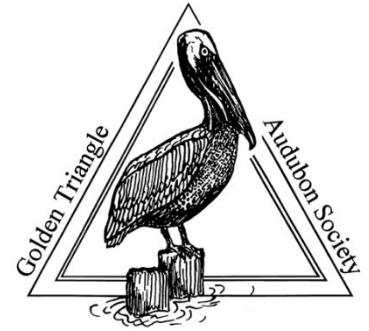


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 32 No 5

May 2026

**Membership Meeting
Thursday May 21, 2026 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

Your Favorite Bird Pictures

Dr. Harlan Stewart has again volunteered to prepare all photos submitted in advance into a Powerpoint presentation. The contributors of the pictures will be encouraged to talk briefly about their pictures telling where they were taken etc., and anything else interesting about the bird or location. Contributions should be no more than about 10 pictures. The pictures should be bird related and have been taken in the last couple of years, but do not need to be exhibition quality, especially if the subject is especially interesting for any reason.

In order to prepare a combined presentation, we will need to have the pictures by Monday morning May 18. They can be emailed as attachments to Harlan at hstewartmail@gt.rr.com; if necessary, send several separate emails. The pictures can be compressed to about 50 percent of original to reduce the number of emails needed, but if you are not easily able to compress them, just send them without compression. We much prefer advance submission, and, depending on how many are submitted, we might not have time to show many or even any that are not submitted in advance. Please come early to work out any kinks if you want to try to do anything other than show still pictures and talk about them.

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.

The Brown Pelican

Vol. 32, No.5 May 2026
Issue number 328

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 web site at www.goldentriangleaudubon.org.

Future Programs and Field Trips are all tentative.

The latest information is always available on the web site.

Saturday May 9, 2026. Spring Migration Count. On World Migratory Bird Day (aka International Global Big Day), we undertake an all-Jefferson-County Bird Count. We have been doing these counts since 1995, so they have become a valuable way to monitor changes in local bird populations. The count attempts to cover as much of Jefferson County as is reasonably possible. We will welcome birders at the inter-mediate level and higher, especially if you are able to count in the early morning from dawn through about 11:00 a.m. It is not necessary to commit to the whole day. If you have special access to any areas within the county, we would appreciate your help! Contact John Whittle (gtaudubon@aol.com or 409-722-4193) for further details or offers to help.

Thursday May 21, 2026. Membership Meeting. Your favorite bird pictures. Full details on page 1.

Saturday, May 23 2025. Field Trip to Hardin County. This is a great opportunity to see the breeding songbirds of the southern part of the Big Thicket. We will focus on the area north of Silsbee to look for the breeding birds of the area. This is typically a half-day trip. We plan to look for the nesting species of the area – Pine, Swainson's, Hooded, Kentucky, Prairie, Prothonotary, and Pine Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-eyed, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireo, Indigo and Painted Bunting, Gray Catbird, Summer Tanager, Acadian Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch and others. We will likely not find all the listed species, but most years we find a good selection of them. Swainson's Warbler is a particular target of this trip, and we have often been rewarded with excellent views of this

normally very secretive species on this field trip. This area is also one of the easiest places to find breeding Prairie Warblers, typically in plantations of about 20-foot-tall young pines. Usually, we bird Gore Store Road east as far as Beech Creek, Firetower Road, and Matigwa Road, but we will probably check some new roads where pines are reaching the desired stages.

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.

The meeting time and place will be at 7:00 a.m. (note the necessary early start if we are to find the breeding birds!) at the shopping center on the northeast corner of the intersection of FM92 and FM418 in the northern part of Silsbee. To reach this from Beaumont, take US 69 north and then US 96 north. Take Business 96 into and through downtown Silsbee. When Business 96 turns right, continue straight on FM92 for 3/4 mile to the shopping center. We normally finish sometime around noon.



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

Field Trip to Sabine Woods 18 April 2026

Spring migration field trips are always a mystery. They can be great or they can be terrible. Sometimes they can be both! Spring birding days in the coastal hotspots are heavily influenced by the weather. Strong south winds and clear skies and the birds will fly right over with the birders never seeing them. On the other hand, a north wind and some rain can bring down a torrent of warblers, orioles, buntings and other migrating birds. But which will you get? Southeast Texas weather is notoriously fickle and difficult to predict but for the chance at one of those magical spring fallouts? Birders will take their chances and hot the coast in April. That is just what the birders from the Golden Triangle Audubon did for the April field trip!

