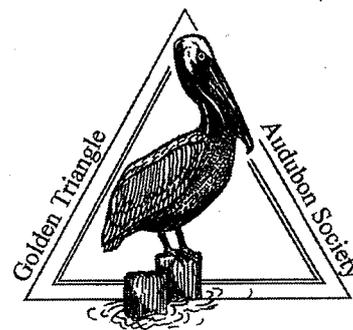


# The Brown Pelican



The Newsletter of the Golden Triangle Audubon Society

Vol. 24 No. 6

June 2018

## Summer Break!

**As usual, there will be no membership meetings in June or July. Our next meeting will be on THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Garden Center, Tyrrell Park, Beaumont, Texas. Details of the program will be published in the August issue of the *Brown Pelican*.**

**The next issue of the *Brown Pelican* will be a combined July/August issue, to be published in early August.**

## Audubon News

It is not often that we have space in the *Brown Pelican* for some National Audubon news. Most of what we do involves the very important task sometimes neglected in the larger Audubon entities of Inventory and Measurement. We are in a unique position to compile the all-important data on bird numbers that must be available to inform and support conservation actions. For example, we hope in the next issue to have a comprehensive analysis of spring migration locally.

The National Audubon website at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) will keep you informed of conservation issues at a national level. Here we present two brief items published on the web-site last month.

### Audubon Joins Carbon Capture Coalition

*As the first wildlife advocacy organization to join, Audubon brings unique perspective to the table.*

NEW YORK May 21, 2018 — “Audubon is committed to protecting birds and the places they need — and the greatest threat to birds and people is climate change,” said David Yarnold (@[david\\_yarnold](https://twitter.com/david_yarnold)), president and CEO of National Audubon Society.

“While some may be holding out for a perfect solution to climate change, we know that it will take an array of approaches to reduce planet-warming pollution.

“The Carbon Capture Coalition is pursuing many avenues—including a market-driven approach that has deep bipartisan support. Audubon is excited to be at the table with a range of voices exploring policy options that accelerate a reduction in carbon pollution,” Yarnold added.

The Carbon Capture Coalition is led by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions and the Great Plains Institute. With over 50 members ranging from the energy industry, agriculture, labor unions and conservation leaders, the coalition is non-partisan and solutions-oriented. Recently, the coalition successfully advocated for improving and extending the carbon capture tax credit, known as the 45Q tax credit, led by Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), John Barrasso (R-WY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV).

*Continued on page 3.*

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Issue number 251

Golden Triangle  
Audubon Society

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

**To contact any officer or board member, send an email to**  
[gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@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](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).*

**Saturday August 11. Field Trip to Liberty-Dayton Area.** This date is tentative. Please check the web-site a few days before.

During the first half of August each year, Swallow-tailed Kites congregate in the Trinity River bottomlands between Liberty and Dayton for two or three weeks before they migrate south for the winter.

We will meet at 8:00 AM at the McDonalds at 1923 Highway 90 in Liberty. This is on the north side of the Highway at the intersection with Travis Street, one block west of Main St/Highway 227. Carpooling is highly desirable on this trip. The part of the trip looking for kites does not **necessitate** extensive walking, although the group will probably do quite a bit on the trails. The trip will probably not last much beyond noon. Traditionally, many participants proceed to JAX Hamburgers in Liberty for lunch.

We will check the area along Highway 90 between Liberty and Dayton, perhaps several times, and also the Liberty Municipal Park area. There have been trail improvements and a new boardwalk has been constructed so that a section of the Trinity River NWR can be easily accessed from the Park. We will check that area for early southbound migrants and a few other songbirds that may well nest in that area. In addition to the Swallow-tailed Kites, there will be Mississippi Kites flying low in the residential areas of Liberty north of US 90. Depending on how wet the area is, there may be other birds characteristic of bottomlands.

For more information, contact Steve Mayes ([sgmayes@hotmail.com](mailto:sgmayes@hotmail.com)).

**Thursday August 16, 2018. Membership Meeting.** Details in next month's Brown Pelican and, nearer the time, on the website at [www.goldentriangleaudubon.org](http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org)

## Refreshments

Each month, we rely on volunteers to provide the refreshments at our membership meeting. We thank all those who brought refreshments over the last few meetings. **We need volunteers to bring items for all remaining fall meetings.** Pick the meeting at which you want to help. 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.

**Saturday August 18, 2018. Field Trip to Bolivar Flats.** Meet the leaders 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.

Usually, after birding the flats, the group proceeds to Fort Travis to use the facilities and eat lunch. Most participants will bring their lunch, as options to purchase are limited.

