

# Texas

Whooping Cranes & Rio Grande

22 Feb – 04 Mar 2017



*Texas highlights (Clockwise from top left): Aplomado Falcon • Rose-throated Becard • Audubon's Oriole • Whooping Crane • Greater Roadrunner • Green Jay. Photos © Peter Cox, Paul Daunter & Chris Charlesworth/Limosa*

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

## Texas | Whooping Cranes & Rio Grande

Leader – Chris Charlesworth

Tour participants – Julia & Peter Cox, Ray Cruise, Paul & Sue Daunter, Karen & Mark Elliott, Allan Hansen.

**DAY 1** – Meeting the group in the arrivals hall of the Houston Airport this afternoon, we emerged from the air conditioning into the lovely warm and sunny weather. The rest of the afternoon was spent in the van en route from Houston to our first hotel in Rosenberg. Along the way we saw a few birds, including common species such as European Starling, Mourning Dove, Feral (Rock) Pigeon and Great-tailed Grackle, as well as a few more interesting ones including Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrel and an Anhinga. We enjoyed our first feast together as a group at Chili's, a local establishment not far from our hotel, before disappearing into our rooms for some much-needed sleep.

**DAY 2** – We emerged from our hotel just after 7 AM and found ourselves somewhat shrouded in mist, however that burned off fairly quickly. Before we had even left the grounds of our hotel we added a few birds to our list; Orange-crowned Warbler, Northern Mockingbird, Cattle Egret and Mourning Dove. We fought the morning rush and made it to Brazos Bend State Park by just after 8 AM. Along the way we stopped to view a field where 42 Sandhill Cranes were counted. Some of the majestic cranes engaged in a playful courtship dance briefly as well, to our delight.

At Brazos Bend State Park we embarked on the 1.2 mile long, 40 Acre Lake Trail and enjoyed a variety of habitats included oak trees draped in Spanish Moss, and a lovely lake with surrounding wetlands. Over 40 species of birds were noted on our walk, with the highlight for most of us being the incredible views of American Bitterns only a few feet away. Other herons and wading birds noted here included White Ibis, Little Blue Heron, Great Blue Heron and Great Egret. Anhingas also put on a nice show, posing for photos. Common Gallinules and American Coots wailed from the wetland areas, while Pied-billed Grebes popped up in plain sight not far from us. In the trees we enjoyed a plethora of species, several of which were east Texas birds such as Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and Red-bellied Woodpecker. Others included Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warblers, Boat-tailed Grackles and noisy Carolina Wrens. We encountered several American Alligators, some of which were quite impressive as they lay next to the path waiting for a meal to wander into their mouths. Luckily they didn't have a taste for birders today. Butterflies enjoyed the gorgeous weather and we identified Giant Swallowtail, Goatweed Leafwing and Cloudless Sulphur. A spectacular bright green dragonfly was identified as an Eastern Pondhawk. As for mammals here we tallied Eastern Gray Squirrel, Eastern Fox Squirrel and White-tailed Deer. We left Brazos Bend quite content with our time here.

We drove for a while and then stopped to pick up lunch in the city of El Campo before heading to Shelley/Lions Park in Refugio. It didn't take us long to find several birders, decked out in camouflage hiding in the trees here and we knew they were looking at the bird which we had come here to see, a Golden-crowned Warbler. This species only ventures north of the Mexican border as a casual stray so we were quite happy to tick it off on our lists, and it was a lifer for myself as well as all others present. The warbler was hanging out with a loose flock of birds that included Black-and-white Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Hermit Thrush and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. We had a fantastic view of a male Green Kingfisher here, though it was rather brief. A noisy Great Kiskadee showed well in a distant tree as we viewed through the scope. Flocks of wintering sparrows included Chipping and Lincoln's and we saw a good number of Northern Cardinals here. All in all it was a very productive stop after which we made our way to Rockport where we spent the night. Dinner was delicious at a local establishment right on the shoreline called the Oyster House.

**DAY 3** – We watched the sun come up over the Gulf of Mexico this morning from the harbour in Fulton / Rockport. At 7:30 AM we boarded the Skimmer and made our way towards the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, a 20-minute crossing over a nice calm bay. The captain took one look at us and dubbed us 'power birders', a fitting term we thought. Once at the refuge we explored the protected waters, hoping to find one of the world's rarest birds, Whooping Cranes. We were not disappointed. We saw several family groups of what is North America's tallest bird, and our captain said his goal was to make us sick of seeing Whooping Cranes. I tell you he almost succeeded and we saw close to 20 of the impressive birds today, some of which were at very close range. Close to 70 species were noted this morning on our boat trip, beginning with the sighting of an immature Cooper's Hawk right at the harbour. As we crossed the open water we saw several Common Loons as well as waterfowl included Bufflehead, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Red-breasted Mergansers. Herons and egrets were plentiful and we had lovely views of Reddish Egrets as well as Tricolored Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, an American Bittern and a flock of flyover White-faced Ibis. A few shorebirds showed themselves with highlights including a Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper and

Ruddy Turnstone. Raptors such as Osprey, Crested Caracara and a Northern Harrier were noted, and gulls such as Ring-billed, Lesser Black-backed and the ever present Laughing Gull were in attendance. A lucky spotting involved a Clapper Rail in the marsh as it called away loudly. Once back on dry land we headed back to our hotel and picked up our bags before visiting the grocery store to pick up provisions for our lunch.

