

The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 31 No 11

November 2025

Membership Meeting Thursday November 20, 2025 6:00 p.m. Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont Elections and Your Favorite Bird Pictures

Dr. Harlan Stewart has again volunteered to prepare all photos submitted in advance into a Powerpoint presentation. We will need to have the pictures by Monday Morning November 18. They can be emailed as attachments to hstewartmail@gt.rr.com . We plan to have the doors open no later than 6:00 p.m., and have light refreshments available by about 6:15 p.m.

In 1995 Golden Triangle Audubon Society opened its doors to birders, birdwatchers and anyone interested in the conservation of local, migratory avian species and their habitats. 30 years later our organization continues to welcome people near and far to share the joy of birding in our area. From annual bird counts, to field trips, community engagement, literature publishing through the Brown Pelican and the continuous dedication of nurturing Sabine Woods, our members have demonstrated a love and commitment that surpasses decades of hard work. As a conservation, educational and not-for-profit organization we have conquered many challenges that come with working in a coastal area often impacted by environmental circumstances and constant change. Through years of efforts and continuous presence in our community, Golden Triangle Audubon Society has become a well known and loved organization that many hold dear in their hearts and memories.

On November 20 we invite you, the birders, volunteers, photographers, educators, supporters and valued members to join us on this special Annual meeting that will cover its scheduled program of sharing your photos, updates, elections and a farewell to the 2025 year. In celebration of our 30th Anniversary we will be sharing stories, the history of Golden Triangle Audubon Society and the wonderful members that made 30 years a milestone worthy of celebrating. Whether you are a member of 1 year or 30 you should take pride and celebrate an organization well known for the wonderful friends, volunteers, board members and visitors that share the interest, conservation and advocacy of our feathered friends. Congratulations Golden Triangle Audubon Society and hope your everlasting legacy will continue for years to come!

We will begin at 6:15 p.m. with refreshments and our monthly potluck, followed by our share your photos program a wonderful time to celebrate our favorite subject birds and the people who care for them!

Dania Sanchez

The Brown Pelican

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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
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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 GTAS web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Thursday November 20, 2025. Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting of Golden Triangle Audubon Society will take place on November 20, 2025 in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont, TX. At this meeting, we will hold elections for all officers and all At-Large Board positions. To nominate someone, contact the chair of the Nominating Committee. Steve Mayes. Please, in the first instance, email him at gtaudubon@aol.com. Nominations from the floor will be in order but must be accompanied by affirmation, either orally at the meeting, or in writing, that the nominee is willing to serve.

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 22, 2025. Field Trip to West Jefferson County. In recent years, this has been one of our most successful field trips. However, we are holding our breaths this year, as the area has been inordinately dry recently, and anecdotal report have so far found relatively few birds. However, it is early November before we normally see many of the wintering species.

The area is well known for its birds of prey, which in past years have included

Bald and Golden Eagles (the latter a good number of years ago). Crested Caracaras and White-tailed Hawks in addition to the more "expected" Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, and American Kestrels. Anecdotal reports indicate American Kestrels have arrived in good numbers this year. In some years we have seen White-tailed Kites and Merlins.

Here in Southeast Texas, we have had a series of unusual weather periods over the last couple of years or so with some very wet periods and also droughts, freezes culminating in a quite severe drought that developed in September and October this year. There is more crawfish farming, but crawfish fields tend to attract mostly Great Egrets.

The area is also well known as the wintering ground of what has become a large (about 1,000 strong) flock of Sandhill Cranes and most winters is one of the best places to see the wintering sparrows of several different species the area. Both cranes and sparrows are omnivorous, but depend on seeds and roots in fall and winter.

Depending on whether we experience any heavy rain in the first two or three weeks of November, there may be flooded fields, that attract ducks and geese also.

We recommend those coming by way of IH-10 or FM365 stop at the Stuckey's at the intersection of IH-10 and FM365 (on the short stretch of two-way service road of IH-10 - north side) to use the facilities and purchase any snacks you need. Reaching toilet facilities during this trip requires a lengthy side trip! Then 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 six or seven miles. Shortly after you



EarthShare of Texas represents Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society in payroll contribution programs in workplaces throughout Texas. For more information about how you can support Audubon Foundation of Texas and the National Audubon Society at your workplace, call 1-800-GREENTX, or visit www.earthshare-texas.org

emerge out of the woodlands, South China Road goes to the right (east then north) and immediately afterwards, on the left, is Johnson Road. If you approach from the north, Johnson Road is about 7.5 miles south of US 90 on FM365. Contact Field Trip chair Steve Mayes, gtaudubon@aol.com, for further information. This will be largely a "car birding" trip, carpooling desired. There is space to leave cars at the intersection of FM365 and Johnson Road.

