

TEXAS

Whooping Cranes & Rio Grande

20th Feb – 2nd Mar 2019



Texas highlights (Clockwise from top left): Whooping Crane • Great Kiskadee • Green Jay • Roseate Spoonbill • Pauraque • Tricoloured Heron. Photos © Chris Charlesworth/Limosa

**Report compiled by tour leader:
Chris Charlesworth**

Leader: Chris Charlesworth

Tour participants: Carol & Rich Carlin, Kath & Nigel Oram, Marie & Martin Singleton.

DAY 1 – We all met up at the arrivals hall at Houston International Airport at about 3PM. It was a gorgeous sunny afternoon as we drove through the sprawling city of Houston to our first port of call, Rosenberg. After checking in to the hotel we went out to Chili's for dinner and then the group, who were understandably, pretty tired, headed off for a night's rest.

DAY 2 – We left our hotel shortly after 7AM and made our way to Brazos Bend State Park, south of Rosenberg. As we drove along the entrance road, flocks and flocks of American Robins were noted as they lifted off the fields. We enjoyed a nice walk around 40 Acre Lake this morning, tallying over 60 species of birds, despite cool, cloudy and drizzly conditions. In the woodlands surrounding the lake were many more American Robins, as well as Cedar Waxwings, Carolina Wrens, Carolina Chickadees, both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Orange-crowned, Palm and Myrtle Warblers, American Goldfinches and more. Woodpeckers showed nicely as we saw Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and best of all a Pileated Woodpecker, the latter of which was drumming away loudly on a tree stump as we watched in the scope. Carrying on around the lake we encountered Eastern Phoebe, a male Vermilion Flycatcher, White-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, Common Yellowthroat and Blue-grey Gnatcatcher. Waterfowl noted included Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Ducks and some lovely Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks. Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot and Common Gallinule were also scattered across the lake. Skimming the surface of the water were hirundines including Cave, Tree, Northern Rough-winged and Barn Swallows. Great Egret, Snowy Egret and Cattle Egret were seen along the lake's edge, along with White Ibis, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Tricoloured Heron and some Roseate Spoonbills. Anhingas showed very nicely here today and we were fortunate enough to have incredible views of some American Bitterns this morning. On our way out of the park, the robins in the fields had been replaced by a flock of Killdeer. Just as we turned out of the park, I mentioned to watch out for Sandhill Cranes, and barely before I could get the sentence out of my mouth, a group of 20 or so were seen quite close to the road.

The drive from Brazos Bend to Bay City provided views, from the moving van, of American Kestrels, Red-tailed Hawks, Crested Caracara and Northern Harrier. We had lunch at Subway in Bay City and then carried on to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. As we drove along the entrance road, I spotted a star mammal for the day, a Bobcat, as it crossed the road and then crept through the thickets, occasionally popping into view. Other mammals seen today included White-tailed Deer and Eastern Fox Squirrels.

At Aransas we explored the Big Tree Trail which wound through the live oaks for a few hundred meters before ending in the saltmarsh along the shore. Out on the sea were Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead and a Red-breasted Merganser, while both Brown and American White Pelicans put in appearances. Forster's Terns foraged in the channels nearby one, with one or two of them plunging headfirst in to the water for tiny fish. On the shore, Kath pointed out our first Willet of the trip and shortly thereafter it was joined by our first Greater Yellowlegs. Way off in the distance we spotted two large white birds that, once the scope had been trained onto them, turned into Whooping Cranes! Feeling we had done pretty well, we left the refuge and headed for Rockport where we checked into our hotel, and then went for a delicious meal at Charlotte Plumber's restaurant. As we sat inside, we saw Great Blue Heron and a Black-crowned Night-Heron beneath the bright lights of the marina. We had seen close to 80 species of birds today, which was fantastic given the cool, dreary weather.

DAY 3 – After breakfast we loaded up our luggage and headed down to the local supermarket where we picked up our lunch. We then made our way to Fulton Harbor where we boarded the MV Skimmer, with Captain Jay at the helm. Captain Jay is an enthusiastic chap, with a strong Texan accent and a real passion for showing people the birds of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. It was a misty morning and the fog remained with us throughout the boat trip. It was cool as we steamed out across the sea towards the refuge. As we left the harbour we spotted a few species such as Laughing Gull, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Martin, Brown Pelican and Neotropic and Double-crested cormorants. Jay slowed the boat down as we entered the protected waters of the refuge. It didn't take us long to spot our first group of Whooping Cranes in the distance. There were two adults and a rusty immature bird foraging a few hundred meters away. The giant birds began striding towards us and then to our delight, they took to the air and flew right towards the boat, landing nice and close to us at the edge of the water. We watched a Reddish Egret as it staggered about like a 'drunken sailor', scaring up little fish in the shallows. Other wading birds included Roseate Spoonbills, Tricoloured Heron, Snowy and Great Egrets and

Great Blue Herons. A few terns, including Caspian, Royal and Forster's Terns foraged around the boat. Waterfowl included Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintail and Northern Shoveler, and we saw a Savannah Sparrow. We had a few quick glimpses of Bottlenose Dolphins as they surfaced near the boat. We arrived back on shore around 12:30 PM and we all agreed the trip was a great success.

