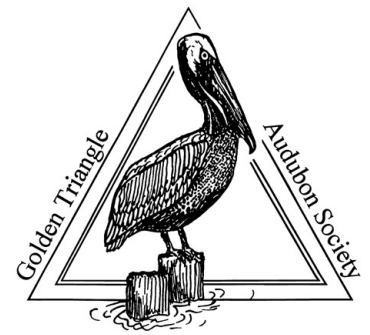


# *The Brown Pelican*



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

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Vol. 21 No. 3

March 2015

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**Membership Meeting  
Thursday March 19, 2015 7:00 p.m.  
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont**

**Warblers of Sabine Woods**

**John Haynes  
Photographs by Harlan Stewart**

Just in time for spring migration, we have a presentation to help you know when and where in Sabine Woods to find the colorful (and the few not-so-colorful) warblers that are so sought after in April along the Texas Gulf coast. Each spring, many warblers pass through on their way from their winter homes in Central and South America to their breeding grounds, which can be just few miles further north, or all the way up to the northern tier of Canada. Most of these birds make a non-stop flight across the Gulf of Mexico from the Yucatan. At least thirty-six warbler species can be seen most years, and forty different species have been recorded over the years.

John Haynes is well known to us all and has birded Sabine Woods intensively for many years. He operates Haynes Financial Services in mid-county. Harlan Stewart is a retired pathologist, an expert photographer, and has recently amassed a large collection of photographs of the birds of Sabine Woods. The program will focus on identifying all these warbler species in their breeding plumages.

We will plan on having the doors open by 6:00 p.m. and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. sharp. A light supper will be available from 6:15 p.m.

## *The Brown Pelican*

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Issue number 215

### Golden Triangle Audubon Society

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

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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).*

**Thursday March 19, 2015. Membership Meeting.** Warblers of Sabine Woods. Details on page 1.

### Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank Gary and Denise Kelley, Girish Doshi, Sherry Gibson, Carol Lynn and Andy Loker, Sherrie Roden, Lu Skillern, and Mary and Herb Stafford for bringing refreshments in February. **We need volunteers to bring items for the March meeting and the following 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!

**Saturday March 21, 2015. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats.**

*Important Note: Galveston County operates a parking permit program on the Bolivar Peninsula. If you park on the beach you must have a parking permit on your windshield. The fee for the permit is \$10.00 a year and permits are obtainable from most merchants on the Bolivar Peninsula.*

This trip will occur as spring shorebird migration is getting well under way, but while the wintering birds are mostly still present. Bolivar Flats is an important shore-bird location. We know that a lot of birders are intimidated by shorebirds, but they are not nearly as difficult to identify as is sometimes alleged! This trip offers an opportunity to compare many of the "true" shorebirds with lots of help in identifying them.

Meet at the vehicle barrier at 8:30 a.m. From Winnie, take TX 124 south to High Island. At the shoreline, turn right (west) on TX 87 and proceed through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you reach the intersection where Loop 108 turns right (north). Turn left (the opposite way to Loop 108) along Rettillon Road. At the beach, if conditions permit, turn right (west) about 1/2 mile to the vehicle barrier. It takes at least one and a half hours to drive from the Golden Triangle. We will leave the vehicle barrier at about 8:45 a.m., although the group will be visually obvious on the flats should you be a few minutes later than that.

Some walking is necessary on this field trip. How much depends on how much mud flat is exposed. Depending on the mud flat conditions, we may visit to the North Jetty to view the birds from that side.

We normally stop at Fort Travis Park to eat lunch and use the facilities. We expect to stop at Rollover Pass and perhaps at High Island on the way back. We will check in High Island for any "very early" Neotropical songbird migrants. Bring drinks and lunch (or buy locally, but that is not particularly easy), sunscreen and insect repellent.



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)

## Calendar (cont.)

**Saturday March 28, 2015. Sabine Woods Work Day.** We plan to get the Sabine Woods Sanctuary ready for spring migration. Mostly, it will be trail maintenance both inside and outside the woods. The winter has been wetter than in most recent years (if somewhat colder also) but there will likely be significant growth by March 28. We will certainly be able to put riding mowers (the heavier duty the better) to good use, and we will probably need push mowers to trim round the trees we have planted in the last few years, and parts of the trails where riding mowers are too big. As always, we will need loppers to trim small branches to keep the trails open. We have a few hand tools, but it will help if you bring any that you have. You will want to bring insect repellent, and you may want to bring sunscreen.