The day started with nice weather – exactly what you don't want if you are a birder hoping for spring migrants! Still, the birders fanned out and set about searching the woods for whatever might be there. Some of the usual suspects were immediately obvious. White-winged Doves called “who-cooks-for-you” from the oaks along with Blue Jays that are always yelling about something. The seemingly resident Little Blue Heron stalked frogs in the pond while a Red-bellied Woodpecker hammered on a snag. A few Tree Swallows zipped over the marsh and larger Purple Martins sang their songs from high above the woods. Red-winged Blackbirds sang from the marshes along with a Sedge Wren while Northern Cardinals called from the underbrush.

But this is not what the group came for. They were looking for spring migrants and that took a bit more searching. A Worm-eating Warbler was a good find early in the day as it poked around clusters of dead leaves. There were a few Orchard Orioles in the tree tops along with at least one Baltimore Oriole, sure to hit the mulberry trees soon. A Gray Catbird was heard mewing from a thicket while a Rose-breasted Grosbeak squeaked from above. A Kentucky Warbler was heard chipping and eventually glimpsed in the dense undergrowth and Common Yellowthroats were heard singing from the reeds, so there were at least a few warblers around. A Red-eyed Vireo was seen along with its Blue-headed cousin.

Some additional non-neotropical migrants were also seen in the morning of the field trip. A Sharp-shinned Hawk zipped along the back of the woods while a couple of Crested Caracaras passed overhead. White-faced and White Ibis were spotted flying by and a small group of Brown Pelicans, unusual at the woods, flew nearby. A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was seen and heard as it passed over the woods – they seem to be everywhere these days. Great and Snowy Egrets were detected and the resident Carolina Chickadee was also located. Northern Mockingbird sang (including an excellent Groove-billed Ani impersonation) and there was at least one flock of Cedar Waxwings hitting the mulberries.

The afternoon started out not that different than the morning – pretty slow. A few Northern Rough-winged Swallows were spotted among the Tree and Barn Swallows. A single Swainson's Thrush was located as was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. A couple of Eastern Wood-Pewees were seen and Eastern Kingbirds were found in the tree tops and open

areas. The Great Kiskadee that has been hanging around Sabine Woods for several weeks was heard by many and seen by a few. One of the nesting Brown Thrashers was spotted as was a Blue Grosbeak.

In the middle of the afternoon, some bigger birds started to appear in the woods. Suddenly there were multiple Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in the trees and Indigo and Painted Buntings were spotted. A few Wood Thrushes appeared and Gray Catbirds became more numerous. Orchard Orioles were suddenly all over the woods and brilliant Summer Tanagers were easy to find when they were absent in the morning. Flights over the Gulf tend to be dominated by bigger birds like Tanagers and Thrushes with the smaller Warblers trailing behind. Would the warblers show up before the end of the daylight? A few warblers were noted in the afternoon. Both Northern and Louisiana Waterthrushes were seen along the ponds. Ovenbird was spotted creeping along the ground in the dense vegetation and a Prothonotary Warbler was found nearby. Hooded Warbler was found in the lantana (where it belongs) and high in the treetops (where it doesn't!). This was certainly an improvement from the morning but not exactly the spectacular day the group was hoping for. Maybe it would have to wait for another day ... or maybe it wouldn't!

Late in the day, a light rain began to fall. This was not major problem and many kept on birding and hoping the rain might produce some birds. Soon, however, the rain began to come down harder. As it was getting late in the day and the birds did not appear to be arriving, most of the birders began to head for their vehicles. As birders hit the front gate, small birds began to pour into the trees! The warblers had arrived and were dropping into the woods everywhere! A group of Tennessee Warblers were spotted first but there were more to come. There was a Black-throated Green Warbler and then a Blackpoll Warbler! An American Redstart appeared and there were two Cerulean Warblers together! In the next tree there was Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler! As the rain came down harder and the light disappeared, the birders held out as long as they could to watch these tiny birds fly in off the gulf. This is what every birder wanted and Sabine Woods delivered! And it would mean good birding the next day as well! A great ending to a day that really summed up spring birding: both boom and bust in the same day!