We drove towards Corpus Christi, stopping in at Sunset Lake and Indian Point Park to search for waders. Unfortunately, many of the waders were in an area we could only see from the freeway, where we could not stop and get out to search. Nonetheless, we did see Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt and American Oystercatcher. As we cruised through the neighbourhood near Sunset Lake, we saw our first Inca Doves and White-winged Doves. A Mottled Duck was viewed through the scope and we enjoyed watching a large group of Black Skimmers here. At one point, an Osprey flew by and scared up the flock of skimmers into their sky. Martin and I had a fleeting glimpse of a Clapper Rail as it disappeared into the reeds. We had a good drive ahead of us yet, as Harlingen was our destination. Along the freeway we saw many raptors including Crested Caracara, Red-tailed Hawks, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture and American Kestrel. A Greater Roadrunner was seen by one or two of the group as it flew out as if to cross the road, then, thinking better of it, turned around and headed back into the thickets. A little break at the Sarita Rest Stop provided us with a chance to stretch our legs and we added three species to the list here; Brewer's Blackbird, the rather gaudy Green Jay and, voted by several folks the best 'songbird' of the day, some Black-crested Titmice. As we entered Harlingen and drove towards our hotel, thousands of Great-tailed Grackles lined the telephone wires as they came in to roost for the evening. This evening, we headed out for a delicious meal of Mexican food at Los Asados.

DAY 4 – Our day began at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, not too far from our hotel. 'This could be a one hour stop', I said, to everyone. Three hours later we were tearing ourselves away from this lovely park along Arroyo Colorado. We walked less than a mile in 3 hours and spotted close to 50 species of birds, most of them new for the trip. The feeding station was full of activity with everything from Plain Chachalacas, Green Jays, White-tipped Doves and Indigo Buntings to Buff-bellied Hummingbirds, Golden-fronted Woodpeckers and Black-crested Titmouse visiting. Along the trails we ran into goodies like Long-billed Thrashers and Curve-billed Thrashers, Olive Sparrows, Bewick's Wrens, White-eyed Vireo, Hooded Oriole and Tropical Kingbird. We chanced upon a gorgeous pair of Green Kingfishers that were hanging about along a small stream where we saw one of the birds enter a cavity in the clay bank. We saw a lovely mammal here, the Desert Cottontail, as it quietly fed alongside a pathway and we also saw a cracking butterfly, the Mexican Bluewing, as it fed on nectar dripping from a hummingbird feeder.

After picking up lunch we made our way towards Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, pausing along the way to check out a pond alongside the road. Blue-winged Teal and American Wigeon were here as well as Black-necked Stilt and Greater Yellowlegs. As we travelled towards the refuge we saw raptors such as Red-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk, American Kestrel and Crested Caracara. Once at the refuge we had just sat down to have lunch when a brilliant Altamira Oriole appeared at a nearby feeder. We took a stroll along the Kiskadee Trail, which at first seemed rather quiet. Soon, we found a little flock of birds that included several Blue-headed Vireos, White-eyed Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler and a lovely male Tropical Parula, the latter of which is fairly rare. A little time in one of the hides was very productive as we watched Olive Sparrow, Long-billed Thrasher, Green Jays, White-tipped Doves, Black-crested Titmouse and Plain Chachalaca come in to drink and feed.

A short drive down to the Osprey Overlook was very productive and the lake was absolutely covered in birds. Most were American Coots and we didn't know where to begin estimating how many were on the lake. Some said 7,000, others said 50,000, but the lake was covered in coots nonetheless. Mixed in were some Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Ducks and Redheads. Along the shore were Tricoloured Herons, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret and more. We took a little stroll down to the Alligator Pond, spotting little along the way. Once at the pond we spotted one of the largest alligators I have ever seen. It must have been a good 15 feet long! Heading back down the road, I just happened to be looking at the right place at the right time and spotted a Nine-banded Armadillo foraging in the roadside thickets. Before heading back to the hotel, we stopped to see some Eastern Meadowlarks. To the surprise of some, the meadowlark was a gorgeous bird with bright yellow on the breast, interrupted by a black 'v'. A drive up and down another road did not yield an Aplomado Falcon, unfortunately, but we did see several Harris's Hawks. We had dinner this evening at La Playa and then headed back to get some much needed rest.

DAY 5 – It was a rather nice morning, with cool temperatures and partly sunny skies as we drove from Harlingen towards South Padre Island. We paused along the way, to check out the shorebirds at the Zapata Memorial Rest Stop, where we were handsomely rewarded with a great variety of birds. Most common were Long-billed Dowitchers, along with Least Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plover. Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-necked Stilts, Long-

billed Curlew and Semipalmated Plovers were also seen, while we were very happy to spot just one single Piping Plover here. Stilt Sandpiper, American Oystercatcher, Ruddy Turnstone and a nice flock of Marbled Godwits were also fantastic to tally here. In addition to shorebirds were wading birds such as Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Reddish Egret and Tricoloured Heron. Hundreds of Laughing Gulls were resting on the shore, alongside lesser numbers of Ring-billed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Royal, Caspian, Forster's and a Gull-billed Tern.

We crossed the bridge to South Padre Island and headed straight for the Birding Center and boardwalk. Birds were numerous here and were also quite obliging to the photographers in the group. We had fantastic looks at waterfowl including Redhead, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal and Mottled Duck. Herons and egrets were well represented with highlights being a little Green Heron fishing in a pond next to the parking lot and some lovely Roseate Spoonbills that posed for photos. This boardwalk, which runs through both brackish marsh and freshwater marsh, is fantastic for rails and we were not disappointed, having excellent views of both Sora and Clapper Rail. One of the real highlights here, a male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher flew right over us, showing off his magnificent streaming tail and brilliant pink underwings. Two Wilson's Snipe were new for the trip list, and everyone finally had a nice look at Stilt Sandpiper here as well. Before leaving South Padre Island we had lunch at Subway.