Sabine Woods is 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on the north side of Highway 87. We will be there from about 7:30 a.m. but you will be welcome if you arrive somewhat later. We normally work until noon or a little after, and we will provide drinks and lunch. We plan another Work Day for mid-May. Call 722-4193 with any questions.

**Thursday April 16, 2015 Membership Meeting.** Terry Ferguson on Birds of New Mexico. Full details in next month's issue.

**Saturday April 18, 2015. Field Trip to Sabine Woods and Sabine Pass.**

This trip will look for Neotropical migrants at the height of spring migration, and does not necessitate extensive walking.

We will assemble at Sabine Woods at 7:30 a.m. (You should be able to find the group if you are unable to be there quite that early.)

At Sabine Woods, there is a small parking area, with additional parking is improvised using the roadside verges.

Sabine Woods is on the north side of Highway 87, 4.1 miles west of the stop sign in Sabine Pass. Take Highway 87 from Port Arthur to Sabine Pass, turn right at the stop sign, and go 4.1 miles.

Fuller details of this trip will be published in the April *Brown Pelican*.

**Saturday May 9, 2015. Jefferson County Spring Migration Count.** We have been doing these counts since 1995. The count attempts to cover as much of Jefferson County as is reasonably possible. We welcome all participants, especially if you are able to count in the early morning from dawn through about 11:00 a.m. even if you would just like to cover your own neighborhood. 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 (409-722-4193 or [johnawhittle@aol.com](mailto:johnawhittle@aol.com)) for details or offers to help. We will be out of town May 1 through 4, but will respond to emails.

**Thursday May 21, 2015 Membership Meeting.** Stephan Lorenz on birds of the Brazilian Amazon.

**Saturday May 30, 2015. Field Trip to Hardin County:** 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 – Hooded, Kentucky, Pine, Prairie, Prothonotary and Swainson's 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.

The meeting 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.

## Membership Dues

To simplify our record keeping, all memberships now run from January through December. Membership dues remain at \$15 per year. You may pay at any membership meeting (checks preferred) or use the subscription/membership blank on the back page.

Dues for all members will be for the period ending on December 31. 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 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.

## Golden Triangle Audubon now on Facebook

Thanks to Kelley Sampeck, Golden Triangle Audubon has its own Facebook page. The page will include bird reports from the Golden Triangle area, meeting, field trip and other birding event announcements, and pictures. To participate, simply go to <http://www.facebook.com/GoldenTriangleAudubon/> and click the "Like" button to follow. Once you have "liked" the page, any posts to the page will show up in your newsfeed, and you will be able to post comments and pictures to the page. If you do not have Facebook but would like to send in bird reports/alerts for the page, you may email Kelley at [kpeck2487@gmail.com](mailto:kpeck2487@gmail.com). This Facebook page has proven to be a much easier method to distribute daily bird updates during migration.

## Field Trip to Cattail Marsh – 22 February 2015

Bad weather is the worst nightmare of any field trip coordinator so when rain was predicted for the Saturday of the February field trip, there was much trepidation among the more than twenty participants that showed up at Cattail Marsh. Luckily, the weather forecast proved much more ominous than the real weather of the day and the rain held off long enough for a great field trip. With ducks, eagles and lots of great birds, a few sprinkles could not keep the Golden Triangle birders from experiencing the wonders of Cattail Marsh.

Cattail Marsh is a man-created wetland used as the finishing touch for Beaumont's waste water treatment before the water is released back into the bayou. In addition to being a useful tool for cleaning up Beaumont's waste, the marsh is also a wonderful area for recreation. The roads atop the levees dividing up the different cells (ponds) are excellent for jogging, biking or horseback riding. And then there are the birds! Though there are good birds to be found at this location all year, the marsh really shines in winter when there may be thousands of waterfowl present along with the avian predators that rely on them for food. This makes Cattail Marsh one of the best winter birding destinations on the upper Texas coast with good species diversity and easy access to great birds.

