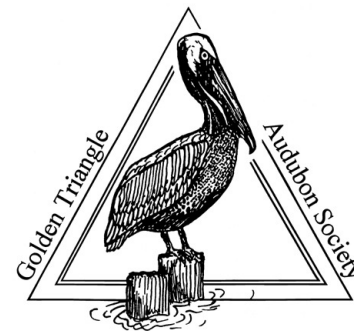


# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 20 No. 12

December 2014

## **Sea Rim State Park Christmas Bird Count Saturday January 3, 2015 Meet in Sabine Pass at 7:00 a.m.**

**at the intersection of Highway 87 and FM3322 in Sabine Pass. This is at the stop sign in Sabine Pass, where Highway 87 turns west.**

**Countdown dinner at 6:00 p.m., location to be confirmed.**

Please contact John Whittle at [johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com) or 409-722-4193 (H), and let us know you plan to attend so we can make the best possible area assignments.

## **Orange County Christmas Bird Count Thursday January 1, 2015 Meet in Orange at 7:00 a.m.**

**at the Service Station at the intersection of Highway 105 and FM1442.**

**Contact Ken Sztraky 409-385-2835 (H) or [berrysheepfarm@att.net](mailto:berrysheepfarm@att.net).**

Please join us for what we hope will be two enjoyable birding days. All are invited, even if you are not an experienced birder or are only able to bird for part of the day. Feeder watchers are welcome to participate. Let us know in advance and we will find a suitable group for you to join. The more pairs of eyes in a group, the more birds will be seen.

Other local counts which will welcome your participation include the **Johnson Bayou** count on **Tuesday December 16** (contact Ken Sztraky, [berrysheepfarm@att.net](mailto:berrysheepfarm@att.net) or 409-385-2835), the **Bolivar Peninsula** Count on **Thursday December 18** (contact Steve Mayes at [sgmayes@hotmail.com](mailto:sgmayes@hotmail.com) or 409-722-5807), the **Turkey Creek** Count (in the Big Thicket north of Kountze) on **Saturday, December 20** (contact John Whittle at [johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com)), the **Beech Creek** Count (in the Steinhagen Lake area) on **Saturday December 27** (contact as for Turkey Creek) and the Trinity River Count on **Tuesday December 30** (contact Stuart Marcus at 936-336-9786 or [stuart\\_marcus@fws.gov](mailto:stuart_marcus@fws.gov)). More details of all counts on page 3.

## *The Brown Pelican*

Vol. 20, No.12 December 2014  
Issue number 213

### Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information  
[www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org)

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

##### President

Gary Kelley (409-697-2346)

##### Vice-President

Sherrie Roden (409-962-7911)

##### Treasurer

Christine Silva (409-782-1832)

##### Secretary

John Whittle (409-722-4193)

##### Directors-at-Large

Edra Bogucki (409-835-7245)

Howard Davis (409-962-1254)

Gerald Duhon (409-899-3368)

Sherry Gibson (409-385-6302)

John Haynes (409-724-6842)

John Mariani (985-373-5016)

Steve Mayes (409-722-5807)

Harlan Stewart (409 727-4441)

Jana Whittle (409-722-4193)

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

##### Program

Jana Whittle (409-722-4193)

##### Field Trips

Steve Mayes (409-722-5807)

##### Conservation

Volunteer opportunity!

##### Membership, Publicity

Volunteer needed

##### Education

Volunteer needed

##### Webmaster

Jeff Pittman

([geojeff@geojeff.org](mailto:geojeff@geojeff.org))

##### Newsletter Distribution

Mary Stafford (409-460-3653)

##### Newsletter Editor

John Whittle (409-722-4193)

([Johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:Johnawhittle@aol.com))

### *The Brown Pelican* is

published monthly except July  
by the Golden Triangle Audubon  
Society, P. O. Box 1292,  
Nederland, Texas 77627-1292

## Calendar of Events

*Important Note: Field Trip notices published here should always be regarded as needing confirmation just before the date. Changes will always be posted on the web site at [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org). Confirmation of the location will also normally be available at the Membership Meeting that is usually, but not always, two days prior to each trip, or by contacting Field Trip Committee chair, Steve Mayes at 409-722-5807 or [sgmayes@hotmail.com](mailto:sgmayes@hotmail.com).*

### Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank everyone who brought dishes to the potluck dinner at the November meeting. **But we need volunteers to bring items for all the spring 2015 meetings.** Pick the meeting at which you want to help. Please do not wait until the last minute to volunteer! We do not expect one person to bring everything, but please call so we can coordinate! Even if you can just bring drinks and cookies or something similar, please call Jana Whittle at (409) 722-4193 (or email her at [janafw@aol.com](mailto:janafw@aol.com)) **as far in advance as possible.** Please help if you can. We thank all those who brought or assisted in the purchase of refreshments over the last year or so!