Preliminary List of Local Christmas Bird Counts (Some of these dates are not yet fully confirmed.)

Johnson Bayou, LA. Date not set yet. Contact Gary Kelley, garymke@sbcglobal.net. While much of the area is private, local landowners have allowed access to their property for this count (notarized releases required in many cases), normally inaccessible to birders at other times. Areas covered include beach, coastal cheniers, marsh and grasslands. Johnson Bayou, Louisiana, is located 15 miles east of the bridge from Pleasure Island to Louisiana on Highway 82. Please contact Gary Kelley (garymke@sbcglobal.net, telephone 409-679-1616) for more information

Bolivar Peninsula. Thursday 18 December
Date not confirmed. This count circle in Chambers County includes High Island and Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 7 am at the Visitor Contact Station by the restrooms of the NWR. We will have access to closed areas of the refuge that you normally can't access.
Contact David Sarkozi, david@sarkozi.net. 713-412-4409 or Steve Mayes, sgmayes@hotmail.com

Turkey Creek. Saturday 20 December. This count in Hardin and Tyler Counties includes the Turkey Creek and Hickory Creek Savannah Units of the Big Thicket National Preserve. Meet at the entrance road to the Big Thicket Visitor Center on US69 at FM420, about 7 miles north of Kountze at 6:30 AM. Sponsored by the Big Thicket National Preserve. Please contact the compiler, Contact Lynn Jackson, vlbjax@yahoo.com

Orange County. Wednesday 1 January 2026
Habitat covers marsh, woodlands, and the Cow Bayou watershed. Includes Bessie Heights marsh and the road to Bailey's Fish Camp, as well as Claiborne West Park. Please contact the compiler, Lynn Jackson, vlbjax@yahoo.com if you would like to participate

Beech Creek. Saturday 3 January. This count takes place in Tyler and Jasper Counties and includes Steinhagen Lake, the Beech Creek unit of Big Thicket National Preserve and Martin Dies State Park, as well as several Corps of Engineers parks. Meet at the Corps of Engineers Picnic Area on FM92 immediately north of the intersection with FM1746 in Town Bluff at 6:30 AM. Those carpooling may leave any extra vehicles in the parking lot at the picnic area. Sponsored by the Big Thicket National Preserve. Please contact the compiler, Lynn Jackson, vlbjax@yahoo.com if you'd like to participate.

Membership Dues and Delivery of the *Brown Pelican*

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues are \$20 per year. We are now accepting 2026 dues. You may pay at any membership meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page. Dues paid in September or later will cover through the end of 2026.

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 officially 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 to receive the *Brown Pelican* electronically, not only to ensure that you receive it in a timely manner but also to save paper, printing cost, postage cost and significant volunteer time in taking the manuscript to and collecting the copies from the printer, sealing the copies, affixing labels and stamps and taking them to the post office. Postage rates have recently increased again, and quite substantially this time. It cost 50 cents in 2018 to mail a copy and now it is 78 cents. We are aware that many of you prefer to have printed copies to read, but as noted, it is becoming increasingly expensive and consumptive of volunteer time for us to prepare and mail them. The printed edition is limited to eight pages whereas the electronic edition can be expanded (within reason), and we occasionally take advantage of that to include additional material, and sometimes to space the material in a less cramped manner.

When we send you a copy electronically, we send it as an attachment to an email. We know that a few of you cannot access attachments, so in the email, we normally will also provide a direct link to the copy on our web site (goldentriangleaudubon.org), as well as instructions as to how to navigate yourself to that issue on the website. To start receiving your copy as a pdf file, simply send an email to gtaudubon@aol.com from the email address you want us to use. Normally, we will send you an email by return with a copy of the latest issue attached to make sure everything is working properly. At this time, we plan to continue sending mailed copies to those of you without electronic access.