Ducks are the main show at Cattail Marsh and they did not disappoint on this day. A few Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks flew out of the marsh early on and were not seen again. Green-winged Teal were by far the most common duck seen on the day and were quite accommodating giving great looks to all. Blue-winged Teal were not as numerous but were still easily found on the day while it took some looking before the first Gadwall were located. Gadwall are normally a very common duck at this location but seem to have preferred other haunts this winter. A few Mottled Ducks were noted on the day. This is the common marsh-breeding duck of the gulf coast but its population has experienced significant declines in recent years so it was nice to see the birds here. Northern Pintail is another duck species in decline though still a common wintering bird in this area. Several Northern Pintail were also seen on the trip with the elegant males contrasting with the plainer females. Northern Shovelers are a more common duck and were easily found by the group. A few American Wigeons were noted along with a number of beautiful green-headed Mallards. Among our area dabbling ducks (those ducks that feed by dipping their heads under the water but not fully diving), Cinnamon Teal are especially sought. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, they are a beautiful ducks with the drake dressed in

its cinnamon plumage with bright red eyes. Second, they are a western species that is only found in the area in small numbers. Cattail Marsh, however, seems to host a few every winter and this winter is no exception and a few of these spectacular ducks provided great looks.

Diving ducks are also well represented at Cattail Marsh. Lesser Scaup are often the most numerous and a few were present on the day of the field trip but the less common (in our area anyway) Greater Scaup was not to be found. Dapper black and white plumaged Ring-necked Ducks were also seen along with the more numerous Ruddy Ducks. A bit of diligent searching also produced a couple of Buffleheads. These tiny ducks are the smallest that occur in our area and are always a treat when they can be located.

Cattail Marsh is home to many other water birds besides just ducks. American Coots were numerous while their shyer cousins, the Common Gallinules, were located in smaller numbers. A few Black-necked Stilts were located along with several Killdeer and Least Sandpipers. White Ibis were common along with several Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets. A single Little Blue Heron was located as was a single Roseate Spoonbill. A highlight of the day was an American Bittern that jumped up from the near a levee in front of the group and flew over the marsh giving good looks at this normally reclusive bird. The trip also gave good looks at a number of other birds that are normally difficult to see, Sora, King Rail and Virginia Rail. All members of the rail family, these birds all dwell in marshes making them difficult to view under normal circumstances. On this day however, at least one of each of these species came out for good looks for the group. The King Rail was especially cooperative giving an extended good look to the assembled birders.

Raptors also gave a good display for the birders on this field trip. Red-tailed Hawks, the common soaring winter hawk of southeast Texas, was well seen on the day with several individuals present. Both Black and Turkey Vultures were located soaring overhead among the many gulls (all drawn by the proximity of both the sewage treatment plant and the Beaumont landfill. A pair of Bald Eagles has nested at Cattail Marsh for several years now and both of the adults were easily located on or near the large stick nest located near the top of a tall pine tree. Perhaps the most exciting raptor sighting of the day was of an adult Peregrine Falcon. This bird has been present much of the winter, preying on the waterfowl present. On this day, the group got the witness the falcon making numerous high speed dives at potential prey though it came up empty on them all.

As the weather closed in, most of the birders wrapped up the field trip and went their separate ways. A winter trip to one of the upper Texas coasts finest birding locations is always a good idea and the February field trip to Cattail Marsh certainly paid great birding dividends. With hundreds of ducks supplemented by waders, eagles and rails, it was worth risking a little rain! The following species were recorded by the trip leaders: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (11); Gadwall (10); American Wigeon (4); Mallard (6); Mottled Duck (2); Blue-winged Teal (35); Cinnamon Teal (4); Northern Shoveler (60); Northern Pintail (40); Green-winged Teal (750); Ring-necked Duck (15); Lesser Scaup (10); Bufflehead (2); Ruddy Duck (40); Pied-billed Grebe (4); Neotropic Cormorant (2); Double-crested Cormorant (2); American Bittern (1); Great Blue Heron (2); Great Egret (4); Snowy Egret (3); Little Blue Heron (1); Cattle Egret (25); Black-crowned Night-Heron (1); White Ibis (10); White-faced Ibis (3); Plegadis species Ibis (7); Roseate Spoonbill (1); Black Vulture (1); Turkey Vulture (35); Bald Eagle (2); Northern Harrier (4); Red-tailed Hawk (2); Peregrine Falcon (1); King Rail (3); Virginia Rail (6); Sora (6); Common Gallinule (20); American Coot (350); Killdeer (10); Black-necked Stilt (6); Lesser Yellowlegs (2); Least Sandpiper (15); Laughing Gull (100); Ring-billed Gull (150); Herring Gull (15); Mourning Dove (5); Red-bellied Woodpecker (2); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1); Downy Woodpecker (2); Northern Flicker (1); Eastern Phoebe (4); White-eyed Vireo (1); Blue Jay (3); Purple Martin (3); Tree Swallow (75); Carolina Chickadee (2); Carolina Wren (3); Marsh Wren (1); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (2); Ruby-crowned Kinglet (1); American Robin (50); Northern Mockingbird (1); European Starling (10); American Pipit (4); Orange-crowned Warbler (2); Common Yellowthroat (1); Pine Warbler (2); Yellow-rumped Warbler (15); Chipping Sparrow (12); Savannah Sparrow (1); Song Sparrow (2); Swamp Sparrow (2); White-throated Sparrows (1); White-crowned Sparrow (2); Northern Cardinal (2); Red-winged Blackbird (10); Boat-tailed Grackle (1); Great-tailed Grackle (5); Brown-headed Cowbird (4); American Goldfinch (8)

