) David Booth

	May 11	CAL-Ellis Moss Rd (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, David Booth, Claire Sylvest
Couch's Kingbird	May 19	CAL-Sulphur (1) Greg Jackson
	May 12	HAS-Peckham Park (1) Tracy Becher
Cassin's Kingbird	May 15-17	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) Hemant Kishan, mult obs
Couch's Kingbird	May 2, 29-31	HAS-Peckham Park (2) mult obs
Western Kingbird	May 4	CAM-Hwy 82 Cameron (1) mult obs
	May 13-15	CAL-Fred Vail Lane (1) Caitlin McCormick, Jordan Cormier
Gray Kingbird	May 1	GAL-Settegast Rd (1) mult obs
	May 3-4	GAL-Artist Boat Preserve (1) milt obs
Blue-headed Vireo	May 4	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Eric Faria
Black-whiskered Vireo	May 3	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Robt Becker
Hermit Thrush	May 6	HAS-Russ Pitman Park (1) Howard Kanelakos
Scaly-breasted Munia	May 12-30	CAL-Tuten Park (1) Randy Frederick, Dale Hamilton, Charlotte Chehotsky
American Goldfinch	May 2-4	CAL-Sam Houston Jones Pkwy (1) Deanna Griggs
	May 4	GAL-Ft San Jacinto (1) Jeff Sexton
	May 31	HAS-Quail Crossing (1) Jeannie Chambers
Yellow-headed Blackbird	May 1	HAS-El Jardin Park (1) Andrew Hamlett, Richard Rulander
	May 6	HAS-J P Landing Park (1) Justin Sandt
	May 11	HAS-Spaceport Houston (1) Wen Li
Bullock's Oriole	May 6	HAS-Edith Moore Sanct (1 f) Young Ko
Baltimore Oriole	May 26	HAS-Mitchell Nature Preserve (1) Krien VerBerkmoes
Louisiana Waterthrush	May 2	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (1) Farokh Jamalyaria
	May 3	HAS-C V Adair Park (1) Daniel Kranshaar
Northern Waterthrush	May 31	GAL-HI Boy Scout Woods (1) WE
Palm Warbler	May 11	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertas (1) Judy Behrens, Mike Austin
Black-thr Blue Warbler	May 4	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) mult obs
Yellow-rumped Warbler	May 4	HAS-El Franco Lee Park (1) Lisa Hardcastle
	May 4	HAS-Yolonda Black Navarro Nature Pk (1) Lisa Madry
	May 7	HAS-Memorial Park (1) Charles Carn
Yellow-thr Warbler	May 3	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) mult obs
Black-thr Green Warbler	May 30	CAM-Bell City (1) Jordan Cosgrove
Western Tanager	May 3-4	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) mult obs
	May 11	CAL-Willow Island (1) Esme Rosen, Karthik Thrikkadeeri

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Jocelyn Nungaray NWR (ex 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; LIB – Liberty County; NEW – Newton County; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Is, Port Arthur; SAA – San Augustine Co.; SAB – Sabine County; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP - Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TYL – Tyler County; WE – Wyatt Egelhoff; WJC – West Jefferson County.

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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 TEXTBIRDS 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.