Copies of the issues of the *Brown Pelican* back to 2000 are available on the web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Sabine Woods Maintenance

We had to cancel the planned work day last month because of impending heavy rain. As a result, there is some light trail work – trimming the sides mainly – that has not been accomplished, and would improve the appearance of the Woods. If you are willing to help on whatever day is convenient for you, contact John Whittle (gtaudubon@aol.com or 409-722-4193)

Field Trip to Sabine Woods 18 October 2025

This fall has been very disappointing for local birders. Passerine migrants, and that is what is expected to be the principal attraction at a fall field trip to Sabine Woods, have been few. It seems likely that the dry conditions were to blame. The field trip was, as usual, held about two-thirds of the way through October, aiming to catch the later migrating species. However, this year, that turned out to be towards the end of a long period of warm mostly cloudless days and light winds, often with a northerly component. Yes, the weather can be too nice to produce good birding! The birds probably migrated as usual but there was simply nothing to cause the birds to remain in the coastal areas for any length of time as they proceeded to their winter quarters further south.

One strange aspect of fall migration in our area at least, is that birders record a very small fraction of the numbers of migrants that they do in the spring. The overall fall population includes the birds born during the breeding season, and as far as songbirds are concerned, there ought to be significantly more birds even allowing for the heavy mortality in the first few weeks of life. There are few estimates of numbers with any backing of data collection, because there is great variability. For songbirds, the number of eggs per clutch may be the easiest to estimate, but some species may have more than one clutch per year when food is plentiful. The mortality in the first season of life also varies greatly owing to such factors as weather and availability of food (which two factors may often be related.) The available data strongly suggests that the greatest mortality is during a bird's first winter, as young birds are not experienced in selecting winter quarters where there is enough food, are not experienced in avoiding predators.

One other factor that may affects us particularly, is that the fall migration routing of many, if not most of the species that birders seek are further east than the spring migration. There are many species that are reasonably common in spring migration in our area that are rare in fall. There are many well known examples of this as a quick perusal of any local checklist will show. Not many are quite as extreme as Blackpoll Warblers, which, although not particularly common in Southeast Texas in Spring, are extremely rare in fall, when most of them take off from the New England States and Canadian Maritime provinces and fly long distances non-stop over water even as far as the north coast of South America.

The late fall time period in southeast Texas often is associated with the arrival of the first of our winter residents, and the possibility of some birds, especially woodland birds, initially overshooting their normal winter range before retreating back into the Big Thicket. So far this year, such overshoots have been very few, even though the area of mature trees at Sabine Woods and nearby has increased significantly over the last few years. The weather further north, especially along the coastal north-eastern US, area has been much less friendly to birds and birders, and this may be one of the reasons for the lack of overshoots. This will be the first year in several where the Woods have not hosted a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

The field trip started with only six participants after a sharp rain shower, mostly passing west of the Woods, cleared. The first interesting bird, and perhaps the star of the day, was an

immature female Vermilion Flycatcher, perching on the fence that marks the northern boundary of the Woods. Red-shouldered Hawks are usually partial to fairly significant areas of mature trees, but one that spent time highly visible in trees in the northeast area of the Woods was admired by the field trip participants. Despite the efforts of one of the leaders to ignore them, at least four Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen! One Carolina Chickadee was vocal enough that everyone was aware of its presence. There has been a single Chickadee wintering in the Woods each year for several years now. The average life-span of a chickadee is said to be four to five years, so it may be the same bird in a non-migratory mode. Early in most spring seasons there are other Carolina Chickadees, but only the one stays. As they are prone to do, at least two White-eyed Vireos made their presence known emphatically vocally. Brief views were had of a Magnolia Warbler, a well-marked Black-throated Green Warbler, and a Northern Parula. A female American Redstart was near the original drip late on the field trip. Both a Northern House Wren (winter resident) and a Carolina Wren (year-round resident) were heard.

Woodpeckers are year-round residents of the Woods, and at least one Red-bellied and one Downy Woodpeckers were heard. Some participants saw a Northern Flicker. Inevitably, there were a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, two Brown Thrashers, and at least one Gray Catbird in the Woods.

For a couple of years, Blue Jay numbers were somewhat reduced as West Nile Virus hit corvids such as jays and crows hard, but there were a number of very noisy Blue Jays evident on this day, and we declare the population has fully recovered.