We headed west to the town of Weslaco and the Valley Nature Center where a very rare bird for North America, a Golden-crowned Warbler, had been wintering. With the help of a sharp-eyed staff member, we were all able to obtain good views of this Mexican and Central American stray as it foraged in the thick vegetation. Other nice birds noted at the nature center included a Clay-coloured Thrush, some Black-crested Titmice, Orange-crowned Warbler, Inca Dove and Great Kiskadee. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was spotted as it roosted high in the trees, looking rather out of place with no water to be seen. This evening, on our way to dinner, we took in the spectacle as tens of thousands of Great-tailed Grackles came in to roost on telephone wires at dusk. We all thoroughly enjoyed our meal at the Texas Roadhouse.

DAY 6 – We left Harlingen this morning and made our way to Estero Llano Grande State Park in Weslaco. Upon arrival I could hear the tell-tale loud, raucous calls of parrots in some nearby trees, so we went to investigate. There were perhaps 50 Red-crowned Amazons clambering about, squawking and flying around at the edge of a golf course. This species is one of a few species of parrots/parakeets that are officially countable in North America. We explored the 'Tropical Zone' first, where the usual Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Great Kiskadees, Northern Mockingbirds, Black-crested Titmouse and Green Jays were noted. We ran into a very informative fellow who showed us where an Eastern Screech Owl was roosting in an extremely hidden spot in a palm tree. He also pointed out a roosting Common Pauraque, so thanks to the man from Wisconsin, we added two really nice nocturnal birds to our list. At some feeders we saw our first Ruby-throated Hummingbird and some saw a Buff-bellied Hummingbird as well.

We did a nice loop walk in Estero Llano Grande Park that took us from the visitor's center to a levee that overlooked a water filled ditch, then back to the center via the 'Alligator Pond'. At the visitor's center we scanned the ponds finding good numbers of Green-winged Teal, along with Blue-winged Teal, Mottled Ducks, Least Sandpipers and an assortment of herons. Once at the levee we had nice looks at several American Avocets, as well as Black-necked Stilts, Stilt Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers and a lovely White-tailed Kite. At the 'Alligator Pond' we had nice looks at roosting Black-crowned Night Herons and several Yellow-crowned Night-Herons. Best of all, we saw another roosting Pauraque, right next to the path.

We picked up lunch at the supermarket and headed for Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. As soon as we arrived, a stunning Altamira Oriole caused some excitement. Once we finished lunch, we headed off to explore Willows Lake. Being mid-afternoon, birds were a little quiet but once we arrived at the lake, things picked up. Waterfowl included several gorgeous Cinnamon Teal, while a Sora was seen as well. A Coypu was seen munching on grasses in the pond. We climbed to the top of the impressive viewing tower where we enjoyed a nice view, though saw few birds. We did see a distant Peregrine Falcon perched on a water tower however, the first for the trip. Before leaving the area we drove through some farm fields, hoping to find a Burrowing Owl. Unfortunately, no owls were seen today, most likely because the areas where they had previously been seen had been disturbed. We drove on to McAllen, where we checked in to our hotel. Dinner tonight was Italian, and was at the Olive Garden.

DAY 7 – We started off at a lovely park called Quinta Mazatlan, just a few short miles from our hotel in McAllen. The object of our visit was a bird called a Crimson-collared Grosbeak, a species that only rarely appears north of the Mexican border. We checked in at the historic adobe house, apparently the oldest adobe house in Texas, then made our way over to the feeders at the amphitheater. We sat for about an hour watching the feeders, which were busy with the likes of Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal

and Plain Chachalaca, but no grosbeak appeared. A light rain began to fall so we headed back to the visitor's center and enjoyed a cup of coffee until the precipitation let up. We then went for a walk to another set of feeders where the grosbeak had been seen previously. Here we added Inca Dove, Olive Sparrow, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Green Parakeet and more to our list of birds. New butterflies included Mourning Duskywing and Empress Leila. As we were leaving Quinta Mazatlan, with no grosbeak sighting, we spotted an immature Cooper's Hawk sitting in the open in the top of a tree. Perhaps this accipiter had kept the rare grosbeak from emerging this morning.

We picked up lunch and then headed to an area known as the 'Border Patrol Corral area, near Bentsen State Park. This area is where there had been a spate of recent sightings of the rare Hook-billed Kite. Raptors were certainly active in the area and we saw Grey Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and just our second Red-shouldered Hawk of the tour, but no Hook-billed Kite today. A Green Kingfisher was a nice sighting along the canal here and we saw our first Black Phoebe of the tour, so all in all, it was a productive stop. Next up, at Bentsen State Park, we had lunch and then took a stroll in to the park to see what we could find. Temperatures had climbed quite high this afternoon and the sun was shining down on us as we scurried from shady patch to shady patch. We watched some feeders where a volunteer from Iowa pointed out Altamira Oriole, Olive Sparrow, Plain Chachalaca and more, then we took a walk to the 'Kingfisher Overlook', with high hopes of finding our first Ringed Kingfisher. We did not find any kingfishers here, but we did find a single Pine Siskin in with a flock of American Goldfinches. The best species, in my opinion, that we found at Bentsen was Northern Bobwhite, as five of the elusive little quails foraged in the grass right next to the parking lot!

It had been a hot afternoon, so I offered folks the chance to do more birding or take a siesta back at our hotel. Most opted for the siesta, but Nigel and I returned to Quinta Mazatlan for one hour, during which time we still did not find the grosbeak. We did add two species to the trip list however, a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a lovely male Black-and-white Warbler.

