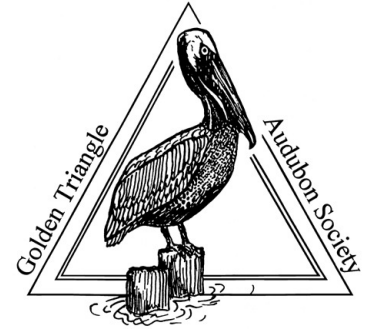


The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 21 No. 8

July/August 2015

**Membership Meeting
Thursday August 20, 2015 7:00 p.m.
Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont
Birds of Tanzania and Southern Kenya**

Presenter: Jana Whittle

According to the Birds of East Africa bird book by Stevenson and Fanshawe, there are over 1,388 bird species in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. Gene Marsh is the photographer who is letting us use his photographs to present a program about some of the birds that he has seen in East Africa. Gene served with the Port Neches police force for nearly 40 years and was the Chief of Police there when he retired. He has made 30 mission trips to Tanzania and Kenya, and if you add them all together, he has been there for 1 1/2 years. Two years ago when he was about to leave for a 90 day trip, I asked him to take some pictures of the birds there. I am very pleased and extremely grateful that he took many bird photos to share with us. At the August meeting you will be able to see about 80 of the different bird photographs he took.

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.

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Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Web Site for more information
www.goldentriangleaudubon.org

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Newsletter Editor

John Whittle (409-722-4193)

(Johnawhittle@aol.com)

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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. 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.

Thursday August 20. Membership Meeting. Birds of Tanzania and Southern Kenya. See p.1 for details.

Saturday August 22, 2015. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats. Tentative. Meet leader Steve Mayes at the vehicle barrier at Bolivar Flats at 8:30 a.m. Take Highway 124 south from Winnie about 20 miles through High Island. At the shoreline, turn right along Highway 87 and proceed approximately 25 miles through Gilchrist and Crystal Beach until you come to the intersection with Loop 108. At that intersection, turn left (south -- the opposite direction from Loop 108) on Rettilon Road to the beach. If conditions permit, drive onto the sand and turn right to the vehicle barrier (about 1/2 mile). It is about a 90-minute drive, with no allowance for stops, from Beaumont or mid-County to the Flats.

We will visit High Island on the way home, checking there for migrants.

You will need a Galveston County Beach Parking Permit, obtainable for \$10 from most merchants on the Peninsula (including the Big Store which opens at 7 a.m.) to park on the beach.

Saturday September 5, 2015 (tentative) Sabine Woods Work Day. We are planning a Work Day subject to conditions (weather, insect population) being acceptable. The large amount of rain in early summer resulted in luxuriant growth of both ground cover and shrubs. We have been able to have the "outside" areas brush hogged, but the trails need a lot of attention. In addition, three trees, all hackberries I think, have come down over trails, and will need to be removed, so we will

need at least one medium sized chain saw. Other particular needs this time will be riding mowers that will pass through the wider trails, but we will also need loppers to cut back the vegetation on the sides of the trails. Please put this date on your calendar and help us if you can. Sabine Woods is 4.1 miles west of Sabine Pass on Highway 87. We will start around 7:30 a.m. and work till about noon.

Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. **We need volunteers to bring items for all the fall 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) **as far in advance as possible.** Please help if you can.

Membership Meeting. Thursday September 17, 2015. Speaker: Nathan Londenberg, Superintendent, Sea Rim State Park.

Jefferson County Fall Migration Count. Saturday September 19, 2015. Contact John Whittle (johnawhittle@aol.com) or 409-722-4193) for details.

Field Trip to Smith Point Hawk Watch. Saturday September 26, 2015. Well meet in Smith Point at 8:30 a.m. Full details next month.



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

Spring Migration in Sabine Woods 2015

(This is the fuller version of this article, with additional comments on the various migratory species, and a table in which the print may be easily enlarged.)

In the early part of the season, there were a few days presaging the show that was to follow, marked by the presence of Black-and-white Warblers and Northern Parulas, and also waterthrushes. February 28 was a gloomy day, and March 5 was cold and windy, perhaps persuading the very earliest of migrants to descend at the coastline. A light rain on March 10 settled in to a steady rain the following day, producing an early five-day migration event that saw a good showing of early migrants, especially on March 12, with some holdovers on March 13 and 14.

A forecast rain event on March 18 did not happen, but a number of migrants dropped in late in the afternoon nonetheless. A rain event did occur on March 21 – six inches of it – and there were lots of migrants in the Woods the following two days trailing off to a few on March 24 leading to a relatively slow period from March 24 through April 3 as south winds prevailed.

A north wind on April 4 had a significant effect the following day with holdovers the day after that, followed by a couple of slow days, and then one very slow day before probably the best two extended periods of the season. A cold front on April 10 brought rain from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. and with it, lot of grounded migrants. The cold front stalled in the area for three or four days, producing excellent diversity and numbers of migrants. The canopy birds had left by April 13, but ground dwelling species were still plentiful. By April 16, there were few migrants left. However, rain from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. caused by a line of weather offshore moving northwest led to an excellent diversity and good numbers after the rain stopped. By the next day, many birds had already left, but birding was good, with a few new arrivals.