Normally, there are some waterbirds around, but the extended drought has had an effect. The main pond at the Woods has all but dried up, something that happens rarely, perhaps one year in five or perhaps nearer one year in ten. We have been adding water to the smaller pond – the original drip – to provide somewhere for the birds to get water. There is probably still some water in the marshy ponds in the marshy areas on the Doornbos owned land north of the Woods, and probably also some water in the areas of Texas Point National Wildlife Refuge a short distance south of the Highway. But there is apparently not much water and only a few waterbirds were seen as they flew over.

Some fly-overs were Barn Swallows, White and Dark Ibis, a Belted Kingfisher, and forty-four Neotropical Cormorants.

Birds seen; Greater Yellowlegs (2); Neotropical Cormorant (44); White Ibis (3) White-faced/Glossy Ibis (1); Snowy Egret (1); Great Egret (1); Osprey (1); Red-shouldered Hawk (1); Belted Kingfisher (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (4); Downy Woodpecker (2); Northern Flicker (1); Vermilion Flycatcher (1); White-eyed Vireo (2); Blue Jay (6); Barn Swallow (3); Carolina Chickadee (1); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (4); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (3); Northern House Wren (1); Carolina Wren (1); Gray Catbird (1); Brown Thrasher (3); Northern Mockingbird (1); Red-winged Blackbird (2); Common Yellowthroat (1); Magnolia Warbler (1); Northern Parula (1); American Redstart (1); Black-throated Green Warbler (1); Northern Cardinal (1); Indigo Bunting (1).

John Whittle

Fall Migration Is the Most Dangerous Season for Warblers per New Audubon Study

By National Audubon Society, published March 27, 2025 [From Audubon Magazine]

For the brightly colored songbirds that breed in the US and Canada, the southbound journeys after the breeding season include more exposure to conservation challenges such as light pollution and urban and suburban landscapes.

NEW YORK—Today, scientists with the National Audubon Society published a new study in *Global Change Biology* that analyzed 43 species of warblers and the conservation challenges they face along their migrations to better understand their population trends. The results suggest that the post-breeding, southbound migration season (i.e. “fall migration” for the Northern Hemisphere) is the most dangerous time of year for these migratory songbirds. Challenges such as light pollution, developed landscapes and livestock management are the factors most highly associated with the declines of some warbler species.

“Knowing when migratory birds face their biggest challenges is key to being able to protect them now and into the future,” said Melanie Smith, Audubon’s director of digital science and data products and co-lead author of the study. “This new study sheds light on both the specific risks associated with warbler declines as well as the time of year they are exposed to these challenges. Knowing those factors allows Audubon and our partners to work across the hemisphere to ‘bend the bird curve’ and secure a healthy future for these long-distance travelers.”

Southbound, post-breeding migration is more perilous for migratory warblers for multiple reasons. First, there are many juvenile birds that hatched earlier that year. These crops of younger birds are inexperienced in migration compared to seasoned adult birds. Second, the birds take longer routes back to their non-breeding grounds compared to the quicker, more efficient (and therefore somewhat less dangerous) journeys north.

During post-breeding migration some of the declining species most closely associated with challenges such as light pollution and developed landscapes (both urban and suburban) include the Common Yellowthroat, Connecticut Warbler and

Prairie Warbler. Livestock management in regions between breeding and non-breeding grounds is the challenge most associated with the declines of species such as Virginia’s Warbler and Grace’s Warbler.

Bird populations are in steep decline across the continent. In 2019, a groundbreaking study published in *Science* found that there are nearly 3 billion fewer birds in North America compared to 1970. Nearly 2.5 billion of those missing birds are from migratory species like the warblers featured in this latest study. More recently, the 2025 State of the Birds [report](#), a status assessment of US bird populations, found that birds are declining across all habitat types and status quo conservation efforts are not enough to reverse these declines.

“Protecting migratory birds will require a hemispheric effort across borders and communities,” said Dr. Jill Deppe, Audubon’s senior director of the Migratory Bird Initiative and another co-author of the study. “While the challenges these birds face are numerous and widespread, if we can rally the millions of people who care about birds to take everyday steps like turning lights off at night, growing native plants, and supporting bird-friendly infrastructure, then we can make a positive difference across the hemisphere.”