DAY 8 – After checking out of our hotel we returned to the Border Patrol Corral area this morning, with hopes of finding the elusive Hook-billed Kite. Though we didn't find the kite, birding was quite good here this morning, with the highlight, no doubt, being the sighting of our first Ringed Kingfisher. Another nice bird added to the list was a Black-throated Green Warbler, though this flitty little character left us all wanting a better view. Next stop was at Anzalduas County Park. We took a stroll through the somewhat manicured park, finding a surprising number of nice birds such as Lark Sparrows and a lovely male Eastern Bluebird. Overhead, a raptor appeared with distinct, slow and deep wingbeats and 'paddle-shaped' wings. "Hook-billed Kite", I yelled out and we all watched as the bird flapped away and out of sight. This was a nice bird indeed, but we all wanted a better look. A little later the kite reappeared and sailed overhead, giving us all a good view, as luck would have it. Another highlight was a male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that entertained us for a few minutes before disappearing. Though this species can be rather common in Texas in the spring, it is decidedly uncommon during the winter months. Other flycatchers noted here included Black Phoebe, Tropical Kingbird, Couch's Kingbird and the brilliant Vermillion Flycatcher. We had our first views of the Rio Grande here at Anzalduas and we noted several species on the Mexican side of the river, including Muscovy Duck, Snowy Egret, Double-crested Cormorant, American Coot and Spotted Sandpiper to name a few. Several Killdeer put on a nice show here and we found Cattle Egrets for only the second time on the tour. Two Mexican Ducks flew downstream, though were not seen by all in the group before they had disappeared. Before we left the area, we walked a grassy field where we hoped to flush a Sprague's Pipit. Unfortunately, a couple of guys had been flying their model airplanes over the field, so our chances for finding the pipits were low. We did see some Western Meadowlarks, though no pipits.

After lunch we carried on to Rio Grande City and checked into our accommodations. We then reassembled and continued west to Salineno where we watched the feeders for half an hour or so. As soon as the volunteers had put out some seed and peanut butter, a flurry of activity ensued. Suddenly there were hungry Great Kiskadees, White-tipped Doves, Long-billed Thrasher, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Black-crested Titmouse and many others swarming the feeders. No Audubon's Oriole though, which is the 'signature' bird of this particular feeding station. We headed down to the Rio Grande and scanned up and down for Red-billed Pigeons and Morelet's Seedeater. No luck this afternoon with those species, though we did enjoy watching Ospreys along the river and a number of songbirds in the thorn-scrub such as Verdin, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher and the usual crop of Lincoln's Sparrows. On our way out of Salineno, I heard a Pyrrhuloxia singing near to the road so we stopped and enjoyed fantastic views of the cardinal/parrotbill cross as it sang from a flowering bush. Back in Rio Grande City we enjoyed dinner at Casa Adobe before heading to bed for some rest.

DAY 9 – An early morning return to Salineno was very productive. We stationed ourselves along the banks of the Rio Grande, hoping for a glimpse of the rather rare and local Red-billed Pigeon. An Audubon's Oriole sang several times and flew overhead, but that wasn't enough to warrant adding it to our list. Then, two large, dark

pigeons flew up the river and landed in some tall trees on an island. They were Red-billed Pigeons. Through the scope we could make these birds out quite nicely, though it was still difficult to see the namesake red bills. Our second Ringed Kingfisher of the tour flew downstream. A short stroll through the scrub produced our first sighting of the impressive Cactus Wren. Back at the feeding station we didn't have to wait long for the local pair of Audubon's Orioles to come in and nibble on some peanut butter. The local birders have named one of the pair 'Baldy' since he has a bald patch on his head.

A drive along 'Dump Road' turned out to be a very good idea, as two Greater Roadrunners crossed the road right in front of our van! Everybody had really wanted to see this species - especially Marie - and I had feared we had missed our chance, so a great sigh of relief was exhaled by myself. Another 'trip tick' along this road was a Cassin's Sparrow that obligingly sang from its perch quite close to the van. At Falcon State Park we had a few more birds to find. Black-throated Sparrows showed nicely and we all agreed that they are one attractive sparrow. Ash-throated Flycatcher was new to the trip list as well. We finally caught up with a little group of Collared Peccary, or 'Javelina', a type of wild pig.

Carrying on to Zapata, the point farthest west on this tour, we picked up lunch and took it down to the local county park. This is a good area to find the uncommon and elusive Morelet's Seedeater, though we could not locate any today. We did, however find two new warblers for the trip, a Black-throated Grey Warbler and an 'Audubon's' Yellow-rumped Warbler. Limosa Holidays uses the IOC taxonomy so Audubon's Warbler counts as a species for the trip, while in North America, we simply just think of it as a race of Yellow-rumped Warbler. Before we left Zapata we had one more surprise sighting right in the town. A pair of House Finches showed quite nicely and the male sported a nice rosy crown. The group joked that the name House Finch was far too boring for such an exotic looking bird and I agree!

We had a long drive ahead of us this morning. I was on the lookout for one more bird however as I drove along the straight highways. I checked every raptor as we drove by, spotting Red-tailed Hawks, Crested Caracaras, Harris's Hawks and finally, the one I wanted, a White-tailed Hawk. The bird was on a telephone pole and we all enjoyed great views of it, noting all the pertinent field marks, including its white tail. The rest of the drive back to Rockport was rather uneventful, other than rain showers here and there. We enjoyed another great meal at Charlotte Plumber's and it was, in fact, the final dinner of the tour. These trips seem to go so quickly!