The group may stop at Rollover Pass and will probably visit High Island on the way home, checking there for early southbound migrants

*To park on the beach, you will need a Galveston County Beach Parking Permit, obtainable for \$10 from most merchants on the Peninsula. (The Big Store opens at 7:00 a.m.)*

## Carbon Capture Coalition *(cont. from page 1)*

"C2ES is honored to welcome The National Audubon Society to the Carbon Capture Coalition," said Jeff Bobeck, co-director of the Carbon Capture Coalition and director of energy policy engagement at C2ES. "Audubon is among the oldest, most recognized, and widely respected voices for conservation, and its unique perspective will be a valuable addition to the coalition. Audubon's commitment to solving climate change is rooted in a devotion to ensuring continued biodiversity, and its support illustrates a growing awareness that carbon capture is an essential and necessary tool to meet mid-century climate targets."

"We welcome the National Audubon Society to the growing list of participants in the Carbon Capture Coalition," said Brad Crabtree, co-director of the Carbon Capture Coalition and vice president for fossil energy at Great Plains Institute. "We are excited to partner with Audubon and their national grassroots network of members and staff to encourage policymakers to take further steps to support carbon capture and to promote its adoption in energy, industrial, and agricultural applications around the country."

Advancing carbon capture technology should be part of a comprehensive solution set to addressing climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, carbon capture is vital to meeting mid-century goals for reducing carbon emissions.

In 2014, Audubon published its Birds and Climate Change Report. The study shows that more than half of the bird species in North America could lose at least half of their current ranges by 2080 due to rising temperatures. These species include the Bald Eagle, the American Kestrel and the Northern Harrier.

Given the urgent threat climate change poses to birds and people, Audubon supports common-sense, bipartisan solutions that reduce carbon emissions at the speed and scale necessary to protect birds and the places they need.

To learn more about Audubon's Climate Initiative, including how members and supporters can take steps to help birds in a changing climate, please visit [www.audubon.org/climate](http://www.audubon.org/climate).

## Audubon is Suing the Federal Government to Protect Birds

Today we filed *Audubon v. Dept of the Interior*, a landmark lawsuit in federal court to defend our country's most important bird protection law—the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act 100 years ago in response to public outcry over the mass slaughter of birds for their feathers. At one point, an ounce of egret feathers was worth more than an ounce of gold—all to use for the fashion industry. Efforts to pass the law were led by Audubon chapters and ultimately became National Audubon's founding victory.

In December, bucking decades of policy and practice, the Department of the Interior declared it won't enforce the law for any unintentional bird deaths caused by industry. As you can imagine, many causes of bird fatalities—including oil spills—could fall into this "unintentional" category, so we're taking the administration to court.

The MBTA has inspired some businesses to lead the way with innovations that have saved birds by the million. It's rescued avian species that once verged on extinction. And it's held companies accountable for the bird deaths they cause, like in 2010's BP Deepwater Horizon disaster.

As Audubon members, you have always been what hope looks like to a bird. Now more than ever we need you to stand with us and help us defend the law that has protected the birds we all treasure.

*David Yarnold,  
President and CEO  
National Audubon Society  
May 24, 2018*

## Contacting Golden Triangle Audubon

All Officers, Board Members and other volunteers of Golden Triangle Audubon are just that, volunteers. We are a relatively small chapter and have no paid staff and no offices. In the past, these volunteers have made their contact information available to facilitate the work of GTAS. However, recently Google has begun to pick up some of this contact information and display it in search results in cases where Golden Triangle Audubon is not the appropriate entity to contact and where the appropriate contact information would be that of Audubon Texas or National Audubon Society, both of which have paid staff who can answer questions of a general nature. Consequently, since it is essentially impossible to directly contact any staff person at Google to attempt to correct the situation, we have removed most contact information from the Newsletter and the web site, and display only our PO Box 1292, Nederland, Texas 77627 address for US mail, and our generic email address of [gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com). Mail sent to either of these addresses will be forwarded to the appropriate GTAS contact as soon as reasonable possible.

If you already know the personal contact information of the individual GTAS volunteer you want to contact, please continue to use it. However, these volunteers experience the same barrage of robocalls and junk emails that you do, and many of them will only "live answer" calls from numbers they recognize. So please leave a message clearly indicating the subject of your call, or make sure the subject line of your email is explanatory, and you will be contacted by return.