In 2022, Audubon and partners launched the Bird Migration Explorer, a first-of-its-kind, interactive digital platform that visualizes the journeys made by more than 450 species of migratory birds found in the United States and Canada. The journeys of the bird species are overlaid with the hemispheric footprint of the Conservation Challenges included in this study. To learn more about migratory birds and the challenges they face throughout the year, please visit: www.birdmigrationexplorer.org

Leading with Solutions that Center Birds and People at Climate Week

Audubon celebrates partnerships and collaborations as part of the annual global gathering.

By Sarah Rose.

Vice President of Climate, National Audubon Society

Published October 03, 2025 Updated October 09, 2025

What's good for birds is good for people and the planet. That was Audubon's guiding message during this year's Climate Week in New York. The annual global platform for climate action sees thousands of leaders gather for conferences, meetings, and events throughout the city, concurrent with the annual meeting at the United Nations. As a leader in conservation for 120 years, Audubon highlighted how we can collaboratively make progress on climate change and biodiversity loss while halting and ultimately reversing bird population declines, or "bending the bird curve."

On the global stage, a key outcome from this year's U.N. General Assembly was the announcement of dozens of 2035 climate targets ("nationally determined contributions") during the Climate Summit hosted by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva also made a groundbreaking announcement that Brazil will invest the first \$1 billion in the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF). TFFF represents one of the greatest global opportunities to secure long-term financing for tropical and subtropical forests that many birds depend on. Audubon's science shows that forests play a vital role as carbon sinks and climate strongholds for birds. Continued forest health is also critical for the well-being of more than a billion people globally.

Grasslands are also important climate strongholds—and the most endangered ecosystem in the U.S., as Audubon's Director of Natural Climate Solutions Strategy Meghan Ryan explained during the Hub Live session *Our Most Natural Lever – Are We Ready for a Regenerative World?* "We're losing them at a rate of 1–2 million acres a year," she said, "and with that loss has come a decline in grassland birds." Meghan joined Matt Maier, Owner of Thousand Hills Lifetime Grazed, to spotlight the Audubon Conservation Ranching program as a model for nature-based regeneration that benefits grassland birds while also offering ecological and economic gains.

Maier rejuvenated his family farm, which had suffered under monoculture and unsustainable practices, to achieve a recovery in soil, wildlife, and the water cycle. "Nature is so resilient," said Maier. "In five years you can make a whole bunch of progress."

Audubon Conservation Ranching is one example of how community-driven restoration can protect bird habitat, store and sequester carbon, and improve human well-being. This "win-win-win" approach to conservation planning was the focus of Audubon's Main Stage session at The Nest Climate Campus at the Javits Center, *Triple Win Conservation: Birds, Climate, and Community*

Brooke Bateman, Audubon's Senior Director of Climate & Community Science, presented on a new study in *Scientific Reports* that provides a decision-making framework for identifying areas where conservation efforts address climate while also benefiting birds and people. "By addressing all three of these factors together, instead of separately, we increase the likelihood of conservation success on all fronts and engage local communities that have the most at stake," she explained.

Chad Wilsey, Audubon's Vice President & Chief Scientist, moderated a panel discussion with Brooke Bateman as well as Gabe Watson, Manager of Data Science & Applications at the Environmental Policy Innovation Center, and Daniel Suarez, Director of Conservation at Audubon Great Lakes. "We're all in this together," said Watson. "We have to think about this holistically. We don't have the privilege to work in silos. These maps show us where we need to be doing more work."

Suarez, who has been working with Audubon Great Lakes to restore wetland bird habitat in Gary, Indiana, said "We're trying to look at the project through a variety of lenses, not just ecological but cultural, social, economic, agricultural, to realize a project that delivers not just for birds but for people."

Successfully implementing these kinds of climate solutions means working with partners internationally and locally. One morning, Audubon joined New York City Bird Alliance and BirdLife International for a co-hosted bird outing in Central Park's Ramble. Led by Dustin Partridge, PhD, and Tod Winston, participants observed migratory birds while discussing ways to get involved—from community science opportunities to global advocacy and conservation initiatives—and how each organization is working to address climate and biodiversity challenges to ensure a brighter future for both birds and people.