We took lunch with us to Sunset Lake Park near Corpus Christi where we ate and then strolled down the path looking for shorebirds. We were not disappointed and we added a nice list of species to our trip total including Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Snowy Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers, American Oystercatcher and more. Out on the open ocean a flock of mixed American Wigeon and Northern Pintail bobbed about in the waves and terns noted here included Forster's, Caspian and Royal. Our next stop was in an industrial area of Corpus Christi along the Nueces River at Tule Lake. We stood beneath the shelter in the much-appreciated shade and tallied more waders. A large flock of Long-billed Dowitchers whirled about, with a few Lesser Yellowlegs mixed in for good measure. Least Sandpipers probed about in the mud right in front of us allowing us to easily see their olive/yellow coloured legs. A pair of Barn Swallows was investigating the shelter, perhaps thinking of nesting, and were unhappy about our presence. Since we still had a long drive to the Rio Grande, we departed and followed Hwy 77 south to Harlingen where we spent the night. Dinner at the Texas Roadhouse was delicious and enjoyed by all.

**DAY 4** – Our first morning in the Rio Grande began with us taking a number of detours in the area to the east of Harlingen to avoid road construction as we attempted to get to Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. Our detail wasn't a complete waste of time since we did see a few birds including Western Meadowlarks and a group of Lark Sparrows on some grassy lawns near Rio Hondo. Finally, we made it to Laguna Atascosa and enjoyed some nice birding in the open grassland habitat along the entrance road into the park. Eastern Meadowlarks sang from fence posts, Loggerhead Shrikes were seen at various locations and we had good views of a stunning White-tailed Kite. A pair of Long-billed Curlews strolled through the long grass and a few Savannah Sparrows popped up from their grassy hiding places. Best of all however was a Greater Roadrunner that was trotting along the verge next to the road. We parked, turned the engine off, opened the doors and the roadrunner came right past us.

At the reserve we made our way to the visitor's center and explored the feeders and trail system that runs through the area. Birds were plentiful, especially Great-tailed Grackles, which numbered in the hundreds. Our first views of gaudy Green Jays were just as incredible as we hoped they would be. Several Plain Chachalacas fed on orange halves, while Black-crested Titmice called from the mesquite trees. Golden-fronted Woodpeckers and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers showed themselves and we enjoyed lengthy scope views of a White-eyed Vireo as it sang. A couple of tiny Verdins also appeared, as did mixed flocks of Myrtle and Orange-crowned Warblers. Overhead, Turkey Vultures teetered on tilted wings and we saw several Ospreys throughout the day. Sue spotted an Olive Sparrow as it hopped about quietly on the ground and, after some patience, we were treated to amazing looks at a pair of brilliantly-coloured Altamira Orioles as they came in to feed. We made our way to Osprey Lookout and had lunch there, though we didn't see too much, perhaps due to a howling wind. After lunch we returned to the visitor's center and had some of the best birding of the trip. A park volunteer offered to show us a roosting Common Pauraque, an excellent score since this nocturnal species is not always seen during the day. Feeling as though we were on a high, we strolled back towards the center when another fellow motioned for us to come forward as he had found a male Tropical Parula. We had great looks at this rare warbler as it foraged amongst the mesquite trees.

On our way back towards Harlingen our luck continued. A telephone wire had eight or so kingbirds lined up along it, and the majority turned out to be Couch's Kingbirds, which we determined by their calls. One was the nearly identical Tropical Kingbird, again which gave up its identity by calling. Raptors were abundant as we made our way home and Allan began counting them, coming up with a total of 12 species for the day. A Merlin, several American Kestrels, White-tailed Hawks, Harris's Hawks, Ospreys, Crested Caracaras and the best of all an Aplomado Falcon were noted late this afternoon. We went out for Mexican food tonight at a Harlingen establishment called Los Carneros.