As an epilogue to the February field trip to Cattail Marsh, there was an extra bonus field trip extension carried out by a few of the birders. With the weather holding out as semi-cooperative (and after a satisfying lunch), the decision was made to head out to western Jefferson County to look for a few rarities that have been present there recently. Since the luck was good at Cattail Marsh maybe it would hold out for a little extra birding as well.

It has been a good winter for producing rare birds in Jefferson County. It started with an American Tree Sparrow that was a one day wonder on Pilot Station Road and continued on through a more persistent Say's Phoebe off of Big Hill Road. Western Jefferson County also produced its share of good birds with a Mountain

Bluebird reliably hanging out on McDermand Road and Couch's Kingbird on Lawhon Road. More recently, Lawhon Road has produced both a Harris's Sparrow and a wintering Dickcissel. The Harris's Sparrow is a close relative of the White-crowned Sparrow but unlike the latter species is quite hard to come by in Jefferson County. It is not seen in the county every year so it is always a nice prize when someone locates one. The Dickcissel is a common bird in our area in the summer but is very rare as a wintering bird.

Arriving at Lawhon Road, the flooded fields nearby produced birds immediately. Northern Shovelers and Lesser Scaup swam in the ponds along with one Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and a few Northern Pintail. Larger numbers of American Coot also made their homes in these waters along with numerous White Ibis. A single Crested Caracara was stationed nearby while two immature Bald Eagles added to the trips bird bounty. A large flock of Tree Swallows zoomed overhead while a Common Yellowthroat called nearby.

Moving further down the road, White-crowned Sparrows were evident almost immediately. Searching through the small flock quickly paid off with one immature Harris's Sparrow feeding on the ground. The larger size of this bird along with the black on the face and throat were obvious and allowed easy identification of the Harris's Sparrow. A little more walking and looking through the sparrows present and up popped the Dickcissel as well! This was also likely an immature bird and probably female as the colors were muted.

A quick check of McDermand did not produce the hoped for Mountain Bluebird but this bird has become uncooperative of late. An Eastern Phoebe on a barbed wire fence and a quartering Northern Harrier rounded out the day. So two more great birds for an already great day rewarded the persistent birders who were willing to brave the questionable weather. With so many great birds seen in the area by February who knows what the rest of the year will bring.

#### **Lawhon Road List**

Mallard (2); Mottled Duck (2); Gadwall (2); Northern Shoveler (35); Northern Pintail (5); Lesser Scaup (15); Ring-necked Duck (5); White Goose sp. (15); Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (1); Great Blue Heron(1); White Ibis (15); American Coot (50); Mourning Dove (8); Turkey Vulture (3); Northern Harrier (1); Red-tailed Hawk (2); Bald Eagle (2); Crested Caracara (1); American Kestrel(2); Belted Kingfisher (1); Eastern Phoebe (3); Red-winged Blackbird (3); Vesper Sparrow (1); Song Sparrow(1); Savannah Sparrow (2); Harris's Sparrow (1); White-crowned Sparrow (15); White-throated Sparrow (1); Dickcissel (1); Purple Martin (1); Tree Swallow (50); Loggerhead Shrike (3); Common Yellowthroat (2); Yellow-rumped Warbler(5); Northern Mockingbird (2)

*Steve Mayes*

# Village Creek Bioblitz

**March 27– 29, 2015 – Lumberton, Tx**

## **Goals**

- Document the biodiversity of Village Creek and Village Creek State Park
- Share strategies for detecting and identifying species with experts
- Raise awareness of local biodiversity and unique species
- Demonstrate the power of Citizen Science

## **Scope**

The target of this bioblitz is Village Creek State Park, and parts of Village Creek in Hardin County. While any observation made in Hardin County between March 27th and 29th will count, please respect park rules, do not trespass on private property, and always obtain permission before posting observations on private property.