Throughout Climate Week, visitors to Times Square could see what is likely the largest hummingbird on Earth on a 10,000-square-foot digital billboard. Featuring colossal, iridescent birds and powerful messaging, this display offered millions of New Yorkers and visitors a striking moment of wonder. The invitation was to learn more about Audubon's mission and reflect on how "it all begins with birds," underscoring that birds are central messengers in the fight against climate change.

Because they live in nearly every habitat, what science tells us about how birds respond to a changing climate has implications for us all. This Climate Week, we were able to work with our partners toward achieving a better future for people and wildlife—from the community level to the wider world. We look forward to building on that momentum.

Texas Hawkwatches 2025

Jana Whittle

Corpus Christi Hawk Watch

August 1st is when the Corpus Christi Hawkwatch starts. It continues until November 15th. As many of you know, this is the largest hawk watch in North America. There is a really nice very large tower for people to watch from. For several years they have seen more than one million hawks fly over during the two- and one- half months that paid hawk watch counters are there.

It is a four-and-a-half-hour drive from Beaumont to Corpus

The prime time to see more hawks normally is between September 15th-30th. That is when we have seen the most.

John and I were there many years ago and saw over 300,000 hawks one day. There have been other years when they have seen 500,000 hawks seen in one day. In 1997 992,950 hawks were seen in one day. In 2018 there were 1,030,849 were also seen in one day. In 2004 more than a million hawks were seen in one day. And yes, there are slow days too, but it is still fun! There have been 30 different hawk species seen there over the years. Broad-winged Hawks comprise 98 per cent of the total hawk count each year. So far, the average count at this site is 631,825 hawks seen per year.

The hawk watch is located in Hazel Bazemore Park which does have bathroom facilities. It is also a very good park to find lots of interesting other bird species.

August 2025 at the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch:

Black Vultures 0	Swainson's Hawks 17
Turkey Vultures 0	Red-shouldered Hawks 0
Osprey 26	White-tailed Hawks 2
Northern Harriers 1	Zone-tailed Hawk 0
Mississippi Kites 9,487	Harris's Hawks 1
Swallow-tailed Kites 165	American Kestrel 1
White-tailed Kites 0	Merlin 1
Sharp-shinned Hawks 1	Peregrine Falcon 5
Cooper's Hawks 2	Bald Eagle 0
Broad-winged Hawks 3	3 Unknown buteos
Red-tailed Hawk 1	
Total for August was 9,746 hawks.	
Highest Day 21 August 2025 4,609 hawks	

September 2025 at the Corpus Christi Hawk Watch:

Black Vultures 29	Red-shouldered Hawks 3
Turkey Vultures 23	White-tailed Hawks 3
Osprey 169	Zone-tailed Hawks 2
Northern Harriers 65	Harris's Hawks 3
Mississippi Kites 14,976	American Kestrels 669
Swallow-tailed Kites 16	Merlin 16
White-tailed Kites 0	Peregrine Falcons 42
Sharp-shinned Hawks 520	Bald Eagle 1
Cooper's Hawks 330	7 unknown accipiters
Broad-winged Hawks 673,333	3 unknown buteos
Red-tailed Hawks 13	5 unknown raptors
Swainson's Hawks 113	
Total for September was 690,555	
Highest Day 28 September 2025 251,300.	

Smith Point Hawk Watch

The Smith Point Hawk Watch opens on August 15th and stays open until November 30th. It has a nice platform with two decks to view the hawks flying over. The neat aspect of this location is that it is located on Galveston Bay, so there are always water birds to see and Bob Baez, the counter for the last many years, maintains hummingbird feeders also. This hawk watch was started in 1993 by volunteers. Now it is sponsored by the Gulf Coast Birding Observatory.

Most of the Broad-winged Hawks that pass over Smith Point are presumed to be those that nest in the eastern part of the range of the species: Quebec, New England, New York and Pennsylvania. They mostly proceed down the mountain ridges of the Appalachian chain taking advantage of the updrafts on the windward side of the mountain ridges to provide lift. There have been many Hawk Watches on the northern part of the Appalachian for a good number of years now. But there are essentially no Hawk Watches between there and the Gulf coast, but many of the hawks, especially the Broad-winged Hawks, eventually reach the northern shore of the Gulf some distance east of Texas. They proceed west roughly along IH-10 until they reach the Coastal Bend and then turn south. Hawks from further west mostly pass over Detroit and then have a straight shot to the Central Texas coast, bypassing the Upper Texas Coast.