**Thursday December 4. Birds in Art Exhibit.** The Museum of the Gulf Coast in Port Arthur, Texas, invites Golden Triangle Audubon Society members to visit the "Birds in Art," exhibition. A soft opening will occur from 4 to 6 p.m. on December 4, at the Museum, 700 Procter Street in downtown Port Arthur. Unfortunately, the planned reception previously announced for that day has had to be cancelled. The exhibit will be open through February 15, 2015

The 2014 "Birds in Art" touring exhibition features innovative perspectives throughout 60 diverse artworks by some of the world's most talented artists. A 132-page full-color, illustrated "Birds in Art" catalogue featuring every work along with artists' statements is

available for purchase. For more information, see the museum's website at [www.museumofthegulfcoast.org](http://www.museumofthegulfcoast.org), email the Museum at [bellianse@lamarpa.edu](mailto:bellianse@lamarpa.edu), or call 409-982-7000.

### Christmas Counts

#### December 14 through January 5.

See the list of local counts on page 3 of this issue.

**Monday December 15.** Waterbird Workshop at the Chenier Plains NWR Complex Headquarters. See page 7 for details.

**Thursday January 15, 2015. Membership Meeting.** Southeastern Brazil: Birds of Espirito Santo. Kelley Sampeck.

**Saturday January 17, 2015. Field Trip.** A final decision will be made nearer the time, but we have tentatively selected Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge for this trip. This is an opportunity to observe waterfowl, at both the main refuge area and the Skillern Tract, as well as various wintering warblers, sparrows and Vermilion Flycatchers. There are also many raptors, including both eagles, Crested Caracara and White-tailed Hawk wintering in the area. Meet at the Visitor Information Station just beyond the entrance at 8:30 a.m. Full details in next month's issue.

**Thursday February 19, 2015. Membership Meeting.** Details in a future issue of the *Brown Pelican*.

**Saturday February 21, 2015. Field Trip.** Tentatively, this will be to Cattail Marsh in Tyrrell Park, Beaumont.



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](http://www.earthshare-texas.org).

## 2014-15 Christmas Bird Count Dates

The dates below have all been confirmed. Houston Audubon Society maintains a list of all Texas CBCs on its website at [www.houstonaudubon.org](http://www.houstonaudubon.org).

**Tuesday December 16. Johnson Bayou, LA.** Centered on Johnson Bayou. This area of Cameroon Parish is recovering from two devastating hurricanes. This count has access to oilfield and Gray Estate properties that are not accessible any other time. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the intersection of Louisiana 82 and Parish Road 536/Middle Ridge Road – the Bayou Convenience Store and the Johnson Bayou High School are at this intersection. Contact Ken Sztraky (409-385-2835 or [berrysheepfarm@att.net](mailto:berrysheepfarm@att.net)).

**Thursday December 18: Bolivar Peninsula.** High Island and Anahuac NWR areas. This count was compiled by Bill Graber for fifty years, and has always been among the top counts in the nation. The count circle includes High Island, Rollover Pass and all of Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Contact Steve Mayes ([sgmayes@hotmail.com](mailto:sgmayes@hotmail.com) or 409-722-5807) for assignment/meeting location and time.

**Saturday December 20. Turkey Creek.** Centered in the Turkey Creek unit of the Big Thicket NP north of Kountze. Meet at the Big Thicket Visitor Center on Highway 69 about 7 miles north of Kountze at 6:30 a.m. Contact John Whittle ([johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com) or 409-722-4193)

**Saturday December 27. Beech Creek.** Centered in the Steinhagen Lake area of Tyler and Jasper counties. In addition to Steinhagen Lake, this count includes all of Martin Dies SP, and the Corps of Engineers picnic areas and campgrounds around the lake. Meet at the Corps of Engineers Picnic area on FM92 immediately north of Town Bluff. Contact John Whittle ([johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com) or 409-722-4193)

**Tuesday December 30. Trinity River.** This count includes the Trinity River NWR, Tarkington Prairie and Gaylor Lake. Meet at the Valero Gas Station at the intersection of Highway 105 and Highway 321, about 6 miles southeast of Cleveland, at 7:00 a.m. Contact: Stuart Marcus ([stuart\\_marcus@fws.gov](mailto:stuart_marcus@fws.gov) or 936-336-9786).