The following species were recorded by the trip leaders: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (1); Fulvous Whistling-Duck (1); White-winged Dove (10); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (1); Common Nighthawk (1); Chimney Swift (1); King/Clapper Rail (1); Willet (2); Neotropic Cormorant (1); White Ibis (1); White-faced Ibis (6); Little Blue Heron (1); Snowy Egret (6); Green Heron (1); Great Egret (1); Brown Pelican (3); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); Downy Woodpecker (4); Crested Caracara (2); Merlin (1); Eastern Wood-Pewee (2); Great Crested Flycatcher (4); Great Kiskadee (1); Eastern Kingbird (8); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue-headed Vireo (1); Red-eyed Vireo (2); Loggerhead Shrike (1); Blue Jay (8); Carolina Chickadee (1); Tree Swallow (5); Purple Martin (10); Northern Rough-winged

Continued on page 5

Identifying Birds using the MERLIN app (and some cautions!)

From LABIRD Listserv

Increasingly, many birders are relying on the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's MERLIN app to identify bird calls. This recent exchange on LABIRD brings attention to many of the problems. The exchange has been edited and reformatted to reorganize it in strict chronological order, and to delete prior postings that were repeated in subsequent posts, but it still must be remembered that some submissions were sent before the sender had a chance to review some of the preceding posts.

*One aspect that is not given enough attention in this exchange is the need to **not include** a species as an entry in an eBird checklist if the identification is based **solely** on MERLIN. There are many instances where an important but not the only element of an identification by a human birder is the call, and it is appropriate to include these in a checklist, but with a "heard only" notation. Enforcement of such a requirement is, of course essentially impossible, and unfortunately eBird has become less useful as a result. All experienced birders have encountered a Northern Mockingbird able to perfectly mimic some other species. Usually, it is a species that it has heard not far away, and a "heard only" listing does not raise any red flags. But, a couple of years back, one mockingbird locally was able to mimic a perfect Black Rail call. Fortunately, local observers quickly recognized that Black Rails were not present in a dry wooded area, and the culprit was unmasked!*

LABIRD Postings

MERLIN audio -- warning! From: Van Remsen
<vnremsen@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 16 Apr 2026 10:14:36 PDT

Most people in this venue have heard multiple times that MERLIN frequently makes mistakes and should never be relied on as the sole evidence for an eBird entry. Merlin's own directions emphasize this. Yet many eBirders seem unaware of this and treat Merlin hits as sufficient evidence for presence. Yesterday provided a poignant example. A single Summer Tanager singing was identified as 3 separate species: Am. Robin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Summer Tanager. Yes, the same individual bird. Yeah, the songs are kind of similar but not THAT similar. As I have mentioned previously, I did 30 trials of 30 minutes at my place in St. Gabriel and NOT ONE was without 1 to 5 obvious or highly suspicious false positives. Since then, I've done dozens of unofficial trials with the same outcome. You would think just by chance I'd have a "clean" trial every so often. The most frequent local false positives are Red-eyed Vireo, House Sparrow, E. Towhee, Baltimore Oriole, Y-b Chat, Am. Robin, and Rock Pigeon. On the other hand, Merlin often misses Fish Crow, Y-b Cuckoo, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, and Screech Owl if they are more than couple hundred yards away, and misses Brown Thrasher "Chack" calls even at close range.

Van Remsen

From: Van Remsen <vnremsen@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 16 Apr 2026 15:29:40 PDT

Before I get accused of "hating Merlin", I should follow-up by making it clear that I think Merlin is great for learning bird songs and detecting species one might not have noticed. It's an amazing tool. What I "hate" is when Merlin output is uncritically considered the same as eBird input. "Trust but Verify" as the saying goes.

Van Remsen

From: Paul Conover <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net>

Date: Fri, 17 Apr 2026 15:14:34 PDT

Because my hearing is schizo (profound loss of highs, above average lows), I use Merlin at times to see if calling high-pitched species like Cedar Waxwings are present, but I often notice that Merlin has issues with distant doves and owls. So, I *take Merlinisms with a grain of salt, both in the field and when looking at checklists. I've noticed many of the same false positive species as Van, which makes me wonder if isolated reports of some of those species at well-birded locales are Merlin-heard-only but not noted as such. My advice would be that birders indicate that fact on their lists.*

Paul Conover. Lafayette

From: Harriett Pooler <harriett.pooler@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, 17 Apr 2026 17:49:16 PDT

I've had some false positives with Merlin too, and hearing in my right ear isn't what it used to be; however, my main problem is that Merlin checks out at times and doesn't pick up any birds or just some at other times. I've seen this often on bird walks with multiple people whose Merlin picks up birds while mine is on vacation. I've deleted the app and then reinstalled which seems to help for a while. It is almost like it knows there are other birders on Merlin in the same area and doesn't put the effort on all iPhones. Any suggestions?