Rain overnight April 17/18 led to great birding day with an excellent selection of warblers as well as thrushes, although there was little evidence of new arrivals. April 19 saw a great variety of species, albeit with relatively low numbers, but with thrushes, tanagers and orioles more prominent than in prior days. Rain later that evening led to excellent variety but small numbers the following day, with Swainson's Thrushes obvious. On April 21, the first Bay-breasted Warblers showed up, along with a few of most other migrants. The next three days were relatively slow. April 23 brought larger birds and Northern Waterthrushes, but still a good variety of other species. April 24 was a very slow day in was the heart of the migration season. The threatened rain held off until the following morning, as an upper level impulse from the west passed by. After the rain stopped, the afternoon brought an excellent diversity of species, but still low numbers. Despite another upper level disturbance and some showers just offshore, April 26 was a very slow day.

A line of showers on the morning of April 27 had no significant effect on migrants, but a storm that passed through from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. did. After the storm passed, there were warblers everywhere, and those few birders who had waited out the storm were treated to large numbers of Golden-winged, Cerulean and Blackburnian Warblers as well as the species expected to be more numerous such as Chestnut-sided and Magnolia Warblers and Ovenbirds. The Bay-breasted Warblers somehow waited until the following morning to show up, along with a couple of Canada Warblers, but there was scant evidence of any new arrivals. Many of the Bay-breasted Warblers left overnight April 28-29, but despite a northerly component to the wind, there were few new arrivals on April 29.

Strong south winds across the entire Gulf of Mexico led to the slowest birding we can ever remember for late April/early May from April 30 through about May 10, although there were mid-afternoon arrivals or more likely brief stopovers on May 4, 5 and 6. The

weather across the nation on May 10 was bizarre with a blizzard in Denver, a tropical storm in North Carolina and tornados in North Texas and Oklahoma, but nothing to excite at Sabine Woods. A line of showers passing through Sabine Woods in the early-afternoon of May 11 led to a show that was in contention with those of April 16 and April 27 as the best birding of the season. Perhaps to be expected, many of the migrants left during the night, and May 12 was still very good, but it was downhill after that, as the season came to a close.

In the tables that follow, we present a listing of the principal migrant species seen in Sabine Woods this spring. The number shown for each species on each day is the *highest number* that was reported in any credible report. This is different from other typical analyses, which often merely sum the numbers reported on all reports. We believe the methodology employed here presents a more accurate picture, as we have a greater number of reports for the days in the peak of migration. We have reviewed all reports with a critical eye before including them in the analysis. Reports from a single observer or group of observers that included species that were significantly early or significantly late but included no details (or photographs) that indicated that the observer or group knew that the species were unusual or rare on the date were not included unless the species was reported on multiple independent reports for that date. Reports showing numbers of each individual species greatly in excess of those reported by other observers were not used. Similarly, reports with multiple questionable identifications in the same report were not used.

We especially thank John Haynes for all his reports, and for the descriptions of the day's events included in his eBird reports. We thank the following for many reports throughout the season: Jessica Barry, Michael Cooper, Howard Davis, John Haynes, Thomas Hellweg, Randy Lewis, John Mariani, Steve Mayes, Harlan Stewart, Ron Weeks, and John Whittle. We also used reports posted on eBird by the following: Mary and Kenneth Able, Jim Armacost, Bob and Bettina Arrigoni, Carroll Belser, John Berner, Gary Binderim, Matt Brady, Craig Browning, Laura Bunton, Geoff Butcher, Larry Carpenter, Lynn Chapman, Chris Charlesworth, Fred Collins, Janet Cook, Katherine Cupps, Mary de Grood, Hans and Kristi de Grys, Drew Dickert, Philip Edmundson, John and Sue Ewan, Nathan Farnau, Joe Fischer, Shannon Fitch, Patricia Folsom, Laurie Foss, Tony Frank, Mary Frey, Andy Garcia, Stephen Gast, Sid Gauthreaux, Martin Gebauer, Christian Gras, Dana Green, Thomas Haase, David Hansen, Ken Hartman, Michael Harvey, Cliff Hendrick, Rachel Herman, John Houle, Cynthia Hughes, Duane Huval, Patsy Inglet, Tom Jackson, Tom Johnson, Susan Jarnagin, Phil Jeffrey, Tom Johnson, Imre Karafiath, Delaney Kempf, Missy McAllister Kerr, Kendra Kocob, Michael and Sarah Kuzio, Sharon Lane, Debbie Layer, Dwayne Litteer, Art MacKinnon, Brad Macurda, Bert and Louise Marcom, Nate McGowan, Candy McNamee, Steve Mechis, Leo Miller, Dave Milsom, Arman Moreno, Derek Muschalek, Janet Neath, Bret Newton, Sue Orwig, Eddie Owens, Chris Perkins, Greg Page, John and Linda Prentice, Craig Rasmussen, Helen Rejzek, Melissa Roach, Michelle Romy, Cindy Rubens, Chris Runk, Beck Runte, Cameron Rutt, David Rymal, Todd Sahl, David Sarkozi, Mark Scheurman, Jeff Sexton, Roger Shaw, Ryan Shaw, Dennis Shepler, Sue Orwig, John Sharp, Jane Tillman, Robert Thacker, Daniel Thompson, Sei Tokuda, Christine Turnbull, Lewis Ulrey, Jenny Vogt, Sandi Wheeler, Tim White, Bob Wilcox, Cathy Williamson, Laura Wilson, Rachel Wrenn.