**Thursday January 1, 2015. Orange County.** This count includes much of Orange County between Orange and the Neches River, including Bessie Heights and the Old River Unit. Meet at the gas station at the intersection of FM1442 and FM105 in Orangefield at 7:00 a.m. Contact Ken Sztraky ([berrysheepfarm@att.net](mailto:berrysheepfarm@att.net) or 409-385-2835)

**Saturday January 3, 2015. Sea Rim SP.** Sabine Pass/Texas Point/Sea Rim area. This count is sponsored by the Golden Triangle Audubon Society. The count circle includes the southern part of Murphree WMA, all of Texas Point NWR and Sea Rim State Park, the eastern part of McFaddin NWR as well as Sabine Woods, the Sabine Pass area and a small section of extreme western Cameron Parish. Meet in the parking lot of the Sabine Pass Community Center, located at

the stop sign on Highway 87 at 7:00 a.m. Contact John Whittle ([johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com) or 409-722-4193)

Christmas Bird Counts are all day events in which participants identify and count all the birds they can find in a 15-mile diameter circle, most groups birding from dawn to dusk. Christmas Bird Counts are free and most are open to anyone. However, in the case of some of the counts with many participants (Bolivar Peninsula and Sea Rim SP are in this category), it is often difficult to accommodate participants who show up without advance notice in a way that is satisfactory to all and provides the best possible experience for the participant. Such counts are organized into groups in advance and many of the groups go straight to their assigned areas. In most cases in such counts, it is easier to adjust if someone (area leaders excepted!) who has indicated their probable participation in advance is forced to withdraw than to add someone to a group on the morning of the count.

## Membership Dues

All memberships run from January through December. Membership dues will remain at \$15 per year. You may pay at any GTAS meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page. The memberships of new members joining in August or later in the year will extend to the end of the following calendar year. For new members joining National Audubon using the membership blank printed on the back page of each printed issue of the *Brown Pelican*, 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 members living in the Chapter's official territory, which is defined by zip codes, but basically covers all of Jefferson, Orange and Hardin Counties and one or two zip codes adjacent to these counties. We do welcome members in other nearby counties!

Your dues cover the cost of printing and mailing the *Brown Pelican* to you, and help fund our other activities. We urge you to help us do more by receiving your *Brown Pelican* as a PDF attached to an email if you do not already. We will continue to post the Newsletter on the GTAS website at [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org). The typical issue will be less than 500 KB and so it is not a large file. Please send an email to [johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com) with your request, including the name we currently send the printed copy to, and the email address you want us to use.

## Annual Meeting Report

At the November meeting, Golden Triangle Audubon elected its officers and directors for 2015. Gary Kelley's term as president continues through the end of 2105.

Elected for one year terms for 2015 were: Vice-President: Sherrie Roden; Treasurer: Christine Sliva; Secretary: John Whittle; Directors-at-Large: Jessica Barry, Edra Bogucki, Howard Davis, Gerald Duhon, Sherry Gibson, John Haynes, Randy Lewis, John Mariani, Steve Mayes, Harlan Stewart and Jana Whittle.

*John A. Whittle, Secretary*

# Sabine Woods Fall 2014 Migration

For many years, we have presented a summary and analysis of spring migration, and are now able, up to a point, to compare one year with prior years, and perhaps even discern some trends. Statistically significant conclusions, however, require many, many years because of the vagaries of weather and observer "effort."

In the past, we have not been able to compile similar summaries for fall migration for a number of reasons. Fall migration is spread over a much longer period, from early August to mid-November – three and a half months compared to a spring migration spanning about two months. In general, the fall migration is not birded nearly as much as spring. Some of this is probably ascribable to the hotter and more "buggy" conditions that prevail for much of the fall; another factor is that many migratory species molt into less striking winter plumages before migrating. In addition, for many species, three out of four southbound birds are juveniles, also in drabber plumage.