DAY 10 – It was our last morning in Texas and we headed to Goose Island State Park. It was cool and grey out this morning, a common theme for us on this trip when we were near the Gulf of Mexico. Upon arrival at the park we enjoyed watching a group of American White Pelicans feeding near a boat launch. I was hoping to add one or two more sparrows to the trip list here and was rewarded with the sighting of at least two Nelson's Sparrows. Marsh Wren was another addition to the tour list. We scanned a mudflat with several species of shorebirds, picking out Piping Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Sanderling, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone and Greater Yellowlegs. A single Roseate Spoonbill fed in a puddle and a group of a dozen or so Sandhill Cranes flew by. Scanning through groups of female Great-tailed Grackles, some of us eventually found one female Boat-tailed Grackle mixed in. We drove around an area of open fields and were rewarded with the sighting of several more Whooping Cranes this morning, as well as more Sandhills. White-faced Ibis in immature plumage was another trip tick here and we saw old friends like Wilson's Snipe and Greater Yellowlegs. Just as we were about to begin the drive back to Houston, we stopped to check out some sparrows on the ground beneath the oak trees. They were Chipping Sparrows, a species we had not encountered on the tour yet, and mixed in was a single Pine Warbler, though it disappeared before all could see it. A male Brown-headed Cowbird sang from the top of an oak tree.

We carried on back to Houston, stopping in for lunch at Wharton. In the grass next to the parking area at the restaurant there were several Buff-bellied Pipits foraging. The final species added to the trip list was a Bald Eagle, though it was seen only by myself and 'co-pilot' for the day, Marie, as it flew directly over the van. We attempted to check an area for Monk Parakeets in south Houston, but we aborted the mission due to heavy traffic. It had been a great tour, with some fantastic birds and a very nice group. We said our goodbyes and I tallied up the trip list to find we had seen 200 species of birds.

Annotated Bird List
(200 species)

Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autamnalis*

First sighting was at Brazos Bend State Park. Other notable sightings were at the boardwalk at South Padre Island and at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

Only one on tour, calling as it flew north overhead at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

One or two seen on the Rio Grande at Anzalduas County Park.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

One male in flight at Brazos Bend State Park.

Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera*

Small numbers at Estero Llano Grande State Park and at Santa Ana NWR.

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors*

Common throughout in wetland areas.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Quite common in wetland areas throughout tour.

Gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Several at Willow Lakes at Santa Ana NWR.

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*

Small numbers at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi, as well as at Laguna Atascosa NWR and at boardwalk at South Padre Island.

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula*

Seen several times in wetland areas, but best views from boardwalk at South Padre Island.

Mexican Duck *Anas diazi*

Pair flew past along Rio Grande at Salineno.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Small numbers encountered at Aransas NWR while on boat trip, as well as at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi and at Goose Island State Park.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

One seen by just the leader from boat at Aransas NWR. Up to 30 tallied at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Redhead *Aythya americana*

Flock seen from the moving bus near Corpus Christi. At Laguna Atascosa NWR, we saw a number in the distance mixed in with coots. We had very good looks at them at the boardwalk at S. Padre Island.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

Several females seen at 40 acre Lake at Brazos Bend State Park.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

First Lesser Scaup were at Aransas NWR. Flocks seen, though not well, from boat to Aransas NWR. Also at Laguna Atascosa, Anzalduas County Park and at Goose Island State Park.

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*

Noted on both visits to Aransas NWR and seen at Goose Island State Park, near Rockport.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Small numbers at Aransas NWR and at Goose Island State Park.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Quite a few mixed in with flocks of waterfowl & coots at Osprey Overlook at Laguna Atascosa NWR.

Plain Chachalaca *Ortalis vetula*

Fairly common at feeding stations throughout the lower valley.

Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus*

Five feeding in the grass next to parking lot at Bentsen State Park.

Great Northern Diver (Common Loon) *Gavia immer*

Seen from the boat at Aransas NWR. Also noted at Sunset Lake, Corpus Christi and at Goose Island SP.

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus*

Two on Alligator Pond at Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also seen at Willow Lakes at Santa Ana NWR.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

Common in wetland areas throughout.

American White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

Fairly common throughout. Often seen in flocks.

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*

A couple were at Goose Island State Park near Rockport.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

Several sightings, with best views at the boardwalk at South Padre Island.

American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*

Fantastic views of 2-3 bitterns at Brazos Bend State Park, at 40 Acre Lk.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One seen after dark beneath floodlights at harbor in Rockport as we ate dinner. Several roosting at Alligator Pond at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax violacea*

First at Zapata Boat Launch, and later in same day at S. Padre Island boardwalk. Also one found roosting at Valley Nature Center in Weslaco and several roosting at Alligator Pond at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

One seen very well at South Padre Island Boardwalk.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Several huddled up in tree at Brazos Bend State Park. Close to 20 also at Anzalduas County Park.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

Common in wetland areas throughout.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Common in wetland areas throughout.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens*

One or two seen dancing in the shallows at Aransas NWR from boat. Also at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi, as well as at South Padre Island Boardwalk and at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Fairly common in small numbers at wetlands. Best sightings from the Boardwalk at South Padre Island.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Found at a variety of wetland areas including Brazos Bend State Park at 40 Acre Lake, the Laguna Atascosa NWR, Zapata Memorial Boat Launch and at the South Padre Island Boardwalk and Goose Island State Park.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Fairly common in wetland areas.

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

We found white pelicans several times, including at Aransas NWR, Estero Llano Grande State Park and best sighting of all at Goose Island State Park.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Common along the coast.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Found at Aransas NWR, both from land and boat, as well as at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, the boardwalk at South Padre Island and at Goose Island State Park.