Harriett Pooler, Baton Rouge

From: Paul Conover <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net>

Date: Fri, 17 Apr 2026 20:13:44 PDT

I guess the first thing I'd check is a physical cause such as a blocked microphone opening which might get lint or dust in it. In terms of the inner workings of the app, I've had similar issues where no species show up even when I hear singing close by, but it seems like after a short delay the list sometimes populates and seems fine after that. I just assume that's a glitch either in the program or the connection, or possibly just that my phone has too many apps open. I sometimes close all apps and reopen just Merlin. It tends to work, but it may just be by chance.

Another possibility is that the location isn't set to the right geographical area, but it would take a bit of doing to accidentally alter that setting. Updating the sound packets for each region probably improves performance as well, but Merlin often reminds me to update right when I'm in the middle of using the app in the field

However, that does bring up an interesting and (to me) annoying limitation with Merlin. If a species isn't expected where I'm birding, Merlin typically just ignores it. I understand that Merlin needs to narrow down the possibilities because many birds around the world make similar sounds, but ideally if a really rare bird is present, it would sure be nice if Merlin would tell me. When I think a rarity is present, I've had to turn off the phone's GPS and manually switch the location in the app to a location on Earth where that species is normally found or Merlin won't admit that the bird is present. Off course, that reset opens a Pandora's box where every vocal species present might get misidentified as an exotic cousin.

Merlin is a work in progress, but eventually if enough good input is confirmed, it seems like the output will become reliable. Birders like you and Van that state the shortcomings and glitches in the program are probably doing the app a big favor by calling attention to its flaws, and certainly doing the birding community a favor by making everyone think twice about its results. Paul Conover, Lafayette

From: Charles Williams <chazbizz91@GMAIL.COM>

Date: Sun, 19 Apr 2026 03:12:32 PDT

Well I'll take a slightly contrarian view and say I've enjoyed sorting out the rights, wrongs and maybes of what Merlin reports. On a recent visit to the Central sports park Merlin reported three species that would have been firsts for the site: limpkin, mallard and eastern meadowlark. Limpkin and meadowlark were both realistic albeit longshot possibilities given the habitat. But neither could be found after a close check of that habitat. So I concluded that known multilingual species, numerous in the area (starlings, blue jays, mockingbirds etc) must have been the source of the misidentified calls.

Charles W

Merlin and AI From: Michael Cavanaugh

<michaelcav@aol.com>

Date: Sun, 19 Apr 2026 06:04:55 PDT

Friends, I don't know if anyone has mentioned this (because I didn't read every post), but I went to AI and asked it what Merlin is most likely to err on for individual birds. For example I frequently get a hit for Common Yellowthroat in my yard, and AI explained that, at any distance, AI might think a Carolina Wren is a Common Yellowthroat (I think it was). Which prompts me to wonder if Merlin itself has information as to what errors are most common for what birds in what locations? Michael

From: Bill Fontenot <williamrodneymfontenot@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, 19 Apr 2026 07:20:08 PDT

Guess my thoughts on this matter are somewhat irrelevant re: this issue as I'm no longer able to bird "by eye". Regardless, my hearing is still quite good.

In my opinion, nothing beats the old-school method of learning birds by ear: when you hear a bird that you can't

identify by ear — or even a bird that you think you already know by ear but the bird's vocalizations sound a little "off" — simply track the bird down and get a visual ID. In that process, the repeated vocalizations as you search, combined with the final visual ID serve to reinforce the audio learning experience. Begin with local birds to build your brain's audio baseline and build your database from there.

Using this method, you'll learn far more than Merlin. You'll learn entire ranges of sounds made by each species (e.g. Carolina Wren). You'll learn the mimics' trickery (e.g. N Mocker, E Starling, Blue Jay). And most importantly you'll learn to discern the voices of birds that you don't know, which often turn out to be rarities.

Re: Merlin, soon enough it will become able to properly ID any bird it can hear. I'm guessing there are also visual ID apps in the works if not already available. A "birder" will simply need the skill to use a smartphone. Gone will be critical thinking and the excitement of the chase. Happy "Birding"!