However, the number of birders active in the fall in Sabine Woods has increased, and the frequency of their visits has also increased to the point where we are able to present a fairly complete picture. On the next page is a summary table. We recognize that the print is extremely small, but it presents a lot of information on one page for easy review. Note that there is not a column for days for which we have no reports. This table has been posted on the Golden Triangle Audubon website at [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org) under the reports tab. This pdf file can easily be enlarged for easy viewing there. Also posted is a pdf document of an expanded table including a few more species and laid out so it will print the table in an easier to read size but on multiple pages. There is a (blank) column for days when there are no reports. The tables include sightings at Sabine Woods only. There were only a few sightings along Highway 87 and at Sea Rim State Park during the fall, and a handful along the road to the site of the former pilot station at Texas Point.

Space and print size considerations have necessitated leaving a few species that were seen only a few times during the fall off the table. These were:

Black-billed Cuckoo on Sep 6 (1) and Sep 14 (1)  
Eastern Whip-poor-will on Sep 10 (2), Oct 5 (2), Oct 10 (2),  
Oct 11 (1), Oct 14 (1) and Oct 15 (1).  
Ash-throated Flycatcher on Sep 22 (1)  
Fork-tailed Flycatcher on Sep 22 (1)  
Bank Swallow on Aug 5 (4)  
Golden-crowned Kinglet on Nov 1 (1), Nov 2 (2), Nov 24 (2)  
Wood Thrush on Oct 4 (1), Oct 14 (1), Oct 15 (1)  
Golden-winged Warbler on Oct 10 (1)  
Bay-breasted Warbler on Sep 15 (1)  
Cape May Warbler on Sep 10 (1), Oct 4-5 (1), Oct 10 (1)  
Townsend's Warbler on Sep 23 (1)  
Scarlet Tanager on Sep 27 (1)

This compilation would not have been possible without the efforts of many birders. First and foremost, we thank John Haynes who birded the Woods almost every day during the peak of migration. Reports were received regularly from Jessica Barry, Michael Cooper, Thomas Hellweg, Randy Lewis, Steve Mayes and Ron Weeks. We also used eBird

reports posted by Mike Austin, Gary Binderim, Fred Collins, Howard Davis, Tony Frank, Cathy Hay, Clayton Leopold, Brad Lirette, John Mariani, Todd McGrath, Janet Neath, Greg Page, David Roberts, Chris Runk, Harlan Stewart, Joyce Marie Stewart, Rebecca Stroud, and Michael Womer.

## Commentary

There being very limited data available for prior years, this commentary is anecdotal in nature rather than based on a rigorous scientific analysis of sightings.

This was an interesting fall migration. The most unexpected rarity was a flyover Fork-tailed Flycatcher seen by John Haynes on Sep 22. Other sought-after species included probably three Cape May Warblers, probably four Black-throated Blue Warblers, including two males present together Sep 21-23, a Townsend Warbler present for about 45 minutes on Sep 23, and an Ash-throated Flycatcher on Sep 22.

In the fall, a few Broad-winged Hawks pass through the Woods. Most often, they are first noticed in the morning when they wake up around 9:30 or 10:00 a.m. From mid-September through early to mid-November, one, two or three birds, essentially all juveniles, were seen most days. Whether these birds were staying several days or there were different birds each day is impossible to determine. We do know that the pattern of Broad-winged migration was extremely unusual at the Smith Point Hawk Watch, with five figure numbers October 15 through 20, a good three weeks later than the long-term average, but following a not quite so spectacular late push in 2013.

Chuck-will's-widows were probably on the high side of normal, but Eastern Whip-poor-wills, seen very infrequently at Sabine Woods in migration, were surprisingly numerous, especially during the first half of October, the normal peak for migration of the species.

Flycatcher migration seemed to extend later into the season for many species. Olive-sided Flycatchers were seen into early October. Flycatchers of the Traill's complex were seen throughout September as were Acadian Flycatchers. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers seemed abnormally numerous this fall. As always, Eastern Wood-Pewees are always among the most conspicuous flycatchers in the fall. The conventional wisdom is that the first arriving wintering Eastern Phoebes push the last Pewees out. This year, both species were present together throughout virtually the whole of October.