Smith Point also sees the increasing number of Swallow-tailed Kites which breed along the southern part of the of the coastal plain from Texas eastwards as they migrate to central America and coastal Colombia and Ecuador.

August 15-31st, 2025 at the Smith Point Hawk Watch

Black Vulture 0	Broad-winged Hawks 81
Turkey Vulture 0	Red-tailed Hawks 3
Osprey 11	Swainson's Hawks 76
Bald Eagle 0	American Kestrels 0
Northern Harriers 2	Merlin 0
Sharp-shinned Hawks 2	Peregrine Falcon 1
Cooper's Hawks 5	Mississippi Kites 2,998
Red-shouldered Hawks 0	Swallow-tailed Kites 114
Total for August was 3,294 hawks.	
Highest Day 30 August 2025 2,182 Hawks	

September 2025 at the Smith Point Hawk Watch:

Black Vultures 0	White-tailed Hawks 2
Turkey Vultures 0	Harris's Hawk 1
Osprey 23	American Kestrels 50
Bald Eagles 11	Merlin 17
Northern Harriers 40	Peregrine Falcons 10
Sharp-shinned Hawks 270	Crested Caracara 1
Cooper's Hawks 205	Mississippi Kites 5,360
Red-shouldered Hawks 2	Swallow-tailed Kites 147
Broad-winged Hawks 5,381	White-tailed Kite 2
Red-tailed Hawks 22	Unknown accipiter 1
Swainson's Hawks 26	
Total for September was 8,307 hawks.	
Highest Day 25 September 2025 2,240 hawks	

Bird Sightings –October 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: No space available this month!

Local Counties October 2025

Black-chinned H'bird	Oct 23	JEF-Hamshire (1) Christine Sliva
	Oct 29	JEF-Nederland (2) Harlan Stewart
Rufous Hummingbird	Oct 12	JEF-Nederland (1) Harlan Stewart
	Oct 23	JEF-Hamshire (1) Christine Sliva
	Oct 24,29	JEF-Nederland (1) JAW
	Oct 29	HAI-Silsbee (1) Johnny Johnson
	Oct 29	JEF-Nederland (1) Harlan Stewart
Calliope Hummingbird	Oct 21	JEF-Hamshire (1) Christine Sliva

Nearby Counties October 2025

Snow Goose	Oct 4-6	HAS-Bliss Meadows Park (1) mult obs
Ross's Goose	Oct 12	HAS-Copper Lakes Park (1) Richard Rulander
Egyptian Goose	Oct 29	CHA-Mt Belview City Pk (2) J Berner
Ring-necked Duck	Oct 12-15	HAS-Hermann Park (1) Dan Brooks, Kevin Ramirez
Lesser Scaup	Oct 12	HAS-Hermann Pk (1) Megan O'Brien
Common Ground Dove	reports in October from 10 locations in Cameron Parish, Galveston and Harris Counties.	

Groove-billed Ani

	Oct 8	GAL-Stewart Rd betw 8 and 9-mile Roads (1) Paul Sivon
	Oct 12-30	GAL-Campeche Cove Animal Hosp Marsh (1), mult obs
	Oct 18	HAS-J P Landing Park (1) mult obs
	Oct 26	CHA-Smith Point area (1) Joseph Kennedy
	Oct 26	HAS-Weekley Community College (1) Justin Sandt
	Oct 27	GAL-Hall's Bayou Ranch (1) mult obs
	Oct 31	CAM-Gulf Beach Hwy (1) mult obs
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Oct 1	HAS-Gessner (1) Patti Goodman
	Oct 1	HAS-18th St (1) Micaela Sandoval
	Oct 3	HAS-Sylvan Rodriguez Park (1) Richard Rulander
Allen's Hummingbird	Oct 9-14	HAS-Rice U (1) Cin-Ty Lee, Leo Costello, Grant Parajuli, mult obs
Calliope Hummingbird	Oct 19-28	HAS-Rice U (1) Cin-Ty Lee, mult obs
Broad-tailed Humm'bird	Oct 17-19	HAS-Memorial area (1) Sue Orwig
Broad-billed Humm'bird	Oct 25	HAS-Med Center (1) David and Miriam Carmichael
Amer Golden-Plover	Oct 1	GAL Bolivar Flats (1) WE, mult obs
	Oct 25-26	CAM-Willow Is (2) James Smithers, mult obs
Hudsonian Whimbrel	Oct 30	HAS-Seabrook (1) Nina Rach
Lsr Black-backed Gull	Oct 9	CHA-Beach (1) WE
Franklin's Gull	Oct 19-26	CAL-Lake Charles Swimming Beach (up to 27) James Smithers
Iceland Gull (Thayer's)	Oct 22	GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) mult obs
Black Tern	Oct 24	CAM-Rockefeller SWR (1) Anne Galennie, Ken Eyster, L Datnoff
Mississippi Kite	Oct 25	CHA-Jocelyn Nungaray NWR Shoveler Pond (2) Sally Johnson
	Oct 26	CHA-Smith Pt Hawk Watch (1) Joseph Kennedy
Brown Booby	Oct 12-25	CAL-Lake Charles Millennium Park (1) Jordan Cormier, mult obs