Bill Fontenot, Lafayette, LA

From: Paul Conover <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net>

Date: Sat, 25 Apr 2026 04:23:43 PDT

A Chuck was just calling within 50 feet of me for minutes. It was loud. Real loud. Merlin missed it. Paul Conover

From: Michael Musumeche <mjmusumeche@COX.NET>

Date: Sat, 25 Apr 2026 07:25:13 PDT

I was birding in Saint Martin Parish a few days ago and Merlin picked up two or three Limpkins. When I finally found the source of the sound, they were peacocks.

From: John Romano <birderjuan@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, 25 Apr 2026 09:06:21 PDT

Mike; I recorded a domestic chicken once on Merlin and it said Canada Goose. I haven't used Merlin much as I haven't birded for a few years, but once when I did I heard a familiar song and couldn't place it. Turned on Merlin and it said Orchard Oriole and Merlin was correct and helpful.

John Romano, Lafayette, La

Field Trip to Sabine Woods (cont from p3.)

Swallow (3); Barn Swallow (2); Sedge Wren (1); European Starling (1); Gray Catbird (18); Brown Thrasher (1); Northern Mockingbird (2); Swainson's Thrush (1); Wood Thrush (6); Cedar Waxwing (150); Lincoln's Sparrow (1); Orchard Oriole (40); Baltimore Oriole (10); Red-winged Blackbird (10); Brown-headed Cowbird (3); Common Grackle (3); Boat-tailed Grackle (7); Great-tailed Grackle (1); Ovenbird (3); Worm-eating Warbler (1); Louisiana Waterthrush (1); Northern Waterthrush (5); Golden-winged Warbler (1); Blue-winged Warbler (3); Prothonotary Warbler (1); Tennessee Warbler (10); Kentucky Warbler (3); Common Yellowthroat (5); Hooded Warbler (3); American Redstart (3); Cerulean Warbler (2); Blackpoll Warbler (1); Black-throated Green Warbler (2); Summer Tanager (6); Northern Cardinal (5); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (10); Blue Grosbeak (1); Indigo Bunting (5); Painted Bunting (4)

Steve Mayes

Bird Sightings –April 2026

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: April is the heart of spring migration in the area. This means there are a lot of checklists entered into eBird, which is our primary source of sightings information for this column. In order to try to be as up to date as possible, we use the “raw” eBird listings, which means that, in general, the sightings have not been reviewed. Some of the reports early in the month may have been reviewed and if not accepted, they may have been removed from this listing, but inclusion in this list does not imply that any review has taken place.

This year represents the first full spring migration since we changed our criteria for inclusion of migratory species to include only sightings more than two weeks “early” or two weeks “late” instead of one week early or late. Logically, we should be considering whether we should be making some adjustments to the occurrences shown in checklist we use (the 2008 Ornithology Group *Birder’s Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast*). However, that checklist was compiled using carefully vetted sightings that were, where appropriate, backed up by full written descriptions of sightings on dates around the “edges” of the occurrence windows, whereas the occurrences data used to generate eBird “Alerts” (which for practical purposes we have to use) is not standardized, and to some extent reflects the discretion of the reviewers in the individual counties. In addition, far too many sightings of rare and very rare species are entered into eBird checklists but are not accompanied by detailed descriptions of the bird. eBird in most cases alerts the observer that a species is rare or very rare, but does not force the observer to provide back up evidence for the ID at the time. We are reluctant to move completely away from that checklist because it is “standardized” even though not all counties we cover were

included in it. It is usually not until considerably later than our press deadline that the county reviewer is able to review the sighting, and request additional details when warranted.

We do exercise a modicum of editorial review by omitting a species that is on only one checklist on a day when there are 20 or 30 other checklists in that location. Before omitting it, however, we do look to see if there is a photo or a detailed description of the key plumage and/or hard part characteristics.

A subtle “problem” can arise when a species common in parts of Jefferson County but very rarely encountered along the immediate coast is entered. eBird alerts do not flag these reports, because the smallest area that is used for compiling checking for alerts in eBird is an entire county, so they are only reviewed if one of the reviewers for the county notices essentially by chance. They will come to our attention when we compile our lists of migrants seen in Sabine Woods in spring migration, but that will be two or more months after the fact as the eBird spreadsheets are not available until at least two weeks after the end of the previous month. Although it may not be significant in the big picture, we do want to report on the appearance in the immediate coastal areas of species usually not seen within 20-30 miles of the shoreline. As one fairly extreme example, we would note that Tufted Titmice are essentially not present in the south part of Jefferson County although they are quite common in wooded areas 20 or more miles north of the coastline.