Phishing emails have recently become much more frequent and much more sophisticated. In many cases, the sender's address and/or the reply to address is "spoofed" – that is, it is sent from some other server but made to look as if it came from the address shown in the email. This can be done even when access to the person's mailbox has not been compromised. Normally, GTAS sends messages from [gtaudubon@aol.com](mailto:gtaudubon@aol.com) (but the volunteer may choose to use his or her personal address for individual messages). If we send an email with an attachment, we will clearly indicate in the email what is in the attachment. Never click on a link in an email purporting to be from GTAS or one of our volunteers that has a weird and thus suspect URL and/or no explanation in the email of what the attachment is. If in doubt, send an email to the indicated sender asking if it is genuine.

# Spring 2018 North American Migration Count

The 2018 Spring Migration Count was held on May 12 in generally favorable weather. That the number of species found was low by the standards of most recent years was, of course, a disappointment to those participating, but by almost mid-May, it takes an unusual weather situation to cause significant numbers of trans-Gulf migrants to descend into the areas near the shoreline where they are seen and counted. In favorable conditions, most overfly the few small woodlots near the shoreline and disperse into the more extensive woods of the Big Thicket. This year, there were relatively few migrants in Sabine Woods and nearby areas. However, a few passerine migrants were detected at places such as the wooded areas of Cattail Marsh, along with more than a few migrant shorebirds in the wetlands. In our part of the country, the value of the count is as much as a survey of the breeding birds of the open areas of the county. The account below, therefore, focuses to a large degree on such species, and some disturbing trends are commented on. Overall, the number of individual birds recorded was a little down, but this likely reflects a slightly reduced number of participants and a corresponding slight reduction in party hours.

Noteworthy among the ducks was a healthy number of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, not quite a new high for the count, but certainly encouraging. The absence of any Lesser Scaup or Red-breasted Mergansers was a little unusual. Surprise at Cattail Marsh was a nice male Ringed Teal. This South American species is frequently kept in waterfowl collections and this particular individual is presumed to be an escapee. Although Cattail Marsh has been intensively birded recently, apart from sightings on the following day, it was not until June 1 that it was seen again. Mottled Duck numbers were on a par with those of recent years. The Blue-winged Teal is a migratory species, but mostly wintering much further south than the other ducks common locally in winter. Substantial numbers are passing through as late as May and this is reflected in the number observed.

Double-crested Cormorants are a wintering species, but it is unusual not to find any. Also all gone further north, in this case for the second year in a row, were American White Pelicans.

Defying anecdotal evidence to the contrary in both cases in preceding weeks, Great Egrets were present in large numbers, while Snowy Egrets were found in modest numbers. Little Blue Heron numbers have been variable in recent years and this was a low year, while Tricolored Herons are not as numerous as they were a few years back. Cattle Egret numbers seem to have stabilized or decreased slightly, while Green Herons are fewer than they were a few years back.

It used to be that sometimes we found one Osprey on this count, but six last year and four this year, suggests that they may be nesting locally. There are certainly White-tailed Kites in the area in winter, but once again, we did not find any. Perhaps they were nesting and staying hidden. This is the sixth year in a row that we have found one Swallow-tailed Kite, always a treat, but it seems to be a matter of chance. They probably are nesting in the river bottoms just north of Jefferson County, although we thought last year that at least one pair was nesting in mid-County. One Mississippi Kite is a

low number for a species that almost certainly nests in residential areas in the cities in Jefferson County. Similarly, Broad-winged Hawks certainly nest in the county -- mid County and Beaumont, but we did not find any. There is, however, an eBird report by an observer we do not know, of two on May 12 in the extreme northwest part of the county. Swainson's Hawks were the lowest since 2012. This species frequently feeds on large insects on the ground, and we wonder if the flooding caused by the massive rains of Hurricane Harvey in late August of 2017 may have washed away the eggs and larvae of many of these prey items. There are other species mentioned below that might have encountered a similar issue.

Shorebird numbers were generally very normal, excepting perhaps Whimbrels. Large flocks of Whimbrel migrate through the county and seeing or missing one of the large flocks makes a big difference in the total.

Gull and tern numbers can be very variable, as practical access issues leave large stretches of beaches from Texas Point west towards High Island not able to be surveyed. Black Terns were plentiful again, and for the second year in a row, large numbers of likely nesting Black Skimmers were very encouraging. Sandwich Terns are always mixed in with Royal Terns so it is probably not surprising that few Royals translated into no Sandwich Terns.

Mourning Doves have largely deserted the urban areas, pushed out by the increasing White-winged Doves. The reduced numbers were not alarming, although we wonder if the floods of Hurricane Harvey had some effects, not readily apparent, on the habitat in the open areas of the western parts of the county.

Crested Caracara numbers continued to increase. American Kestrels certainly nest in the neighboring counties to the north, but not, apparently in Jefferson County

The numbers of Eastern Kingbird and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, two species that share the same habitat, have been quite variable over the years, and may well be another indicator of a possible reduction in insect numbers.