## **How can you participate?**

1. Download the Texas Nature Trackers App, or the iNaturalist App
2. Make observations of as many species as you can between March 27th and the 29th
3. Join one of the official bioblitz activities lead by an expert
4. Monitor the bioblitz feed and validate incoming observations

**Activities to include:** Orientation and overview of project, evening herp walk, Village Creek paddle trip from Baby Galvez to 96 bridge (observations for all taxa), plant walk/observation hikes, fish survey of sloughs within Village Creek SP, black light set up and field photography demonstration, night fish surveys, fish and herp inventory of Mandy Lake. There will also be a review of the data on Sunday Afternoon. Note: All observations posted to iNaturalist count, you do not need to participate in an activity to contribute to the BioBLitz. All events will meet at the Pavilion in Village Creek State Park.

**Participating Experts:** Cliff Shackelford (birds), Jonah Evans (mammals, tracks), Sarah Robertson (fish), Melissa Casarez (fish), Ben Labay (fish), Adam Cohen (fish), Alex Wild (insects/photography), Andy Gluesenkamp (reptiles and amphibians), Jason Singhurst (plants), Marsha May (mussels), Clint Robertson (fish and mussels), Michael Warriner (invertebrates), and Ben Hutchins (invertebrates)

## **Find out more about the project at:**

[www.inaturalist.org/projects/village-creek-bioblitz](http://www.inaturalist.org/projects/village-creek-bioblitz)

**Or, by contacting:** Cullen Hanks, [Cullen.Hanks@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:Cullen.Hanks@tpwd.texas.gov), 512-656-1222

# Bird Sightings – February 2015

In this section of the Newsletter, we now generally limit the report to birds justifiably shown as rare or very rare on the local checklists for the week of the sighting, but we also try to mention any particularly high numbers as well as any sightings that may be of special interest for reasons other than those mentioned.

We have reviewed eBird and other submitted records for the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also reviewed, looking for very rare

or vagrant species only, records for nearby counties or parts of counties that are easily accessible to and often birded by birders in our core Golden Triangle Audubon area. These are Chambers, Galveston (High Island and Bolivar Peninsula only) and Liberty counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes (both west of the Calcasieu River only) in Louisiana.

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-more precise location if available – (number) – Observer(s) with comment on reason it is noteworthy, if applicable.

## Seen in our core Counties (listed above)

Greater Scaup	Feb 20	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (2) RL
	Feb 21	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (2) J&R
Surf Scoter	Feb 15	JEF-SRSP (19) SM
Northern Gannet	Feb 7	JEF-McFaddin Beach (7) JHH
	Feb 15	JEF-SRSP (93) SM
Reddish Egret	Feb 20	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (1) RL
	Feb 21	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (1) J&R
Green Heron	Feb 14	ORA (1) Sheila Ware
	Feb 19	ORA-Claiborn West (3) JA, Syeda Kazmi
American Woodcock	Feb 6	JEF-Big Hill Rd (1) Tony Frank
American Oystercatcher	Feb 9	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (1) Lydia Sund
	Feb 26	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (2) JHH
	Feb 27	JEF-Pilot Sta Rd (2) RL
Thayer's Gull	Feb 6	JEF-Pleasure Is (10) Tony Frank
	Feb 13	JEF-Pt Arthur landfill (1) RW
	Feb 27	JEF-Pt Arthur landfill (2) JAW
Lsr Black-backed Gull	Feb 13	JEF-Pt Arthur landfill (3) RW
Common Ground-Dove	Feb 6	JEF-WJC (3) JHH
	Feb 25	JEF-Nederland (2) HS
Red-cockaded W'pecker	Feb 21	HAI-Sandyland (1) JA, Brandon Hood (new location for species)
Say's Phoebe	thru Feb 8	JEF-Needmore Rd (1) multiple observers, continuing bird
White-eyed Vireo	Jan 31	JEF-SW (1) MC, TH
	Jan 31	JEF-Edgewater (2) J&R
	Feb 6	HAI-Lumberton City Park (1) JA
	Feb 21	JEF-Cattail Marsh (1) GTAS Field trip
	Feb 28	JEF-SW (1) MC
White-breasted Nuthatch	Feb 13	SAA-Ellen Trout Park, Lufkin (1) Louis Debetaz
	Feb 15	SAA-TX147 bridge (1) Phillip Hight
Mountain Bluebird	thru Feb 13	JEF-WJC (1) multiple obs
Northern Waterthrush	Feb 28	JEF-SW (1) JHH et al
Black-and-white Warbler	thru Feb 28	JEF-SW (1) multiple obs
Northern Parula	Feb 28	JEF-SW (2) JHH et al.
Harris's Sparrow	Feb 7	JEF-WJC (1) RW
	Feb 13-21	JEF-WJC (1) multiple obs
Henslow's Sparrow	Feb 6	JAS-Sam Rayburn dam tailrace (1) Phillip Hight
	Feb 19	TYL-Sundew Trail (1) JM
Dickcissel	Feb 13	JEF-WJC (1) JHH
	Feb 17	JEF-WJC (1) RL
	Feb 21	JEF-WJC (1) GTAS field trip