One function that this column intends to fill is to highlight significant change in the local distribution of various species. As a practical matter, it is very much easier to detect species moving into the area than it is to recognize species that are no longer being seen. Currently we are monitoring the spread into the area of Limpkin and Common Ground Dove, and a couple of species that are candidates to be added to that list: Lesser Nighthawk and Great Kiskadee. Great Kiskadees seem to have an enormous home range and all the sightings recorded in April may refer to only two or three birds. The species is very conspicuous, especially orally and is often detected at a great distance.

A little more subtle is when sightings of multiple birds extend the months of the year that a species is normally seen. Wood Storks have been for many years not particularly rare June through October, which would ordinarily suggest post-breeding dispersal. But we are now seeing the species almost year-round, and not just single birds that might raise suspicion that it was one that was impaired.

Local Counties April 2026

Great Kiskadee	Apr 1-25	JEF-SW (1) mult obs
White-tailed Hawk	Apr 24	HAI-TX326 (1) Stephen Shunk
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	Apr 18	JEF-SW (1) mult obs
Winter Wren	Apr 13	JEF-SW (1) Dania Sanchez
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Apr 20	ORA-Claiborne West Park (1) Gaston del Pino
Lesser Goldfinch	Apr 28-May 1+	JEF-Port Arthur (1)Greg Jackson
Brewster’s Warbler	Apr13, 19	JEF-SW (1) Andrew From, Dania Sanchez

Lawrence’s Warbler	Apr 13	JEF-SW (1) Andrew From, Dania Sanchez, Travis Turnbow
Cape May Warbler	Apr 20-26	JEF-SW (1) mult obs
Prairie Warbler	Apr 5-8	JEF-SW (1) mult obs
Canada Warbler	Apr 17	JAS-FM777 (1) Penny Garsee
Western Tanager	Apr 30	JEF-SW (1) Andrew Lee

Nearby Counties April 2026

Snow Goose	Apr 10-26	CAM-Lacassine NWR (14) Bob Spomer, mult obs
Surf Scoter	Apr 26	GAL-Artist Boat Sanctuary (1) Arman Moreno

American Flamingo	Apr 26	GAL-Fort Travis (1) Bryan Hardee
	Apr 24	GAL-Bolivar Flats (14) mult obs
	Apr 27	GAL-Rollover Pass (1) mult obs
Least Grebe	Mar 29-Apr 25	CHA-J Nungaray NWR Entrance rd (2) mult obs
	Apr 25-27	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) mult obs
Common Ground Dove	Apr 17	GAL-UH Coastal Center (1) Matthew Abernathy
	Apr 19	CAM-Willow Is (1) Paul Conover, Mac Myers
	Apr 21	CHA-J Nungaray NWR S of Visitor Info Station (1) Mark Lyons, Jane Tillman, Ron Jacobs
Groove-billed Ani	Apr 25	GAL- Artist Boat Sanctuary (1) Amy Neblett
Lesser Nighthawk	Apr 3	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) Joanie & Mark Hubinger, Hanzhi Zhang
	Apr 12-30+	GAL-HI Smith Oaks (1) mult obs
	Apr 25	GAL-Virginia Pt area (1) Jamie Schubert
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Apr 21	HAS-Deer Park Nature Preserve (1) Dale Wolck
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Apr 4	CAL-French Settlement (1) Charlotte Chehotsky, Beth Kramer
Limpkin	Apr 14,20	GAL-Hall's Bayou Ranch (Pvt) 5 mult obs
	Apr 27	GAL-Magnolia Ridge Basin (1) WE, Robt Buchert. Isaac Boden, Spencer Poling
Sandhill Crane	Apr 9	HAS-Hwy 99 at Bridgeland(2) John Hales
Red Knot	Apr 29	CHA- J Nungaray ANWR Shoveler Pond (1) Merryl Edelstein
Ruff	Apr 21	CHA- Fairview Rd (1) mult obs
	Apr 22-27	CHA- TX124 S of Fig Ridge (1) mult obs
Iceland Gull (Thayer's)	Apr 10	GAL-San Luis Pass (1) Kyle O'Haver
	Apr 21	GAL-Fort Travis (1) mult obs
	Apr 26-28	GAL-Fort Travis (1) mult obs
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Apr 21-26	CHA-J Nungaray NWR Shoveler Pond (1) mult obs
	Apr 21	GAL-Ft Travis (1) J Nungaray NWR Shoveler Pond (1) mult obs