Discussion of Species and Numbers

Flycatchers

Of the Empidonax flycatchers, the season was notable for the unusual number of Acadian Flycatchers that were seen. Most other Empids pass through late in the spring season and don't usually hang around, but there were a couple of early "Traill's" type flycatchers on April 17 and 29. Although there seem to be more Scissor-tailed Flycatchers around Jefferson County this summer, and fewer Eastern Kingbirds, the converse was true at the Woods. Great Crested Flycatchers, however, were very vocal all season, and are almost certainly nesting in the Woods this year.

Every year, Eastern Phoebes are reported from coastal locations through late in April whereas the finding of experienced local birders along the coast is that they are gone essentially by the end of March. It is easy to envisage that a flycatcher seen briefly may be (mis)identified without much attention as a Phoebe and not a Pewee, owing to the similarity in appearance and even the call notes of some of the birds. Eastern Phoebes certainly regularly breed less than 100 miles north of the Upper Texas Coast, and no doubt there are occasional birds that are still in or pass through coastal locations late in April. However, we have included in the table only two sightings, in parenthesis to indicate our concern, in April. These sightings were by birders experienced in local coastal birding, but the species was not reported by any of the several other experienced local birders present in the Woods on those days (April 12 and 20). Visiting birders from locations where the species regularly breeds may not realize that the species is downright rare on the coast in April. We would encourage anyone finding an Eastern Phoebe in April on the coast, particularly after the first few days of the month, to treat it as a rare species and attempt to obtain good documentary evidence.

Vireos

Blue-headed Vireos regularly winter in Sabine Woods, so the early sightings in the tables through about the end of March, and probably the first few days of April likely represent birds that have wintered in the vicinity or not too far south. The sightings typically taper off towards the end of March, but we notice they pick back up again in April. These presumably represent other populations, presumably wintering further south – the species regularly winters south to Nicaragua – that are truly Neotropical migrants. This year, it almost appears as if there was one group passing through in a period centered on April 10 and another centered on April 20.

This was a good year for Philadelphia Vireos, but less so for Warbling Vireos, the reverse of previous years which had seen a steady increase in Warbling Vireos. White-eyed Vireos, which winter locally in modest numbers, showed a normal pattern, with good numbers being evident in the middle two weeks of April. Red-eyed Vireos were missing in early April but in good numbers on through the end of the season, with good numbers in May as seems to be usual. Also as usual, Yellow-throated Vireos migrated through from mid-March to early in May.

Kinglets and Thrushes

We include Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, winter resident species rather than passage migrants, in the table to demonstrate the pattern of departure from early April through about April 20.

The migration of Wood Thrushes spanned the period from about April 10 through the end of the month, perhaps starting a little later than normal. Swainson's Thrush migration began on schedule towards the middle of April, and extended through April with

significant numbers of straggler in early May. Accurately counting the relatively high number of Gray Catbirds present, despite or perhaps because of their skulking yet noisy habits, is difficult but as usual, their presence was demonstrated from early in March through as long in May as our observers were there.

Warblers

The focus on many birders during spring migration, there are more members of the Wood Warbler family than any other involved in this migration in our area. There are well over 30 species that can be expected each year, and the best days often produce 25 species in a single day.

Ovenbirds seemed significantly more plentiful this year with April 27/28 a very pronounced peak. A flight of Worm-eating Warblers in late March was followed by appreciable numbers through about April 20, but overall numbers were back to normal after an exceptional number last year. Normally, only the birders who start looking early in the spring are successful in finding Louisiana Waterthrushes, and the species can normally be found in migration through March and into early-April. This year was abnormal and carefully identified Louisiana Waterthrushes continued to pass through up to at least April 21. Northern Waterthrushes seen on February 28 and March 6 were likely a bird or birds that wintered relatively close to Southeast Texas. Regular migrants started to pass through April 9, giving birders a relatively long period to compare both species in close proximity.

Blue-winged Warblers got off to a very late start this year, and it was April 10 before the species really began to be seen every day, at least a week later than usual. It was a very good year for Golden-winged Warblers, with 41 reported during the second half of April, at least double what is typical. This included April 27, when conservatively 10 were seen. Two Brewster's Warblers, the hybrid between these two species were seen.

Good numbers of Black-and-white Warblers were recorded, stretching as usual from the end of February through mid-May.

Prothonotary Warbler numbers, especially in the first half of March, have tended to be highly variable over the years. This year, there were relatively small numbers March 12-15 and March 24-28 and others scattered through April, for a near normal total.

What to say about Swainson's Warblers? Certainly, there is some possibility that our regular observers have become more adept at locating this secretive species in Sabine Woods. Most sightings are carefully noted, and the species tends not to wander far within the Woods, so the number of birds present is known with more certainty than for any other warbler species. This year's total was an astonishing 40 birds, with six on two separate days (April 5 and 18), as compared to less than 20 in recent years, and less than the highest in any previous year of 30. There is a tendency for birds of this species to remain for more than one day, and in the same location within the Woods, so the total does include the same bird counted on two or more successive days. But then, so do the previous years' totals. Tennessee Warblers were perhaps slightly less numerous than in a typical year. We include Orange-crowned Warblers, a common wintering species, in an attempt to document their departure dates. However, we must note that possible confusion between Orange-crowned and Tennessee Warblers is a problem.

Nashville Warbler is a circum-Gulf migrant (meaning that it skirts round the Gulf rather than crossing non-stop from the Yucatan as most species do), and so we do not expect to see many in the spring, as it requires a sharp right (east) turn prior to reaching the Houston area for one to reach Sabine Woods. However, most of the Eastern population breeds well east of the Mississippi, albeit as far

north as the Great Lakes, so there is some inborn tendency to head somewhat east. Nashville Warblers were seen March 18 through 23 – early, and perhaps the same bird staying over – and a few others later. Mourning Warbler is likewise a circum-Gulf migrant, and one that migrates late in the season. We found only one this spring.