The drastic reduction in Loggerhead Shrike numbers is quite alarming. The species does feed on larger insects and small rodents and opportunistically on other items including small birds. Numbers appear to be reduced in all parts of the county, but particularly in the open western areas. Reduced populations are of concern throughout its range across the United States, especially towards the northeast. We hope the reduction we see in the results of this count might reflect only local after effects of Hurricane Harvey.

Barn and Cliff Swallows, and Purple Martins also seem to be in decline, but again, this year's numbers may reflect what we hope is a short-term local effect.

We are at a loss to explain the low Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse numbers, or for that matter low Blue-gray Gnatcatcher numbers except to note that Gnatcatchers were very scarce through the spring in the areas where they are usually numerous.

As we noted at the beginning, the weather situation essentially controls whether there is an array of migrant species visible in the coastal woodlots, and on count day this

year, there was not. We would note, however, that the usual species of warblers were present in areas of the county where they likely nest. Prothonotary Warblers were, if anything, more numerous than usual; Northern Parulas, Yellow-throated Warblers, Pine Warblers, and even Yellow-breasted Chats were present in areas, particularly in the western parts of the county where they likely nest.

Good numbers of Seaside and Nelson's Sparrows were found, and Savannah Sparrow numbers were high for mid-May, the latter suggesting that seeds and other sparrow food may not have been seriously depleted by Hurricane Harvey. Other seed-eating species: Northern Cardinals, Dickcissels, and blackbirds and grackles were reasonably normal.

Also found on the count were four Whooping Cranes from the reintroduced Louisiana flock. These birds are fitted with satellite transmitters. This is the third group that have been seen in Jefferson County in the past three years from the flock formed by releases in the White Lake area of Louisiana. This suggests that the habitat in Jefferson County is attractive to these birds, and we may see more in the future. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries requests that no location information more specific than the county level be made public in any way, and we honor that request, so they will not appear in our area spreadsheets except in the total column. The area location will be retroactively added to the published records when there is no longer any need to withhold it.

## Species Seen

WHISTLING-DUCK, Black-bellied (94); WHISTLING-DUCK, Fulvous (143); TEAL, Ringed (1); DUCK, Wood (4); DUCK, Mottled (44); TEAL, Blue-winged (99); SHOVELER, Northern (cw); TEAL, Green-winged (1); DUCK, Ruddy (1); BOBWHITE, Northern (1); LOON, Common (1); GREBE, Least (1); GREBE, Pied-billed (1); CORMORANT, Neotropic (77); ANHINGA (5); PELICAN, Brown (98); BITTERN, Least (9); HERON, Great Blue (24); EGRET, Great (289); EGRET, Snowy (76); HERON, Little Blue (62); HERON, Tricolored (29); EGRET, Cattle (502); HERON, Green (28); NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned (6); NIGHT-HERON, Yellow-crowned (50); NIGHT-HERON species (4); IBIS, White (288); IBIS, Glossy (cw); IBIS, White-faced (15); IBIS, Plegadis species (43); SPOONBILL, Roseate (11); VULTURE, Black (66); VULTURE, Turkey (65); OSPREY (4); KITE, Swallow-tailed (1); KITE, Mississippi (1); HARRIER, Northern (1); HAWK, Cooper's (1); EAGLE, Bald (1); HAWK, Red-shouldered (5); HAWK, Swainson's (4); HAWK, Red-tailed (4); HAWK species (1); RAIL, King (6); RAIL, Clapper (32); RAIL, King/Clapper (2); RAIL, Virginia (1); SORA (9); GALLINULE, Purple (18); GALLINULE, Common (53); COOT, American (41); CRANE, Whooping (4); STILT, Black-necked (102); AVOCET, American (1); PLOVER, Black-bellied (56); PLOVER, Wilson's (5); PLOVER, Semipalmated (8); KILLDEER (104); SANDPIPER, Spotted (4); YELLOWLEGS, Greater (3); WILLET (39); YELLOWLEGS, Lesser (38); SANDPIPER, Upland (2); WHIMBREL (206); GODWIT, Hudsonian (cw); TURNSTONE, Ruddy (61); KNOT, Red (5); SANDPIPER, Stilt (313); SANDERLING (359); DUNLIN (130); SANDPIPER, Baird's (2); SANDPIPER, Least (56); SANDPIPER, White-rumped (148); SANDPIPER, Buff-