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*

Quite common throughout.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Seen regularly around freshwater wetlands. Excellent views at Brazos Bend State Park. Also seen well at Border Patrol Corral near Bentsen Pk.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Common throughout tour.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Fairly common throughout

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Common throughout near water.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

Found at Estero Llano Grande State Park and at Anzalduas County Park.

Hook-billed Kite *Chondrohierax uncinatus*

One male flew over twice as we explored Anzalduas County Park.

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

One seen at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*

Noted at Quinta Mazatlan where an immature sat nicely up in a dead tree. Others at Anzalduas Park and at feeders at Salineno.

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*

Seen often in open country and wetland areas.

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

One seen, just by front seat passengers in van, as we drove back to Houston on final day of tour.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Fairly common in the Rio Grande, where we often saw them on telephone poles and treetops along roadways.

White-tailed Hawk *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*

One on telephone pole along Hwy 16 near Hebbronville.

Grey Hawk *Buteo plagiatus*

Found at several Rio Grande locations including Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen State Park and the nearby border corral, as well as Anzalduas Park and Salineno.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

First sighting was of an adult on a telephone wire in the mist near our hotel in Rosenberg. Later seen at the border patrol corral, as well as at Bentsen State Park. Seen by a few observers at Wharton also.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Common throughout, most often seen from the van alongside the highway.

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans*

Brief sighting of one at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi. Excellent views later from the boardwalk at South Padre Island. Heard at Goose Island State Park as well.

Virginia Rail *Rallus limicola*

One seen at edge of marsh at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Sora *Porzana carolinensis*

Seen well from boardwalk at South Padre Island. Also noted at Estero Llano Grande State Park and at Willows Lake at Santa Ana NWR.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

Found at Brazos Bend State Park and also at the boardwalk at S. Padre Island.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Common in wetlands throughout, including an estimated 20,000 at Osprey Lookout in Laguna Atascosa NWR.

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis*

First sighting was in fields just outside of entrance to Brazos Bend State Park. Later seen in fields near Los Fresnos and at Goose Island State Park.

Whooping Crane *Grus americana*

First sighting was of one very distant Whooper at Aransas NWR. The next day we saw up to 10 from the boat at Aransas NWR and towards end of trip we saw several more at Goose Island State Park.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

Two sightings at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi, but both from moving van. Seen also at Jaimie Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Seen fairly often at wetlands including at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi, the boardwalk at South Padre Island and ponds at Santa Ana NWR.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

A few seen from the moving van at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi. Later seen well at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Found at Sunset Lake, Corpus Christi, as well as at the Zapata Boat Launch and Goose Island State Park.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Found at Zapata Boat Launch and at Goose Island State Park.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Fairly common throughout.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*

Found at Zapata Boat Launch and at Goose Island State Park.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

Encountered at Sunset Lake, near Corpus Christi, as well as at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch and at boardwalk at S. Padre Island.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

Found at Sunset Lake, Corpus Christi and at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

First sighting was at the harbour in Fulton/Rockport. Also found at Sunset Lake, as well as at Zapata Memorial Boat Launch and Goose Island State Park.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

Found at Zapata Memorial Boat Launch as well as at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Noted at Sunset Lake, Zapata Memorial Boat Launch and Goose Island State Park.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

One in non-breeding plumage at Goose Island State Park.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Fairly common at a number of locations including Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, Goose Island State Park, Santa Ana NWR, but best sighting was of a flock on the boardwalk at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

Only one or two seen at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Flocks at Zapata Memorial Boat Launch as well as at Estero Llano Grande State Park and Santa Ana NWR's Willow Lakes.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*

Three seen in flooded field at Goose Island State Park.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Fairly common in small numbers throughout.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

One at boardwalk at South Padre Island and another at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

First sighting was in a pond beside the road on our way to Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also seen at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch and at the boardwalk at South Padre Island.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

Fairly common at coastal locations including Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake, the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, S. Padre Island, and at Goose Island State Park.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

Found at several locations, with first sighting coming along the 'Big Tree Trail' at Aransas NWR. Other sightings from boat at Aransas, as well as at Sunset Lake, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa Ana and Goose Is. State Park.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*

Upwards of 100 at Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi. Perhaps a hundred visible from the boardwalk at South Padre Island, and smaller numbers at Goose Island State Park.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

Common at coastal locations like Rockport, Sunset Lake, S. Padre Island, and Goose Island State Park.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Found at Aransas NWR, Brazos Bend State Park, Sunset Lake and at the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

Noted at Sunset Lake, South Padre Island, Aransas NWR and the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Single bird at Zapata Memorial Boat Launch.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

We found them at most coastal locations including Aransas NWR, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, South Padre Island and Goose Island State Park.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

Encountered at most coastal locations such as Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake, Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, S. Padre Island and Goose Is. State Park.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

Most common 'small' tern at coastal locations during this time of year. We saw Forster's Terns at Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake, Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, S. Padre Island and Goose Island State Park.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Common throughout, especially in towns and cities.

Red-billed Pigeon *Patagioenas flavirostris*

Small numbers along Rio Grande at Salineno.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common throughout, especially in towns and cities.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*

Seen fairly often on tour. Our first was in a suburban neighborhood near Sunset Lake. We saw Inca Doves also at Quinta Mazatlan and the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco. Also at Estero Llano Grande State Park, Bentsen State Park and Salineno.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina*

Small, short-tailed doves seen at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Salineno, and Falcon State Park.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*

We first saw these 'skulking' doves beneath feeders at the Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen.

Subsequently seen at all other feeding stations; Laguna Atascosa, Santa Ana, Salineno, Quinta Mazatlan, etc.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

Common throughout.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

Common throughout.