Kentucky Warblers seemed plentiful this year, from the second week in April onwards. Although Common Yellowthroats are present in Sabine Woods year round, and almost certainly breed there, we tabulate sightings because there are considerable numbers that pass through as migrants, especially in April. There are always days in the spring when Hooded Warblers are everywhere. April 10-20 was the peak time this year, with 45 reported on April 12.

American Redstarts always wait until a few days into April to start passing through. Numbers this year were normal. There were high counts April 11-15, but the highest of the years were the 55 and 50 recorded May 11 and 12. Only one Cape May Warbler was seen in the Woods this year (on May 4). Cerulean Warbler is a much sought after species that passes through in the second half of April. This year's 23 was about normal for recent years.

The arrival of a Northern Parula is normally the first sign that spring migration is about to begin. A good fraction of those we see pass through in March, but there are usually a few stragglers on into May. Magnolia Warblers on the other hand usually do not start coming through in any numbers until late in April. This year's peak was during the May 11/12 event, with 55 on May 11. Bay-breasted Warblers are thought of as having one of the narrowest migration windows of any warbler species, but this year continued what seems to be trend to a wider window, with birds being seen from April 20 through May 20 peaking with 23 on May 11. Blackburnian Warbler numbers were comparable to last year, and spread out over most of April and May, but with a high peak of 20 on May 11.

Yellow Warblers got off to a relatively slow start, but good numbers throughout May brought the overall total up to normal or a little above. Chestnut-sided Warbler totals benefitted from good numbers on April 27/28 and again on May 11/12. Blackpoll Warblers were tough to find last year, but much easier this year with 28 birds spread from April 11 through May 11, but with only one seen during the May 11/12 event.

Palm Warblers did not winter in any numbers in the Woods or vicinity this year, and numbers of migrants were comparatively modest with 87 records between the last week in March and the third week in April. Yellow-rumped Warblers are shown to illustrate the departure pattern of wintering birds, although most recorded actually wintered elsewhere but likely not too far away. Three examples of the Audubon's race were seen on April 20, 22 and May 1.

Yellow-throated Warblers are likely to be found from mid-March to at least mid-April, and numbers this year both fit that pattern, and were normal in total number. Prairie Warbler is another circum-Gulf migrant, although breeding as near the coast as just north of Silsbee. Very rare as a spring visitor to Sabine Woods, this year, three were detected on April 11, 12 and 14. Apart from one on March 22 – perhaps one wintering much further north than normal – Black-throated Green Warblers got off to a very late start, with no others showing up until April 10, at least 10 days later than usual. But when all was said and done, the total number recorded was close to normal. Canada Warbler is yet another circum-Gulf migrant, much more numerous on the return trip in the early fall. A total of 21, centered on late April, was within norms. Two years ago, Wilson's Warblers were always in the Woods during spring migration, presumably birds that wintered there, but there were not any confirmed sightings last spring nor this spring. (We need sightings to be backed up by an indication that the field marks that separate female Hooded Warblers from Wilson's Warblers were seen, or that the birds were identified by two or more independent observers on the same day.)

Yellow-breasted Chats, almost all heard rather than seen, were much more numerous this year after two years of low numbers. Likely, this year represented a return to normal.

Tanagers

Summer Tanagers began to pass through as usual in the second week in April, and continued through the middle of April, with a total that was very much normal. Historically, the migration pattern for Scarlet Tanagers is offset such that they are about a week later than Summer Tanagers, but this year and for the last two years, the offset has not been evident, and the windows for both species were virtually indistinguishable.

Grosbeaks and Buntings

We recorded somewhat fewer Rose-breasted Grosbeaks this year, but in a normal pattern, beginning the second week of April. We do show Blue Grosbeaks in the table, although they are much more a ground and open country bird rather than arboreal, and thus our sightings in Sabine Woods, with varying management of the open areas, may not be a good indicator of the numbers actually passing through. Much the same could be said of Indigo Buntings, although this year's totals were very normal. Likewise, we record Painted Buntings, a much admired species, but in addition to migrating through, some remain to breed, and a few winter in some years. So we draw no conclusions from what we do see in spring migration.

Orioles

Orchard Oriole were seen from early April on, but significant numbers breed in the immediate vicinity of the Woods, and are thus reported day after day, and we cannot use the numbers for any analysis. Baltimore Orioles have a discrete migration window, from the middle of April through the first week of May. This year conformed to that pattern and the total number was normal.