The overall impression this fall was that vireos passed through in below average numbers. Certainly, there were not many days when Warbling Vireos were numerous, and Philadelphia Vireos were reported on only a handful of days. Red-eyed Vireos were quite numerous in the middle part of September, while White-eyed Vireos were perhaps fewer than usual, although quite numerous in the first three weeks of October.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are by far and away the most numerous "migrants" in the woods, and this year was no exception, but it must be remembered that the species is present throughout the year, although the birds present in the winter are probably not the same birds that spent the summer. *Continued on page 7*



# Field Trip to West Jefferson County – 22 November 2014

Since its inception a few years ago, the Golden Triangle Audubon Society's November field trip to western Jefferson County has been extremely popular. That could be because of its close proximity to the homes of most of the local birders or possibly because it is a birding area that is less well known than other local hot spots (Sabine Woods, Tyrrell Park, etc.) and folks are anxious to explore it. But maybe it is more likely that birders have heard of the many great birds that have turned up on this field trip over the years and are anxious to find a rarity or two themselves!

At first glance, the western part of Jefferson County does not look particularly appealing. A collection of grassy fields, rice fields, pastures and a few scattered homes would not seem like ideal bird habitat. However, it is very different than most of the county. The northern part of Jefferson County is largely wooded, the eastern part is mostly urbanized/suburbanized and the southern part is mostly marsh so the grassland habitat is unique for the county even in its heavily altered state. Being different, this habitat often harbors different birds than other parts of the county especially in the colder months when our winter birds move in. In the past, such rarities as Golden Eagle and Red Phalarope have turned up in the area and sparrows, cranes, raptors and shorebirds of many kinds can be abundant. And more than twenty birders turned up on Johnson Road south of China to get a look at them.

The biggest numbers of birds to be seen out in this area are often geese and cranes and this proved true on this day. Snow Geese were flying early and often with hundreds of these large waterfowl streaming by in large flocks. Many of these flocks contained a special surprise – Ross's Geese! These smaller versions of Snow Geese are occurring in our area in increasing numbers and most large flocks will contain at least one or two Ross's. Sandhill Cranes were also found quickly. Traced down by their odd bugling calls, the cranes were seen flying overhead and later on the ground. Great looks were had by all at these stately birds as they congregated in old rice fields and pastures. In most winters somewhere between 50 and 250 Sandhill Cranes spend the winter in this area but on this day, the number was more like 2000 birds! This in itself was enough to call this a successful field trip!

Raptors are another target on this trip. One of the first spotted on the day was a White-tailed Kite. This lovely raptor was seen hovering ("kiting") over one of the fields in their characteristic manner probably hunting for small rodents. A Great Horned Owl was first heard then seen flying out of some trees. Red-tailed Hawks were one of the most numerous raptors seen on the trip and they were seen in a variety of different forms and plumages from the typical eastern forms to very pale young birds possibly of the "Kriders" form. Northern Harriers were also common and easily seen cruising low over the fields. Most were the brown female and young birds but a few of the beautiful gray males were also found. A Red-shouldered Hawk or two were found on the day as was a single small Sharp-shinned Hawk. Colorful American Kestrels perched on powerlines as they hunted for small prey. The last raptor species spotted on the trip was also, perhaps, the best: Bald Eagle! Our expert eagle spotter Christine Sliva found the

first of the two or three eagles seen on the day, an adult bird perched on a levee near flooded fields filled with ducks. Later, a young eagle was found in this same area.

Other good birds were seen on the trip. Both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were found in flooded fields along with a few Dunlin and a good selection of Wilson's Snipe. Sparrows were not especially numerous and the group dipped on the LeConte's Sparrows sometimes found in the area but Savannah Sparrows were fairly common and Vesper, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows were located. In a small wooded area, more typical woodland birds were found. Pine Warblers were called in to show off for the group and a Hermit Thrush was heard but would not come out. Woodpeckers put on a good show with Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker all being seen at this spot.

After a quick lunch break, the group headed down McDermand Road to find more birds. The northern stretch of this road near Highway 90 is often a good place to locate Eastern Bluebirds but none were located on this trip. Traveling further down the road, a bluebird was seen perched on a barbed wire fence in company with a few colorful eastern Palm Warblers. As the group stopped for a better look, there seemed to be something strange about this blue bird. It had no rusty color underneath. A scope view of the bird along with some quick photos proved what the group had hoped. This was a Mountain Bluebird! Mountain Bluebirds occur regularly in the winter in the panhandle but a young male on the upper Texas coast is extremely rare! The bird fed along this stretch of fence regularly perching on a pipeline sign and allowed great looks and photos for many birders.