Wood Stork

Apr 10	GAL-Pearland (17) Andrew Dietrich
Apr 12	HAS-Armand Bayou NC (4) mult obs
Apr 14	HAS-Little Cedar Bayou Park (1) J & C Miles
Apr 14	HAS-Sheldon Lake SP (4) Robt Comstock
Apr 23	HAS-Little Cedar Bayou Park (4) mult obs
Apr 26-27	HAS-Mitchell Nature Preserve (5) mult obs

Apr 27- 30	HAS-EI Franco Lee Park (12) mult obs	
Brown Booby	Apr 28	CHA-Fairview Rd (1) Barbara Hostetler, Patrick Maurice
Glossy Ibis	Apr 12	HAS-Becker Rd ponds (1) John Hale
Burrowing Owl	cont-Apr 3-27	GAL-Harborside Dr area (1) mult obs
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Mar 30-Apr 9	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) mult obs

Great Kiskadee

Apr 4-27	HAS/GAL Seabrook/Kemah area (1) mult obs	
Apr 14	HAS-Sheldon Lake SP (1) Nina Rach	
Apr 18	CHA- J Nungaray NWR Jackson Prairie (1) Gene Campbell	
Apr 18	CHA-S Pear Orchard Rd (1) Tyler Miloy	
Apr 23	GAL-HI Boy Scout Woods (1) I&D Peterson	
Apr 24	CHA-J Nungaray NWR Skillern Tract (1) Owlando Fonseca	
Gray Kingbird	Apr 30-May 1+	HAS-East River 9 Golf (1) mult obs
Vermilion Flycatcher	Apr 23	CAM-Sabine NWR Wetland Walkway (1) Steve Freeman
	Apr 24	GAL-Loop 108 (1) Ken Finger, Brenda Shelton
Black-whiskered Vireo	Apr 20-21	CAM-Willow Island (1) Darcy Rabold, Phil Chaon
	Apr 25-26	GAL-Smith Oaks (1) Sarah Roper, Christina Parks, mult obs
Bullock's Oriole	Apr 2-4	GAL-Clear Creek Village (1) mult obs
	Apr 26	GAL-HI Boy Scout Woods (1) Doray Lendachy
	Apr 26	GAL-Jamaica Beach 1) Brenda Gonzales
Prairie Warbler	Apr 22	HAS-Alex Deussen Park (1) mult obs
	Apr 27-30	GAL-HI Boy Scout Woods (1) Pat Comas
Scarlet Tanager	Mar 30-Apr 4	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) mult obs
Western Tanager	Apr 9-29	GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) mult obs
	Apr 23-30	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Nathan Tea, mult obs
	Apr 29	GAL-HI (1) WE, Grace Yaros

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 Egelhoff; WJC – West Jefferson County.

Spring Migration 2026

We plan to present our usual thorough review of spring migration through Sabine Woods, but some of the compiled eBird data we need will not be available to us until about June 15th, and so will have to wait until the July-August issue of the *Brown Pelican* planned for early August.

We already know that this spring season was characterized by consistent strong south winds for almost all of the migration season. Thus, a great majority of the migrants were able to fly on over and not be required to stop on the immediate coast to rest and refuel. .

As of the date that we write this (May 5th), there have been only two weather events of significance to migrants. On the day of our April field trip (April 18th), a cold front passed through very late in the day, significantly after most field trip participants had left. Because of rain and gathering darkness,

it was not possible to continue birding, although it was obvious the following morning that the conditions had forced many migrants down, and at least 24 warbler species were reliably reported on the 19th.

The other weather event will likely turn out to be the one for which this season is remembered. On May 1st, a front approaching the Gulf coast stalled, resulting in heavy rain showers for most of the day, and a fairly strong northeast wind. A total of 2.5 inches was recorded in the rain gage. The front cleared the coast that night, but north winds continued through all of May 2nd and much of May 3rd likely discouraging any northbound migrant to leave and arriving ones to stop. More remarkable than the mere number of species seen (likely 24) was the numbers of each species, particularly on May 2nd.

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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.