2015 Migration - Sabine Woods

NAME	ABBREV	28	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	MAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	AP 1-15	16	17	
Nbr Reports		6	1	1	3	1	2	2	4	4	3	1	4		6	5	5	5	2	2	5	6	8	3	2	1	TOTAL	2	2	4	9	8	6	3	3	6	9	11	15	3	8	6	TOTAL	5	7	
Prothonotary Warbler	PROW							3	3	3	1							3	3						1	24				1	6	5	4				2	2	6	2	3	2	33	1	3	
Swainson's Warbler	SWWA																													6	4	1	1				5	3	2	2	1	25	1	3		
Tennessee Warbler	TEWA																													1	7				1	15	16	12	8	7	10	77	25	8		
Orange-crowned Warbler	OCWA	18	7	6	15	3	6	7	8	8	7	1	5		7	6	8	5	5	2	2	4	3	2		135	4	2	3	4	4	4		1		2	4	2		2	2	34				
Nashville Warbler	NAWA												1		1	1	1	1								5											(1)		1		2					
Mourning Warbler	MOWA																																													
Kentucky Warbler	KEWA																		1							1	1				4	2				1	3	5	21	8	5	5	55	6	10	
Common Yellowthroat	COYE	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	3	2	4		2		3	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1			43	1		1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	6	3	2	3	30	3	6		
Hooded Warbler	HOWA						1	1	1				10		1	1	6	10	7	1	2	6	7	1	1	56	3	1	2	10	20	18	3	1	2	8	12	45	26	20	16	187	16	26		
American Redstart	AMRE																														2	4	1	2		4	4	4	2	1	4	28		5		
Cape May Warbler	CMWA																																													
Cerulean Warbler	CERW																																					1		5	1	7		4		
Northern Parula	NOPA	2	2	1	1	3	21	18	12	9	4		8		3	3	4	6	10	1	3	11	5			127	2		2	4	12	9	2			5	5	2	3	12	5	63	5	4		
Magnolia Warbler	MAWA																																											3		
Bay-breasted Warbler	BBWA																																													
Blackburnian Warbler	BLBW																														1	1					3		2		12	2	1			
Yellow Warbler	YWAR																																		1			4	1	6	7	19	11	4		
Chestnut-sided Warbler	CSWA																																						1	1	2	1	2			
Blackpoll Warbler	BLPW																																				1		1		2	1	2			
Black-throated Blue Warbler	BTBW																																													
Palm Warbler	PAWA		1	3								1						1	1	1		3	3	1	2	17	7	5	4	4	8	7	1	3	3	4	6	6	2	2	4	66	2			
Palm Warbler Western	PAWE			"(3)																		"(2)	"(1)							"(2)	"(5)	"(4)		"(2)		"(5)	"(6)	"(1)	"(1)							
Palm Warbler Eastern	PAEA																"(1)					"(1)									"(1)	"(1)				"(1)										
Pine Warbler	PIWA			1																						1																				
Yellow-rumped Warbler	MYWA	3	5	3	1	2	2	4	3	12	10	10	8		4	1	3	5	8	6	11	11	10	4	5	1	132	18	11	8	15	25	10	2	2	1	4	4	2		3	1	106	2		
Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler	AUWA														1		1									2																				
Yellow-throated Warbler	YTWA						1		2	1		7			1	1	7	3			1	4	3			31				1	5	3	1			2	2	2	1	3	20	1	1			
Prairie Warbler	PRAW																																				2	1		1	4					
Black-throated Green Warbler	BTNW																1									1											3		2	1	5	6	17	7	7	
Canada Warbler	CAWA																																											(1)		
Wilson's Warbler	WIWA																																													
Yellow-breasted Chat	YBCH																																			1	1	2	3	1		1	9	1	3	
Summer Tanager	SUTA																											1			1	2	1			6	7	18	20	3	5	64	9	8		
Scarlet Tanager	SCTA																															1					4	2	6	1	2	6	22	14	4	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	RBGR																																			2	5	8	11	2	1	2	31	10	14	
Blue Grosbeak	BLGR					1	1																			2										1	2	6		1	1	12		2		
Indigo Bunting	INBU															1		1	1	2	2	2				9			1		11	8	1			2	35	12	17	13	5	16	121	22	20	
Painted Bunting	PABU																																			1	9	2	1	7	2	3	25		4	
Dickcissel	DICK																																													
Bobolink	BOBO																																													
Bronzed Cowbird	BROC																																						1			1				
Orchard Oriole	OROR																								1	2	3	7	10	6	4	6	15	4		6	49	45	55	50	10	28	295	30	40	
Baltimore Oriole	BAOR																															2						1	1	12	6	4	6	32	8	6
TOTAL		112	91	96	125	51	142	176	286	247	172	42	186		157	100	220	305	196	93	176	512	164	62	89	23	3823	153	110	95	170	574	278	85	62	132	377	380	601	329	309	347	4002	455	727	