breasted (7); SANDPIPER, Pectoral (41); SANDPIPER, Semipalmated (56); SANDPIPER, Peep (160); DOWITCHER, Long-billed (28); DOWITCHER species (30); PHALAROPE, Wilson's (13); GULL, Laughing (312); GULL, Franklin's (2); GULL, Ring-billed (9); TERN, Least (66); TERN, Gull-billed (1); TERN, Black (42); TERN, Forster's (10); TERN, Royal (37); SKIMMER, Black (151); PIGEON, Rock (91); DOVE, Eurasian Collared- (20); DOVE, Inca (1); DOVE, White-winged (186); DOVE, Mourning (199); CUCKOO, Yellow-billed (10); SCREECH-OWL, Eastern (3); OWL, Great Horned (cw); NIGHTHAWK, Common (32); SWIFT, Chimney (9); HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated (4); KINGFISHER, Belted (1); WOODPECKER, Red-headed (1); WOODPECKER, Red-bellied (25); WOODPECKER, Downy (6); WOODPECKER, Pileated (3); CARACARA, Crested (13); FALCON, Peregrine (2); WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern (3); FLYCATCHER, Acadian (1); FLYCATCHER, Empidonax (1); FLYCATCHER, Great Crested (6); KINGBIRD, Eastern (40); FLYCATCHER, Scissor-tailed (18); SHRIKE, Loggerhead (26); VIREO, White-eyed (27); VIREO, Yellow-throated (2); VIREO, Red-eyed (16); JAY, Blue (98); CROW, American (21); CROW, Fish (19); CROW, Species (19); SWALLOW, N. Rough-winged (1); MARTIN, Purple (130); SWALLOW, Tree (4); SWALLOW, Barn (180); SWALLOW, Cliff (503); SWALLOW, Cave (8); SWALLOW, Cave/Cliff (5); CHICKADEE, Carolina (10); TITMOUSE, Tufted (6); WREN, Marsh (9); WREN, Carolina (12); BLUEBIRD, Eastern (9); VEERY (1); THRUSH, Gray-cheeked (2); THRUSH, Swainson's (4); ROBIN, American (24); CATBIRD, Gray (5); THRASHER, Brown (9); MOCKINGBIRD, Northern (351); STARLING, European (276); WAXWING, Cedar (15); OVENBIRD (1); WATERTHRUSH, Northern (1); WARBLER, Prothonotary (5); WARBLER, Tennessee (1); YELLOWTHROAT, Common (37); REDSTART, American (2); PARULA, Northern (3); WARBLER, Bay-breasted (1); WARBLER, Yellow (2); WARBLER, Pine (2); WARBLER, Yellow-throated (3); CHAT, Yellow-breasted (2); SPARROW, Nelson's (3); SPARROW, Seaside (25); SPARROW, Savannah (18); TANAGER, Summer (1); TANAGER, Scarlet (3); CARDINAL, Northern (122); GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted (3); GROSBEAK, Blue (3); BUNTING, Indigo (3); BUNTING, Painted (9); DICKCISSEL (169); BLACKBIRD, Red-winged (347); MEADOWLARK, Eastern (86); GRACKLE, Common (285); GRACKLE, Boat-tailed (98); GRACKLE, Great-tailed (455); GRACKLE, Gt./Boat-tailed (30); COWBIRD, Bronzed (2); COWBIRD, Brown-headed (51); ORIOLE, Orchard (27); FINCH, House (10); SPARROW, House (155); TOTAL INDIVIDUALS (9366); TOTAL SPECIES (162); Number of Observers (14); Number of Parties (7); Number of Party-Hours - Foot (8.4); Number of Party-Hours - Car (56.75); Number of Party-Hours - Stationary (1); Total Party-hours (60.55); Number of Party-Miles - Foot (5.6); Number of Party-Miles - Car (308.1); Total Party-Miles (313.7);. Cw indicates seen within the three days before or after count day, but not on count day itself.

We thank the participants in the count: Sherry Gibson, Claudia Gilson, John Haynes, Sheila Hebert, Thomas Hellweg, Harrison Jordan, Gary and Denise Kelley, Steve Mayes, Sherrie Roden, Christine Sliva, Harlan Stewart, Jana Whittle.

## Field Trip to Hardin County – 26 May 2018

The Hardin County field trip did not start out as a field trip. It started out with just a few local birders looking for something to do after migration had quieted down and slowly grew into an official Golden Triangle Audubon field trip that is much anticipated by many members. This trip is the chance to see some of the beautiful warblers observed on the coast during migration on their breeding grounds along with other local breeding birds. It is a bit of a different trip since it is not primarily about maximizing the number of species seen but instead focuses on picking up a few specialty birds. It can be a little hit or miss but the hits can be spectacular!