Red-footed Booby	Oct 6-12	HAS-A. Duessen Park (1) mult obs
Least Bittern	Oct 31	CAM-Sabine NWR Wetland Walkway (1) mult obs
Burrowing Owl	Oct 3-30	GAL-Harborside Dr (1) mult obs
	Oct 27	CHA-Jocelyn Nungaray NWR (1) Dwayne Litteer
Yellow-headed Caracara	Oct 4-27	GAL-Stewart Rd nr Airport (1) mult obs (wanders in the area)
Say's Phoebe	Oct 20	CHA-Smith Pt Hawk Watch (1) WE
	Oct 29	CAL-Bell City (1) mult obs
	Oct 31	CAM-Willow Is (1) mult obs
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Oct 20	GAL-Galveston Is SP (1) Robt Becker
	Oct 25	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertes (1) Chris McMullin
Western Kingbird	Oct 19	SAA-San Rayburn TX147 (1) D Wolf
Cassin's Kingbird	Pct 28	GAL-Terramar Beach Utility Area (1) Dean Silvers, Chris McMullin
Purple Martin	Oct 13	CHA-Smith Point Hawk Watch (1) WE
Hermit Thrush	Oct 1	HAS-Edith Moore Sanctuay (1) Young Ko
Cedar Waxwing	Oct 12	HAS-W Tidwell nr Wheatley (1) Michael Williams
Purple Finch	Oct 17	HAS-Westheimer/Chimney Roack area (1) Douglas Downard
Lesser Goldfinch	Oct 24	HAS-Katy Library (1) Chris Bailey
American Goldfinch	Oct 19	GAL-Port Bolivar (1) WE
Vesper Sparrow	Oct 22	CAL-Lake Charles Fred Vail Rd (2) Kathy Rhodes, Charlotte Chehotsky
Green-tailed Towhee	Oct 31	GAL-Campeche Cove Animal Hosp (1) mult obs
Western Meadowlark	Oct 14	J P Landing Park (1) Megan Ahlgren
	Oct 19	SAA-Sam Rayburn TX147 (1) David Wolf
	Oct 23-27	HAS-Weekley Community Ctr Park (1) Margaret Farese
	Oct 29	GAL-Point San Luis (1) Dean Silvers
	Oct 30	GAL-8-mile road (1) Jamie Schubert
Black-thr. Gray Warbler	Oct 27	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) WE
Western Tanager	Oct 6	GAL-Dos Vacas Muertas (1) Richard Liebler, Dean Silvers
	Oct 6	GAL-HI Boy Scout Woods (1) WE
	Oct 7	HAS-Kingspoint area (1) Joan Parker
	Oct 20	HAS-Bear Creek Park (1) Margaret Farese
Scaly-breasted Munia	Oct 13	GAL-Dickinson (1) Kathy Sweezey
Black-headed Grosbeak	Oct 12-17	GAL-Campeche Cove Animal Hosp marsh (1) Robert Becker

Abbreviations used: ANG – Angelina County;; CAL – Calcasieu Parish, LA; CAM – Cameron Parish, LA; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HAS – Harris County; HI – High Island; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; LIB – Liberty County; NEW – Newton County; ORA – Orange County;; PI – Pleasure Island, Port Arthur; SAA – San Augustine County.; 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 Egghoff; 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.