2015 Migration - Sabine Woods

NAME	APR													AP15-30	MAY													MAY TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL											
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Nbr Reports	15	11	8	4	7	6	12	13	5	5	5	5	1	TOTAL	16	10	5	1	3	4	4	1	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	TOTAL	TOTAL	
Green Heron	2	2	2	1		1	2	3	1				1	27	1				5	1				1	1	3												14	100	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		1	1					1						4										2														2	65	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	2	2	1	3	3	2	2	2		2	2	1		31	2	1	1		2	1	2	1	3		8	4	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	3			41	85	
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	(1)				(1)								4																									4	
Barn Owl																																							29	
Great Horned Owl																																							75	
Common Nighthawk	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	1	2	14	5		44	3	1	1		2	1			2			4	1	2	1	1		1	1	2			23	75		
Chuck-will's-widow		1	1								1	1		4	1	1																						2	6	
Eastern Whip-poor-will																																								
Chimney Swift	4	2	11	8	4	2	3	4	1	2	3	3		55	10		2		2	4	2	1	3		6	5	1		1					3			40	112		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	25	25	30	13	20	14	14	28	10	20	22	20	4	299	6	5	2	5		2			1	1	3		3										28	470		
Archilochus Hummingbird																																							3	
Belted Kingfisher	1	1	1		1	1	1		1					9	1								1															2	17	
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	1		1		1	1		1			1	1		8	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1				1						12	44		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	2	1		1	1					1	1	1	11	2	1	1		1		1		1		1	1								3			11	66		
Melanerpes Woodpecker		1	1		1	1				1	1			6			1							1		1		1						1			5	25		
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	1	2	1	2	2					1	1	1	16		1																					1	51		
Downy Woodpecker	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	33	3		2	1	2	2	1		2	1	2	1		1			3	1					22	194		
Northern Flicker																																						24		
Olive-sided Flycatcher								2						2																								3	3	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	5	13	6	4	4	5	8	1	12	10	6	2	88	3	2	2	8	2	6	5	4	5	2	22	10	3	6	2	3	4	3		1	1	94	196			
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher												1		1		1	1							2													4	5		
Acadian Flycatcher	6	2	6	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	4	4	1	42	2									12	2	1	1				1						19	72		
Alder Flycatcher							(1)							(1)										1													1	1		
Willow Flycatcher												1		2	1	1	(1)																				2	2		
Trill's Flycatcher	(1)											1		2	1									3	2	1	1										8	10		
Least Flycatcher	1		3	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2		20	1		1	1				1		1	1			1									7	30		
Empidonax species	3	5	5	1	1		2	2	1	3	2	2	1	34	1	1	1			1	1			1	5	5	1	1									18	57		
Eastern Phoebe		(1)																																					108	
Great Crested Flycatcher	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	4	4	3	2	45	5	2	4	2	2	4	2	3	6	4	3	5	3	4		2	3	1	7				62	144		
Western Kingbird															2	2	1																					5	5	
Eastern Kingbird	5	6	10	14	6	12	6	15	4	8	7	7	6	122	6	14	5	21	8	16	4		6	2	20	15	1	8		2		5		1			134	400		
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	4	1	1			2	1		3					16	2	1	2		1																			6	37	
White-eyed Vireo	35	20	15	11	8	9	8	3	2		1	1		159	2	1								1	1													5	339	
Yellow-throated Vireo	3	3	4	2	3	3	1	2			5	4	3	42		(1)		1							3	1			1									6	101	
Blue-headed Vireo	1	2	1	1				4	1	1	2	2		19	1	1																						2	75	
Warbling Vireo	6	2	2			2	3	9	2	2	3	1		34		1																						1	42	
Philadelphia Vireo	4	1	4	1		3	2	5	1	14	15	8	2	61	1	1					5				7	2		5		1							22	83		
Red-eyed Vireo	9	7	5	11	11	8	5	6	3	10	12	10	1	124	3	4	2	1	6	9	4	1	7		80	45	10	6	10	1		3		1				193	410	
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2	1	1	1	2	3			1					20	1																							1	495	
Golden-crowned Kinglet																							1															1	3	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	4	3	3	3	3	1	1						37																										469
Veery		1			2	2	1	3			3	5	3	1	25	2	1	2	1			2	1			3	3	2	1	2								20	48	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	3	3	8	6	2	4	2	5	1	2	6	8	1	57	5	5	3	2				2			2	2	1					1						23	81	
Swainson's Thrush	25	14	30	20	10	10	10	24	6	15	15	17	10	232	10	12	14	8	2	1	2		4		6	40	5	4		1				1	1			111	358	
Hermit Thrush	(1)	(1)			(2)																																		25	
Wood Thrush	20	10	8	12	7	8	6	8	3	6	6	6	4	134	4	1	2	2		2	1				2	3												17	210	
American Robin	2	1												3											1													1	93	
Gray Catbird	75	18	20	21	18	35	30	45	7	27	47	50	18	464	12	10	10	13	10	45	50		12	2	10	22	15	11	6	10		3		1				242	799	
Brown Thrasher	6	10	5	4	3	4	5	4	2	4	4	3	5	75	5	3	4	2	1	2	1	1	4	1	2	3	2	2		2	2	3	1				41	344		
Northern Mockingbird	2	3	4	2	1	2	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	38	3	3	3	1	2	1	2		2	4	1	2		2						10			40	195		
Cedar Waxwing	8				22	85	80	50	16	124	21	23	14	443	12	45	120		65	28	60		15		15													360	933	
Ovenbird	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	6	1	21	12	6	3	78	5	3	1	1	1	3	1				7	4	3											29	134	
Worm-eating Warbler	10	4	3	2				1						36				1																						

Bird Sightings – June and July 2015

In this section of the Newsletter, we now generally limit the report to birds justifiably shown as rare or very rare on the published Upper Texas Coast checklist 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 all credible 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.

Summer presents some difficulties in deciding which species to include in this section. Many species are very rare in the coastal counties, but less so in the Big Thicket and other localities away from the coast. For a very few the reverse is true. In the absence of any definitive lists, we have used our best judgment in making our decisions

Seen in our core Counties (listed above)