The trip always starts out at a parking lot in Silsbee. This may not sound too glorious but this spot can actually produce some nice birds. On this day, the parking lot featured a group (a “murder” technically) of Fish Crows. This trip usually produces more American Crows so it was nice to pick up the species for Hardin County. An Eastern Bluebird, the only one seen on the day, perched on a wire along the road. A Green Heron flew out of a ditch bordering the parking lot and several Cattle Egrets flew overhead. Killdeer were also present, the only shorebird likely to be encountered on this trip!

This trip consists of driving along a few strategic roads with a variety of habitats and stopping at creek crossings and other birdy looking spots – or whenever something interesting is seen or heard! Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures were not hard to come by while a single Great Blue Heron flying by was probably only seen by the lead vehicle in the group. The thin whistle of a Broad-winged Hawk was heard at one stop and the small raptor species was seen perched on a snag at another stop. Barn Swallows zipped down the road while a Brown Thrasher jumped across it. Northern Cardinals were common and Red-bellied Woodpeckers were heard and seen. Mourning Dove were the common doves along the roads and fields while White-winged Dove was seen in town. Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse were some of the common woodland birds seen on the day while Carolina Wrens were only heard. Great Crested Flycatcher was also heard and remained elusive while a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher showed off for the group.

Those birds are all great but not the ones the group was specifically seeking. But many of those birds were located as well. A Wood Thrush was surprisingly cooperative. Often these birds are only heard in the deep thickets but this one actually allowed some looks as it flew over the road. White-eyed Vireos were common on the day those more were heard than seen. Yellow-throated Vireo was fairly cooperative and Red-eyed Vireo made a brief appearance. Yellow-billed Cuckoos ticked away in the trees but one gave the group a pretty good look. Summer Tanager was heard giving its “lazy robin” song and gave the birders a look as well. Acadian Flycatcher is not exactly a colorful species but it is easily detected by its distinct calls and was found on the day. But if the birders wanted color, the singing Indigo and Painted Buntings seen on the day provided more than enough!

Breeding warblers are the main focus of the trip and they were common on the day. Hooded Warblers were often heard in the roadside thickets and a couple presented themselves for

inspection by the group. Pine Warblers gave their trills from their namesake trees while a Kentucky Warbler or two sang from lower areas and even gave a few nice looks. A single Yellow-throated Warbler was found singing from a large tree along a creek. Two of the species always sought on this trip are Swainson’s Warbler and Prairie Warbler and both were cooperative on the day. Swainson’s Warblers were seemingly at every creek crossing (and a few other spots!). They may not be the most colorful of warblers but the assembled birders were still thrilled with the great looks that were had at singing Swainson’s Warblers on territory. It took a while to find Prairie Warblers – the habitat of young pines between about 10 and 20 feet tall that is their strong preference is possibly not as prevalent along the usual birding route at present – but they were eventually found. Individual birds came out and sang from the tops of pine trees and even from a power line! The birders would agree that the show was worth the wait! Yellow-breasted Chat may not technically be a warbler anymore but the distant looks that were had at this enigmatic species were still appreciated.

The trip was topped off by excellent views of a singing Eastern Towhee. This bird is sometimes heard on the trip but rarely do any birders actually lay eyes on it. To get a good view of a Towhee (and a bad view of a second bird) was a really nice finish. We did not realize that the species bred in the area until a few years ago, one sang from near the top of a pine tree on Gore Store Road during this field trip. Now that we have eBird to more precisely determine the edges of breeding ranges, it seems that our area is in the southwest corner of this species range.

It may not be the most species filled trip of the year but the Hardin County field trip always produces a nice mix of colorful, singing birds and gives the group a chance to see these birds in their true habitat and not just as they frantically feed and speed from the coast in migration. There is something to be said for getting to know the birds at a slower pace and really learning their habits. In any case, it was a great field trip with lots of nice birds!

The following species were recorded by the trip leader:

Great Blue Heron(1); Cattle Egret(5); Green Heron(1); Black Vulture(1); Turkey Vulture(7); Broad-winged Hawk(2); Killdeer(2); White-winged Dove(4); Mourning Dove(4); Yellow-billed Cuckoo(2); Red-bellied Woodpecker(2); Acadian Flycatcher(1); Great Crested Flycatcher(1); White-eyed Vireo(7); Yellow-throated Vireo(1); Red-eyed Vireo(2); Blue Jay(5); American Crow(4); Fish Crow(6); Barn Swallow(5); Carolina Chickadee(1); Tufted Titmouse(2); Carolina Wren(3); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher(1); Eastern Bluebird(1); Wood Thrush(2); Brown Thrasher(2); Northern Mockingbird(2); European Starling(3); Swainson’s Warbler(6); Kentucky Warbler(1); Hooded Warbler(6); Pine Warbler(4); Yellow-throated Warbler(1); Prairie Warbler(4); Eastern Towhee(2); Yellow-breasted Chat(4); Summer Tanager(1); Northern Cardinal(5); Indigo Bunting(2); Painted Bunting(2); Brown-headed Cowbird(4); House Sparrow(2).