Greater Roadrunner *Geococcyx californianus*

Two crossed dirt track in front of van along 'Dump Road' near Salineno.

Eastern Screech Owl *Megascops asio*

One of the 'McCall's' race, roosting beneath fronds of palm tree in the 'Tropical Zone' at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Pauraque *Nyctidromus abicollis*

Excellent views of two different roosting birds at Estero Llano Grande State Park. One was in 'Tropical Zone' and other was near Alligator Pond.

Buff-bellied Hummingbird *Amazilia yucatanensis*

Seen well at feeders at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen and at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*

At feeders at Estero Llano Grande State Park and at Quinta Mazatlan.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana*

Pair seen well at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen. Also seen well at Estero Llano Grande State Park and at Border Patrol Corral area.

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*

First sighting was along canal at Border Patrol Corral area. Also seen flying upriver along the Rio Grande at Salineno. Flyover also at Zapata County Park.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

Found at Aransas NWR, as well as Goose Island State Park and S. Padre Island boardwalk.

Golden-fronted Woodpecker *Melanerpes aurifrons*

Common throughout the Rio Grande, with first sighting at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen.

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*

Seen at Brazos Bend State Park.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*

Noted at Brazos Bend State Park and at Anzalduas County Park.

Ladder-backed Woodpecker *Dryobates scalaris*

Fairly common in the Rio Grande, with sightings at most feeding stations, including Laguna Atascosa, Quinta Mazatlan, Salineno etc.

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*

One drumming on dead tree at Brazos Bend State Park.

Northern Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

Common, especially along roadsides, with sightings nearly every day.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

Common, especially along roadsides, where we saw many of them each day.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds seen on two occasions. First sighting was at Aransas NWR, near the Big Tree Trail. The second was at Goose Island State Park on a fence post.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

A distant adult seen from atop the viewing tower at Santa Ana NWR. It flew and then landed on a water tower.

Red-crowned Amazon *Amazona viridigenalis*

Flock of perhaps 50 around golf course near entrance to Estero Llano Grande State Park in Weslaco.

Green Parakeet *Psittacara holochlorus*

Flock of perhaps a hundred came in to sit on telephone wires not far from our hotel in Harlingen on Ed Carey Drive. Seen also at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen.

Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*

Common throughout.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*

First sighting was at bridge over canal at Border Patrol Corral and nearby Bentsen State Park. Also seen at Anzalduas County Park.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pryocephalus rubinus*

Distant male seen through scope at Brazos Bend State Park. Also found at Estero Llano Grande State Park, the Border Patrol Corral area, Anzalduas County Park, Salineno and Zapata City Park.

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*

Big and bold flycatcher common in the Rio Grande where we had them almost daily, with sightings at most refuges and parks.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*

Seen, and heard, at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen, as well as at Anzalduas County Park.

Couch's Kingbird *Tyrannus couchii*

Very similar to Tropical Kingbird. Seen and heard at Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also at Border Patrol Corral area, and Salineno.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

One sailed overhead as we were on the boardwalk at South Padre Is. Another showed well at Anzalduas County Park.

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens*

Two seen nicely at Falcon State Park.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*

Seen regularly in open country. We saw our first Loggerhead at Aransas NWR, and had other sightings at Laguna Atascosa, South Padre Island, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Dump Road in Salineno, Falcon State Pk and Zapata City Park.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*

Found at Brazos Bend State Park, Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, the Border Patrol Corral area, and at Laguna Atascosa NWR.

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

First noted at Brazos Bend State Park as one sat still long enough for extended scope views. Also found at Laguna Atascosa along Kiskadee Trail and at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Green Jay *Cyanocorax luxuosus*

Quite common through the lower Rio Grande Valley. Our first sighting was at the roadside rest stop near Sarita. Later, they were regulars at feeding stations.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

A few were noted on the tour, within close range to Houston. Absent from the Rio Grande Valley.

Chihuahuan Raven *Corvus cryptoleucus*

Two seen flying about near the Zapata Memorial Boat Launch, and another at Zapata City Park, also in flight.

Cedar Waxwing *Bombcilla cedrorum*

Thirty or so at Brazos Bend State Park on our first day of birding. We then saw one more at Salineno.

Black-crested Titmouse *Baeolophus atricristatus*

Common in the Rio Grande and present at most parks and refuges, especially where feeders present.

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*

Several at Brazos Bend State Park.

Verdin *Auriparus flaviceps*

Found at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Laguna Atascosa, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Salineno and Falcon State Park.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*

Seen often in flight with other swallows. Found at Brazos Bend State Park, and Laguna Atascosa, boardwalk at South Padre Island, Estero Llano Grande State Park and at Santa NWR.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

The first Purple Martin of the tour was at the marina in Rockport as we waited to board the boat. Also noted at South Padre Island, the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Quinta Mazatlan and at Goose Island State Park.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

Small numbers mixed in with other swallows at Brazos Bend State Park, Sunset Lake near Corpus Christi, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR, Anzalduas County Park and Goose Island State Park.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Quite a few encounters at places including Brazos Bend State Park, Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake, Laguna Atascosa, South Padre Island, etc.

American Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

Several seen around nests on the dam at Anzalduas County Park.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*

Found at Brazos Bend State Park, Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR and at Border Patrol Corral.

Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa*

Several found at Brazos Bend State Park.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*

Common throughout in woodland areas.

Cactus Wren *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*

Large, loud wren found at Salineno and at Falcon State Park.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

Seen on last day of birding at Goose Island State Park.

Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*

Seen well at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen, as well as at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Seen well at Brazos Bend State Park and again in the 'Topical Zone' at Estero Llano Grande State Park.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Heard more often than seen. Sightings at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Santa Ana NWR and at Salineno.

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea*

Fairly common throughout.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

Common throughout.

Long-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma longirostre*

Numerous sightings at locations including Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Bentsen State Park, and at Salineno.

Curve-billed Thrasher *Toxostoma curvirostre*

Found at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park, Valley Nature Center in Weslaco, Quinta Mazatlan, Bentsen State Park and at Salineno.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common throughout.

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

Excellent views of male at Anzalduas County Park.

Clay-coloured Thrush *Turdus grayi*

Noted at Valley Nature Center in Weslaco, as well as at Quinta Mazatlan and at feeding station at Salineno.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*

Many seen at Brazos Bend State Park on our first morning of birding.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

Seen quite well at Estero Llano Grande State Park and also at Anzalduas County Park. On grassy lawn in Wharton we had several as well.

House Finch *Heamorrhous mexicanus*

Male and female seen in Zapata.

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*

A number found at Brazos Bend State Park and again later at Bentsen State Park. Single bird was at Salineno.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*

One with American Goldfinches at Bentsen State Park's Kingfisher Lookout.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii*

Many migrant Lincoln's Sparrows encountered throughout trip.

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*

Seen quite well at Brazos Bend State Park and again later on at Goose Island State Park.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*

A few seen rather briefly at Brazos Bend State Park.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*

Several sightings at Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Border Patrol Corral and at Goose Island State Park.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*

Flock on ground in neighbourhood near Goose Island State Park.

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*

Good looks at several as they foraged on ground at Anzalduas County Park.

Black-throated Sparrow *Amphispiza bilineata*

Two seen quite well at Falcon S.P.

Cassin's Sparrow *Peucaea cassinii*

One singing from roadside bush along Dump Road near Salineno.

Olive Sparrow *Arremonops rufivirgatus*

Found at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park in Harlingen and at Laguna Atascosa NWR where one came repeatedly to pond to drink and bath. Also at Bentsen State Park and the border patrol corral area, as well as at Salineno.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturna magna*

Best sighting was of a couple of Eastern Meadowlarks alongside of road near Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also seen in fields at Goose Island State Pk.

Western Meadowlark *Sturna neglecta*

Several in grassy field at Anzalduas County Park.

Audubon's Oriole *Icterus graduacauda*

Two came in to feeders after much anticipation, at Salineno.

Altamira Oriole *Icterus gularis*

Found at feeders at Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also at Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa ANA NWR, Bentsen State Park, the Border Patrol Corral area, and best of all at Salineno feeders.

Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus*

Just one seen on tour, a male, at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

One of the most abundant birds on the tour. Large flocks often at feeding stations.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

Just one, a male, in neighborhood near Goose Island State Park.

Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*

Several seen well at Rest Stop along Hwy 77, south of Sarita.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

Seen in fields near Brazos Bend State Park. Also noted in neighborhood near Sunset Lake and at lunch stop in Wharton.

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major*

One 'dark-eyed' female in with some Great-tailed Grackles at Goose Is. State Park.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Abundant throughout, but especially in the Rio Grande Valley where huge numbers gather to roost.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

Male seen by leader and one other observer at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen.

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata*

Common throughout.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Fairly common, especially in marshy areas such as Brazos Bend State Pk, the boardwalk at South Padre Island, Estero Llano Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR, Salineno and Goose Island State Park.

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayumi*

One male in willows along the short Kiskadee Trail at Laguna Atascosa NWR.

Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum*

Just one on tour at Brazos Bend State Park.

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*

One hopping about on ground with other birds in neighborhood near Goose Island State Park.

Myrtle Warbler *Setophaga coronata*

Common migrant throughout.

Audubon's Warbler *Setophaga auduboni*

One hiding in the treetops at Zapata City Park.

Black-throated Grey Warbler *Setophaga nigrescens*

One male high in treetops at Zapata City Park.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

One male briefly seen in trees along canal at the Border Patrol Corral area.

Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus*

One, a Mexican rarity, seen at the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla*

Singles at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park and at Quinta Mazatlan.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Common throughout, especially at feeding stations.

Pyrrhuloxia *Cardinalis sinuatus*

Seen quite well singing from flowering bush along roadway as we approached Salineno.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

Several at feeders at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park.

MAMMALS

Nine-banded Armadillo *Dasyopus novemcinctus*
Eastern Fox Squirrel *Sciurus niger*
Hispid Cotton Rat *Sigmodon hispidus*
Coypu (Nutria) *Myocastor coypus*
Desert Cottontail *Sylvilagus audubonii*
Bobcat *Lynx rufus*
Coyote *Canus latrans*
Collared Peccary *Tayassu tajacu*
White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*
Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

REPTILES

Red-eared Slider *Chrysemys scripta*
Eastern Fence Lizard *Sceloporus undulatus*
American Alligator *Alligator mississippiensis*

BUTTERFLIES

Pipevine Swallowtail *Papilio philenor*
Little Yellow *Eurema lisa*
Grey Hairstreak *Strymon melinus*
American Snout *Libytheana carinenta*
Gulf Fritillary *Agraulis vanillae*
Phaon Crescent *Phyciodes phaon*
Bordered Patch *Chlosyne lacinia*
Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*
Mexican Bluewing *Myscelia ethusa*
Empress Leilia *Asterocampa leilia*
Monarch *Danaus plexippus*
Queen *Danaus gilippus*
Teleus Longtail *Urbanus teleus*
Mournful Duskywing *Erynnis tristis*
Common Checkered Skipper *Pyrgus communis*