Northern Shoveler	Jun 24	JEF-TP (2) HS (Rare in summer)
	Jul 3	JEF-TP (2) SM
Wild Turkey	Jun 2	JAS-Boykin Springs (1) Bret Newton
Wood Stork	Jul 5 on	JEF-Hwy 90 Nome (up to 100 reported regularly thru end on July)
Magnificent Frigatebird	Jun 6	JEF-McFaddin Bch (1) JB, RL
Glossy Ibis	Jun 6 on	JEF-TP (up to 4) HS, SM. Seen thru Jul 22.
Osprey	Jul 18	TX87 betw. Pt Arthur and Sabine Pass (JB, RL). Rare in summer.
Swallow-tailed Kite	Jun 2 on	West Beaumont (1) RL; seen thru Jul 6
Mississippi Kite	Jun 5 on	Beaumont esp. Tyrrell Park/Cattail Marsh (up to 6) April Whitehead, HS, SM, JB, MC, RL, SM
Cooper's Hawk	Jun 20, Jul 4	JEF-Shangri La (1) JM
	Jun 14	JEF-Labelle/Fannett (1) SM
	Jun 28	JEF-WJC JB, RL
	Jul 3	HAI-Firetower Rd (1) Susan Heath
	Jul 18	JEF-PI S Levee (1) JHH
Broad-winged Hawk	Jun 14	JEF-LaBelle/Fannett (1) SM
	Jun 28	JEF-TP (1) HS
	Jul 9, 15	JEF-W. Beaumont (1) RL
	Jul 26	JEF-WJC (1) JB, RL.
Swainson's Hawk	Jun 14 thru Jul 7	JEF- WJC, Big Hill Rd, TP, Pt Acres. TX326, TX87Sabine Pass to Sea Rim April Whitehead, JB, RHRC, RL, SM
Red-tailed Hawk	Jun 14	JEF-LaBelle/Fannett (1) SM
	Jul 31	JEF-FM365 nr Central Mall (1) JAW. Rare in summer.
Purple Gallinule	Jun 30	TYL-MDSP Cherokee (1) Brent Ortego
American Avocet	Jun 20	JEF-SRSP (3) Greg Page
	Jul 18	JEF PI S Levee (19) JHH
	Jul 26	JEF-McFaddin Bch (3) JB, RL
Piping Plover	Jul 26	JEF-McFaddin Bch (3) JB, RL
Solitary Sandpiper	Jul 22	JEF-TP (1) HS
Upland Sandpiper	Jul 16	JEF-TX326 @US90 (10) JHH
	Jul 26	JEF-Tex A&M Res. (2) JHH, RL
Stilt Sandpiper	Jul 18	JEF PI S Levee (27) JHH
Pectoral Sandpiper	Jul 16	JEF TX326 @US90 (6) JHH
	Jul 16	JEF-Tex A&M Res. (3) JHH
Common Tern	Jun 6	JEF McFaddin Bch (7) JB, RL
	Jul 18	JEF-McFaddin Bch (1) JB, RL
	Jul 26	JEF-McFaddin Bch (3) JB, RL
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	Jun 14-17	JEF-Hamshire (1-2) CS
	Jun 15	JEF-Groves(1) Sherrie Roden
	Jun 18	JEF-Nederland (1) HS
	Jun 28	JEF-Hamshire (1) CS

	Jul 19	JEF-Fannett area (1) RL
	Jul 29	JEF- Nederland (1) SM
American Kestrel	Jun 27	TYL-BTNP Sundew (1) JM
	Jul 11	JAS-Ebenezer Park (1) MC
Western Kingbird	Jun 22	JEF-Big Hill Rd (1) RHRC
Red-eyed Vireo	Jun 22	JEF-LaBelle-Fannett (1) SM
N. Rough-wing. Swallow	Jun 6 on	JEF-TP on wires in Cattail Marsh (8 birds on Jun 6 rising to 326 on Jul 17).HS
Tree Swallow	Jun 6 on	JEF-TP on wires in Cattail Marsh (1, 2 or three birds rising to a high of 5 up to Jun 20; 30 on Jul 22, 35 on Jul 24 and 60 on Jul 27) HS
Cliff Swallow	Jun 6 on	JEF-TP on wires in Cattail Marsh (up to 40 in Jun, increasing to 146 by late Jul) HS (New location for species.)
Gray Catbird	Jun 2	JEF-SW (2) Howard Davis
	Jul 24	JEF-SW (1) Howard Davis
Black-and-white Warbler	Jul 24	JEF-SW (1) Howard Davis
Prothonotary Warbler	Jul 19	JEF-Fannett area (1) RL
	Jun 22	JEF-Claiborne West Park (1) Neil and Joni Cotham
American Redstart	Jun 2	JEF-SW (1) Howard Davis
Northern Parula	Jul 19	JEF-Fannett area (1) RL
	Jun 22	JEF-Claiborne West Park (1) Neil and Joni Cotham
Summer Tanager	Jun 22	JEF-Claiborne West Park (3 Neil and Joni Cotham

Nearby Counties (very rare species only)

Lesser Scaup	Jul 5	CHA-ANWR (1) Norman Welsh
Least Grebe	Jul 3	GAL-High Island 5th St. (1) J. Berner
Osprey	Jun 24	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Jana Singletary
Swainson's Hawk	Jun 28	CAM-Martin Beach (1) Rob Dobbs
Yellow-green Vireo	Jun 10-15	CAM-Peveto Woods (2) Jay Huner, Matt Pontiff, John Romano, Rosemary Seidler, JAW
Black-whiskered Vireo	Jun 12, 15	CAM-Peveto Woods (1) Matt Pontiff, Rosemary Seidler

Abbreviations used: ANWR – Anahuac NWR; BTNP – Big Thicket National Preserve; CAM – Cameron Parish, LA; CHA – Chambers County; CS – Christine Sliva; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JB – Jessica Barry; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JM – John Mariani; MC – Michael Cooper; MDSP – Martin Dies State Park; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Island; RHRC – Rene Hebert and Rita Czek; RL – Randy Lewis; SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TH – Thomas Hellweg; WJC – West Jefferson County.