*Steve Mayes*

## Bird Sightings – May 2018

For this column, we review, looking for rare and very rare species, all credible eBird and other records for the Texas counties we have always covered – Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler. We also review records for Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty Counties in Texas, and Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

### Seen in our Core Counties (listed above)

|                        |             |   |
|------------------------|-------------|---|
| Canada Goose           | May 16      | HAI-Sandylands (2) Rich Kostecke                          |
| Green-winged Teal      | May 22-30   | JEF-TP (1) HS, John Faber                                 |
| Gadwall                | May 15-30   | JEF-TP (1) HS   |
| Ringed Teal            | May 12-13   | JEF-Cattail Marsh (1) JHH                                 |
| Least Grebe            | thru May 12 | JEF-Cattail Marsh (1) continuing bird                     |
| Greater Scaup          | May 11      | JAS-Martin Dies SP (3) Justin Boslet                      |
| American Bittern       | May 11      | JAS-Martin Dies SP (1) Tony Frank, John O'Brien           |
| Swallow-tailed Kite    | May 20      | ORA-Oak Manor (1) Denise Kelley                           |
| Semi-palmated Plover   | May 18-22   | JEF-TP (2) Dell Little, D.D. Currie, HS, Jimmy Bryan      |
|                        | May 28      | JEF-SRSP (24) SH (photo)                                  |
| Glaucous Gull          | Apr 26      | JEF-Pilot Stn. Rd (1) Mike Baker. Unconfirmed             |
| Great Kiskadee         | May 5       | JEF-SW (1) Robert Thacker                                 |
| Black-whiskered Vireo  | May 6       | JEF-SW (1) Joseph Hood (photo-not completely unequivocal) |
| American Pipit         | May 6       | SAB-Hemphill (1) Darrell Lee                              |
| Northern Waterthrush   | May 30      | JEF-SW (2) Howard Davis                                   |
| Blackburnian Warbler   | May 30      | JEF-SW (1 fem) Howard Davis                               |
| Chestnut-sided Warbler | May 29-30   | JEF-SW (1) Howard Davis                                   |
| Savannah Sparrow       | May 17      | JEF-SRSP (1) Michael Emenaker                             |
|                        | May 20      | JEF-Beaumont North End (1) SH                             |

### Nearby Counties

|                    |           |   |
|--------------------|-----------|---|
| Canada Goose       | May 15    | HAS-Willow Waterhole Park (1) Mark Meyer                          |
| Green-winged Teal  | May 4     | CAM-Creole (1) Sidney Gauthreaux                                  |
|                    | May 5,26  | CAM-Rutherford Beach (up to 3) mult obs                           |
| Cinnamon Teal      | May 6     | CHA-ANWR (1) Kristina Arndt                                       |
| Lesser Scaup       | May 12-26 | CAM-Rutherford Beach (3) David Booth, Jody Shugart, Deborah Frank |
| Long-tailed Duck   | May 1-21  | CAM-Rutherford Beach and vicinity (up to 2 fem) continuing birds  |
| Wood Stork         | May 12    | HAS-nr. Bear Creek Park (7) Ken Hartman                           |
|                    | May 12    | HAS-Friendswood (1) Andrew Hamlett                                |
| Common Loon        | May 4-6   | HAS-Towne Lake (1) Greg Page                                      |
| American Bittern   | May 6     | HAS-El Franco Lee Park (1) Joshua Jaeger                          |
|                    | May 11    | HAS-Sheldon Lake SP (1) Kelly Roy                                 |
| Glossy Ibis        | May 1-23  | CHA-ANWR Shoveler Pond (1) Continuing bird.                       |
|                    | May 2-5   | GAL-Lafitte's Cove (1) mult obs, continuing bird                  |
| Wilson's Phalarope | May 19    | CAM-Rockefeller SWR/Price Lake Rd (40) Mike Brasher               |
| Harris's Hawk      | May 5     | GAL-Smith Oaks (1) mult. obs (continuing bird);                   |
| Upland Sandpiper   | May 31    | GAL-Tanger Mall ponds (1) Dennis Cooke                            |

The format of the listing is Species – Date – County-and brief location information if available – (number) – Observer(s). If more precise location information is needed, it can often be obtained by using the bird species map feature to find the sighting in eBird, opening the checklist, and using the map function to display the location as precisely as the observer provided.