Eventually, the group left the company of the bluebird and moved on but the birding excitement was not over yet! In the last stop of the day, while looking at ducks in some flooded fields, a flycatcher with a yellow belly was noticed. Any such flycatcher is unusual this time of year so the bird was carefully studied by the group. The bird was eventually determined to be either a Couch's or Tropical Kingbird. On a subsequent visit to see this bird it gave a call finally proving it to be a Couch's Kingbird. A bird normally more associated with extreme south Texas, a small number of Couch's Kingbirds stray north in the winter every year. Still finding one in this area is rare and quite a coup for a field trip that already had produced a Mountain Bluebird!

So the assembled group of birders was rewarded for heading out to west Jefferson County. Whether it was for the easy access, the birding in a new area or the attraction of rarities, all left satisfied with the trip. A trip with thousands of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese along with Bald Eagles and a Great Horned Owl would have been fantastic enough. Throw in two great rarities, Mountain Bluebird and Couch's Kingbird, and this November field trip will be long remembered as one of the best ever for the Golden Triangle Audubon Society!

The following birds were recorded by the field trip leaders: Greater White-fronted Goose (25); Snow Goose (810); Ross's Goose (9); Gadwall (5); Mallard (4); Mottled Duck (4); Blue-

winged Teal (3); Northern Shoveler (15); Northern Pintail (200); Green-winged Teal (35); Great Blue Heron (3); Great Egret (16); Cattle Egret (4); White Ibis (104); *Plegadis* species Ibis (156); Turkey Vulture (7); White-tailed Kite (1); Bald Eagle (3); Northern Harrier (17); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Red-shouldered Hawk (2); Red-tailed Hawk (11); Crested Caracara (3); American Kestrel (4); Sora (1); American Coot (50); Sandhill Crane (1979); Semipalmated Plover (1); Killdeer (43); Black-necked Stilt (6); Greater Yellowlegs (3); Lesser Yellowlegs (56); Dunlin (30); Wilson's Snipe (25); Ring-billed Gull (1); Mourning Dove (87); Great Horned Owl (1); Belted Kingfisher (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1); Northern Flicker (4); Pileated Woodpecker (1); Eastern Phoebe (9); Couch's Kingbird (1); Loggerhead Shrike (2); Blue Jay (3); American Crow (4); Tree Swallow (69); House Wren (3); Sedge Wren (7); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (3); Mountain Bluebird (1); Hermit Thrush (1); Northern Mockingbird (5); European Starling (21); American Pipit (4); Orange-crowned Warbler (1); Palm Warbler (3); Pine Warbler (4); Yellow-rumped Warbler (2); Vesper Sparrow (3); Savannah Sparrow (6); Swamp Sparrow (4); White-throated Sparrow (6); White-crowned Sparrow (4); Northern Cardinal (5); Red-winged Blackbird (2370); Eastern Meadowlark (28); Brewer's Blackbird (10); Common Grackle (200); Brown-headed Cowbird (2000); Blackbird sp. (3000); House Sparrow (25).

*Steve Mayes*

## Waterbird Workshop

A free birding workshop is scheduled for December 15, 2014. The workshop is presented as a result of an exciting new partnership between Audubon Coastal Texas and The Friends of Anahuac Refuge (FOAR). The goals of this partnership are to conduct monthly free workshops to train volunteers to identify waterbirds along the upper Texas coast including Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and other good birding locations in this coastal area. The waterbird monitoring project is needed to first establish a baseline of numbers of birds and secondly to use the information to manage waterbird populations by species.

These workshops will teach volunteers how to collect information by waterbird monitoring at the coastal locations such as Anahuac refuge and other sites. This workshop will be approximately one hour and will be paired with a 1-2 hour field trip which will help volunteers become comfortable with identifying waterbirds and filling out the census form. Beginner and experienced birders are all welcome to participate.

The first workshop will begin at 9:00 a.m. until approximately 10:00 am December 15, 2014 at the USFWS Chenier Plains NWR Complex Headquarters (ANWR Visitor Center) on FM563 about 2 miles south of 1-10 and 4 miles north of Anahuac. Then there will be a 1-2 hour bird survey in the field ending by 12p.m. Bring your binoculars and favorite field guide. Also, bring a bottle water and a light snack for this event and wear weather appropriate clothing including walking shoes/hiking boots. For additional information contact Travis Lovelace, 409-277-9112 or 409 252-3454 or email at [atl3454@windstream.net](mailto:atl3454@windstream.net).