Field Trip to Liberty Area – 1 August 2015

Birding in Southeast Texas in August has some challenges, but no fewer than 17 intrepid members and friends participated in the annual "Swallow-tailed Kite Trek" to the Liberty-Dayton area on August 1. Late each summer, Swallow-tailed Kites begin congregating in the Trinity bottomlands between Liberty and Dayton in preparation for their migration south to their wintering grounds in South America, centered on eastern Bolivia and the adjacent Amazon basin of Brazil. Some kites, mainly Florida breeding birds, have been fitted with radio transmitters and the current status and location of these birds is available on www.swallow-tailedkites.org.

One of the better locations to see the kites is along Highway 90 between Liberty and Dayton. Unfortunately, this is a busy high-speed highway, but the shoulders are wide, and we were able to pull well off the road when we found a kite. Dayton Police, who patrol this stretch intensively, are aware of its birding potential, and have (so far) been tolerant of us over the past few years. Perhaps we were a little early this year, but between all members of the field trip, we tallied only five Swallow-tailed Kites on a pass along the highway and back. The kites, as usual, tended to be quite low over the trees on either side of the highway, but good looks were eventually had by all.

There was a lot of rain earlier in the summer both in our area and in the Trinity River watershed to our north all the way to Dallas. There was extensive flooding of the lowlands that had fully subsided only a few days prior to our trip, and there were many wet areas visible. Always, there are other birds of the wet bottomlands to be seen, and there were a number of Anhinga exhibiting their characteristic flap-flap-flap-glide flight. Little Blue Herons were also very evident, and at least one Roseate Spoonbill was in the area. Numerous distant white egrets, likely a mixture of Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, were taking advantage of the remaining water.

Passing through northwest Liberty on our way to the Liberty Municipal Park, we saw several Mississippi Kites skimming the treetops in the residential areas. The Liberty Municipal Park is a nice open area with an excellent view back over the river bottomlands, and we have often seen both Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites from the park, but not immediately on this occasion. So after a short break, we proceeded to the trailhead for the Knobby Knees trail which runs from the northern boundary of the park through part of the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge. This trail runs through a moist, mainly cypress forest. Evidence that the trail had been under water until recently was hard to miss, and a very muddy area prevented us from completing the loop we have made in previous years. But there were some birds. Thankfully, mosquitoes were essentially non-existent, although Golden-orb Weaver spiders were especially numerous, but easily avoided.

Early on, a noisy Pileated Woodpecker announced its presence, but did not become visible. A Red-bellied Woodpecker was similarly a "heard only" bird. White-eyed Vireo was perhaps the most numerous species, with at least

two seen and several more heard. Perhaps a little surprisingly for August, Acadian Flycatchers were still calling and at least two were seen, along with another two or more heard only birds. A Red-shouldered Hawk called from somewhere north of us. The group was treated to a pair of Prothonotary Warblers, which energetically flitted all around us. A Yellow-throated Warbler was seen high up in a tree (as they are wont to be), while a Pine Warbler was similarly high in one of the few pine trees in the area. The almost inevitable Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Chickadee were also heard and seen. Through the trees we glimpsed an area with a large concentration of egrets and ibis, mostly Great Egret as far as we could tell, crammed into a very small area. This flock appeared to have found an evaporating pool in the forest that must have had lots of fish in it.

After completing the trail, the group took a leisurely stroll round the wooded eastern edge of the park. There we were treated to a flyover by a Sallow-tailed Kite and a Mississippi Kite. A Downy Woodpecker was high in a giant hackberry, while an adult and two juvenile Eastern Bluebirds were much lower down. Looking out to the west, there were some flocks of Cattle Egrets, a few Great Egrets and at least two White Ibis. On very distant flock wheeling over the bottomlands comprised about 30 Wood Storks. And there were at least three Purple Martins, a few European Starlings, and about 10 Northern Mockingbirds.

By this time, about 11:30 AM, it was beginning to get hot, and most of the group retired to the cool of the famous JAX Hamburgers in Liberty. It seemed that half the group was going on to somewhere further west, but many of the rest stopped by the now well established summer Wood Stork roost south of Highway 90 just east of the Liberty County line. It is totally unpredictable how many storks will be there on any given day at any particular time, but in the middle of this day, there were about 100 to be seen, even though there had only been about 30 there at 7:30 AM. We cannot fathom their "out feeding"/"roosting" pattern! Sometimes, one can pass by and see not a single stork. Other times, as this day, most of the storks were apparently roosting in the trees by the very early afternoon, when one might expect that they would still be out feeding. Perhaps the feeding area chosen that day, for they do vary their feeding areas, was exceptionally productive, and a full crop was easily achieved.

Birds reported during field trip: Anhinga (11); Roseate Spoonbill (1); White Ibis (7); Wood Stork (30); Great Egret (15); Little Blue Heron (2); Cattle Egret (15); Turkey Vulture (1); Black Vulture (1); Swallow-tailed Kite (4); Mississippi Kite (7); Red-shouldered Hawk (1); Downy Woodpecker (1); Pileated Woodpecker (1); Red-bellied Woodpecker (1); Acadian Flycatcher (4); European Starling (4); Purple Martin (3); White-eyed Vireo (5); Prothonotary Warbler (2); Yellow-throated Warbler (1); Pine Warbler (1); House Sparrow (3); Northern Mockingbird (10); Tufted Titmouse (1); Carolina Chickadee (1); Eastern Bluebird (3).

John A. Whittle