|                         |           |  |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| Whimbrel                | May 19    | CAL-Corbina Rd S (3) Judson Lassiter                       |
| Iceland Gull            | Apr 27    | GAL-Apfel Park (1) Matthew Daw                             |
| Glaucous Gull           | Apr 29    | GAL-Rollover Pass (1) mult obs                             |
|                         | May 7     | GAL-betw Rollover Pass and High Island (1) John Bartos     |
|                         | May 11-15 | GAL-Bolivar Flats (1) R. Peake, Mary Mack, Alice O'Donnell |
| Great Black-backed Gull | May 14    | GAL-BF (1 imm) continuing bird?                            |
| Common Ground-Dove      | May 13    | HAS-Friendswood (1) Steven Berenzweig                      |
| Eastern Whip-poor-will  | May 19    | HAS-Addicks Reservoir N of Clay Rd (1) Mark Kulstad        |
| Hairy Woodpecker        | May 18    | HAS-Bear Cr Pk (1) Dan Sherick                             |
| Alder Flycatcher        | May 29    | CAM-Creole (1) Sam Saunders                                |
| Great Kiskadee          | May 6     | CAL-Sam Houston Jines SP (1) Julian Grudens                |
|                         | May 9     | CAM-Rockefeller SWR (1) John Herbert                       |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | May 2     | HAS-Kingwood nr W Lake Houston Parkway (1) Bonnie de Grood |
|                         | May 8, 21 | HAS-Rose Hill Area (1) Megan Ahlgren                       |
| Brown Thrasher          | May 21    | HAS-Bane Park (1) Drew Dickert                             |
| Northern Waterthrush    | May 29    | CAM-Rutherford Beach (1) Sam Saunders                      |
| Orange-crowned Warbler  | May 2     | HAS- Kingwood nr W Lake Houston Parkway (1) John Mariani   |
| Y-r Warbler Audubon's   | May 5     | HAS-Spring (1) Brad Macurda                                |
| Prairie Warbler         | May 4     | CHA-ANWR_Frozen Point Road (1) Susan Kosoris               |
| White-crowned Sparrow   | May 5     | CAM-Lighthouse Rd (1) Cameron Rutt                         |
| Grasshopper Sparrow     | May 29    | HAS-Warren Ranch Lake (1) Stephen Gast                     |
| Swamp Sparrow           | May 6     | CAM-Sabine NWR Wetland Walkway (1) Robert Dobbs            |
| Brewer's Blackbird      | May 12    | HAS-E. L. Moore Sanctuary (1) Jeff Geissler                |
|                         | May 31    | HAS-Langham Creek (1) Drew Dickert                         |
| American Goldfinch      | May 1-7   | GAL-Clear Creek Village (1) Jackie Farrell                 |
|                         | May 5     | GAL-Frenchtown Rd (1) Brenda Gonzales                      |
|                         | May 11-13 | CHA-FM565 nr FM3180 (1) Paul Fagala                        |

**Abbreviations used:** ANG – Angelina County; ANWR – Anahuac NWR; BF – Bolivar Flats; BTNP – Big Thicket National Preserve; CAL – Calcasieu Parish; CAM – Cameron Parish; CHA – Chambers County; GAL – Galveston County; HAI – Hardin County; HAS – Harris County; HS – Harlan Stewart; JAS – Jasper County; JAW – John Whittle; JEF – Jefferson County; JHH – John Haynes; JJW – Jana and John Whittle; LIB – Liberty County; MC – Michael Cooper; NEDR – Nederland; ORA – Orange County; PI – Pleasure Is, Port Arthur; RL – Randy Lewis; SAA – San Augustine Co.; SAB – Sabine County; SH – Sheila Hebert; SM – Steve Mayes, SRSP – Sea Rim State Park; SW – Sabine Woods; TH – Thomas Hellweg; TP – Tyrrell Park including Cattail Marsh; TXPT – Texas Point NWR; TYL – Tyler County; WJC – West Jefferson Co..

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### RARE BIRD ALERTS

Unfortunately, almost all the local and regional telephone Rare Bird Alerts have been discontinued in favor of various forms of Internet distribution.

The Texas-wide Rare Bird Alert, maintained by Houston Audubon Society, is available on their web-site at <http://www.houstonaudubon.org/>. Email alerts are also available for a fee.

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.

Detailed information/maps on birding sites in Texas is available on the Web at <http://www.texasbirds.org/birdingLocations.php>. This leads you to the maps of the various eBird hotspots. You can also subscribe (free) on eBird for email alerts for all rare birds reported in a specific county.