## Sabine Woods Migration *(cont. from p.4)*

The first Ruby-crowned Kinglets were perhaps a little late in arriving, but many were seen throughout October.

*Catharus* thrush migration was extremely disappointing. No Gray-cheeked Thrushes were reported, and only a handful of Swainson's Thrushes. Nor were there many Wood Thrushes. Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers, on the other hand, were present in good numbers throughout the entire fall migration period.

Ovenbird migration seemed a little more spread out than usual, even though the overall numbers were normal. Worm-eating Warblers seem not to be as plentiful in the fall as they are in the spring, and probably passed through in normal numbers. Louisiana Waterthrushes are notoriously early fall migrants, so most of them have already passed through by the time many of us start birding again. Northern Waterthrushes were seen throughout September, but in relatively modest numbers probably related to the relatively dry conditions.

Blue-winged Warblers were perhaps a little bit scarce, though several late migrants were noted in October. Only one Golden-winged was reported (on October 10). Nashville Warblers were very numerous on several days in October, and, overall, were much above average. Mourning Warblers are difficult to see but relatively easy to identify by call, and many of the reasonably good number in September were detected by call. Hooded Warblers are expected to be among the most common migrants through the area, spring and fall, but this year's fall total was a little disappointing. American Redstarts are normally the dominant warbler in the latter part of the fall migration season, and peaked this on schedule this year in the last few days of September and the first few days of October.

Yellow Warblers were by no means as numerous as usual, and seemed to peak in late August rather than the normal middle of September. While Palm Warblers are winter residents in the area, again this year, there do not seem to be many that have come down as far as the coastal woodlots. Black-throated Green Warblers are late migrants, almost all passing through in October, which they did this year in normal numbers. This was another good fall for Canada Warblers, from late August to early October. Wilson's Warblers were reasonably common in September and October, but it looks as if the Woods will be devoid of wintering ones again this year.

Most sparrows are, of course, winter residents, and all that can be gleaned from the summary are the arrival dates and some indication of the numbers. Numbers of all species listed in the table are on the low side. The later part of the fall, apart from one very early cold snap, has been on the warm side, and many of the sparrows may still be further north.

While Summer Tanagers were in normal numbers with the peak being a week or two later than usual, almost no Scarlet Tanagers were seen. Blue Grosbeaks were episodic from early September through early October, while Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were very scarce, concentrated on the first few days of October.

Indigo Buntings are birds of open country but like the safety of wooded areas. Numbers seen in October were quite encouraging. Orchard Orioles nest in the area of the Woods, and were gone after the first few days of September. Baltimore Orioles were seen in good numbers throughout September.

*John A. Whittle*

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

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 12  
Groves, Texas

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## NATIONAL AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

### Membership Form

To join the National Audubon Society, please complete this form and return with Introductory Membership fee of \$20 (payable to the National Audubon Society, or indicate you wish to be billed) to National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 422250, Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250. To use this form to give a membership as a gift, please complete the form and indicate your name in the appropriate space. Payment should accompany gift memberships.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gift from: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed  Please bill me

Golden Triangle Audubon C4ZW250Z

## *Brown Pelican* SUBSCRIPTION/ MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete this form or include the information on or with your check. Mail to Golden Triangle Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627-1292 or bring to any Membership Meeting. Subscriptions from National Audubon members with mailing addresses outside our official territory, and others wishing to subscribe are \$15 per year (Jan-Dec). Members with addresses within our official territory are also asked to contribute \$15 if they are able.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

## RARE BIRD ALERTS

Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various 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. Most rare bird sightings in Texas are posted on the TEXBIRDS listserv. Archives of the listserv are at [www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds](http://www.freelists.org/archive/texbirds). It is not necessary to subscribe to the listserv to view the archives, which include all recent postings. Postings for the last two weeks are also available at <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/TX>.

Transcriptions of many current and recent email alerts are available on the Siler's Birding on the Net at <http://birdingonthe.net/hotmail.html> Detailed information (maps and text) on birding sites on the Upper Texas Coast is also available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirding.net..>