## Hummingbirds

Ruby-throated Humm.	Thru Feb 28	JEF-Nederland (1 male) JJW
	Feb 16	HAI-Lumberton (1 fem) JM
Broad-tailed Humm.	Feb 1 to 28	JEF-Nederland (1 male, 1 fem) JJW
Rufous Hummingbird	thru Feb 28	JEF-Nederland (1 fem) HS
	Feb 15	HAI-Lumberton City Park (1 male) JM
	thru Feb 16	HAI-Lumberton (1 male) JM

Rufous/Allen's Humm.	thru Feb 28	JEF-Nederland (1 fem) JJW
	Feb 2, 3	JEF-Nederland (1 fem) HS
	Feb 8	JEF-Nederland (1 fem) SM

## Nearby Counties (very rare species only)

Cackling Goose	Jan 28	CHA-Jenkins Rd (1) Dan Coleman
Canada Goose	Feb 17	CHA-Mont Belview (6) Odie Asscherick
Cattle Egret	Feb 13	SAA-Sam Rayburn
Ferruginous Hawk	Feb 1	CHA-TX124 S of Winnie (1) Jeremy Bensette
Thayer's Gull	thru Feb 14	CHA-Ash Lake (3) multiple obs
Iceland Gull	Feb 5	CHA/Harris Co-Ash Lake (10) Stephan Lorenz, Janet Rathjen
Pomarine Jaeger	Feb 18	CAM-offshore (4) Mac Myers, Dave Patton
Purple Gallinule	Feb 2	Anahuac NWR (1) Robert Scranton
Black-chinned Humm.	Feb 23	CHA-Baytown(1) David Hanson
Buff-bellied Humm.	Feb 14	GAL-High Island (1) Andy Jordan
Black-headed Grosbeak	Feb 14, 16	LIB-Liberty (1) Shelli Ellerbe

**Abbreviations used:** CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HS – Harlan; Stewart; JA – Jim Armacost; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle; JM – John Mariani; J&R – Jessica Barry and Randy Lewis; LIB – Liberty County; MC – Michael Cooper; RL – Randy Lewis; RW – Ron Weeks; SAA – San Augustine County; SM -- Steve Mayes; SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TH – Thomas Hellweg; TYL – Tyler County; WJC – West Jefferson County.

**Commentary:** Cinnamon Teal, while sought after by birders for their looks, have now reached the point where we can no longer consider them rare in our area, although sightings are concentrated at Cattail Marsh. As we noted last month, Redheads have been spreading east, and can no longer be regarded as rare. Birds have been reported from Big Hill Road, Sea Rim State Park and Cattail Marsh. Glossy Ibis are also being regularly reported, mostly but not exclusively from Cattail Marsh, where they can often be studied easily.

Common Loons have been reported from Lakes Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend in higher than normal numbers this winter. Thayer's Gulls have been reported locally from the Baytown area. Thayer's is a rare gull in Texas, or anywhere on the Gulf coast for that matter, but we most are early cycle immature birds and we wonder if many others are passed off by default as immature Herring Gulls.

The first Purple Martin to show up in the area this spring was reported on Feb 15 in Hamshire by Christine Sliva. This species is always the very first to arrive each spring. On the last day of the month, there were two Northern Parula seen in Sabine Woods. While one may well have been a bird that wintered there, the other was probably the first migrant to arrive across the Gulf. The Black-and-white Warbler was almost certainly the bird seen there frequently throughout the winter, while a Northern Waterthrush was probably a bird that wintered not very much further south.

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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 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..>