**DAY 5** – The forecast threatened thundershowers today, but for the most part we were pretty lucky, enjoying warm temperatures throughout and only a few little splatterings of rain. As we assembled outside our hotel at dawn a group of noisy parrots flew overhead, though we couldn't tell which kind they were. We followed the freeway from Harlingen south to Brownsville and made our way to the Sabal Palm Sanctuary, situated right on the Mexican border. We paused along the way to view our first Chihuahuan Raven of the tour. Once at the refuge we headed into the very impressive old plantation house that is now the visitor's center and the gentleman behind the desk offered to take us to see a nesting Great Horned Owl. We saw the owl sitting on her nest hidden away in a palm tree and thanked the friendly fellow for sharing. We strolled through the lovely stand

of jungle-like habitat of native Sabal Palms, sifting through a few mixed groups of birds that included Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren and more. Great Kiskadees were easily located by their loud and boisterous calls. From a hide we scanned the resaca where our first Least Grebes of the tour were seen. Also noted on the water were Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Mottled Duck, American Coots and Common Gallinule. In a tree on the far side of the pond an immature Gray Hawk was rather briefly seen before being replaced by an immature Cooper's Hawk. We carried on to a boardwalk through the wetland, spotting a Common Yellowthroat or two skulking in the understory. A waterthrush, either Louisiana or Northern, called and was seen by Peter hiding in the vegetation. Birds were singing, with White-eyed Vireos, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wrens and the like, but they were rather hard to see in the windy and somewhat stormy conditions. We did see a gorgeous butterfly that we identified as a Red-bordered Pixie. We returned to the feeders and were happy to find that 10 or so White-tipped Doves had decided to show themselves, alongside Green Jays, Altamira Oriole, Black-crested Titmouse and a rather shy male Buff-bellied Hummingbird. A female type Hooded Oriole appeared a couple of times at the orange halves. We had one more look at hummingbird feeders near the visitor's center and were rewarded with views of a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

We bid Sabal Palms adieu and had some lunch before heading east to South Padre Island. We paused along the way at a shallow tidal bay where we saw our first Black Skimmers of the tour, along with a variety of other gulls and terns including a winter plumage Gull-billed Tern. A few shorebirds were picked up here too with Long-billed Dowitchers, 'Western' Willets, American Oystercatchers, Spotted Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone and Black-necked Stilt in attendance.

Once at South Padre Island we visited the birding center and headed off on the boardwalk through the mangrove wetlands where the birding was very good. We had point blank looks at most species here and the real highlights included a nice Sora poking along the shore as well as our first Green Herons, and good looks at Redhead and a flock of Roseate Spoonbills. A few American Alligators were basking in the sun as groups of photographers snapped pictures. To finish off on South Padre we headed for an area of sandy beach to see if any birds were present, but being a sunny, hot Sunday, the beach was crowded with people. We saw a nice group of rather tame Sanderlings here and loads of Laughing Gulls however. This evening we had dinner once again at the Texas Roadhouse, where the steaks were delicious.

**DAY 6** – We left Harlingen 'in the dust' and headed west towards Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. Before we even left the parking lot we scanned through a group of mixed species including Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-and-white Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Black-crested Titmouse and the like. A Tropical Parula had been seen just prior to our arrival but had moved on. A Peregrine Falcon perched on a distant water tower was pointed out to us. Feeders outside the center were bustling with Red-winged Blackbirds, Plain Chachalacas, Green Jays and an Eastern Fox Squirrel. We did the Pintail Lakes Trail, which took us through the thorn-scrub habitat to an area of wetlands. Dominant species included noisy Great Kiskadees, Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Orange-crowned Warblers and more. At the wetlands there were a few ducks about, such as Blue-winged and Green-winged teals, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mottled Duck and two female Ruddy Ducks. Savannah Sparrow was seen quite nicely along the edge of the pond. A Sora was seen very well as it slinked through the weeds, while a Marsh Wren remained mostly hidden away. Our first Common Ground-Dove of the tour was seen all too briefly as it disappeared before all members of the group could have a good look. An introduced Coypu, a large South American rodent, was seen in the wetland, new for our list of animals seen on the tour. We finally caught a glimpse of the Rio Grande this morning and the woodlands of northern Mexico on the other side. As we followed a trail along the north side of the river we had good views of our first Northern Beardless Tyrannulet of the trip. A few other small mixed flocks were encountered with Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and our first Lesser Goldfinch of the trip. We returned to the visitor's center where we had a picnic lunch.

After lunch we scoped a nice adult Gray Hawk from the parking lot and saw several Inca Doves in the trees as well. We hit the trails again, though we walked rather slowly after eating lunch and by now the sun had come out and the temperatures had soared to the mid thirty degrees Celsius. At Willow Lakes we scoped the wetland hoping for the big kingfisher, the Ringed, but we could only find a male Belted Kingfisher as a consolation prize. Several Least Grebes were noted here however, and a dazzling male Altamira Oriole put on a nice show. Skulking in the underbrush was a House Wren that we eventually had looks at. On our way back towards the visitor's center we had brief views of Clay-coloured Thrush, an uncommon Central American species that just barely enters the United States along the Rio Grande.

To finish off the day we slowly cruised down a dirt road through an agricultural area and our efforts were rewarded with the sighting of a Burrowing Owl sitting on top of a levee. Also in the area was a flock of Western

Meadowlarks. Finishing on a high note we made our way to McAllen and checked into our hotel to enjoy some much needed air-conditioning before venturing out for dinner at the Olive Garden.

**DAY 7** – Our first port of call this morning was at Estero Llano Grande State Park. Before we even left the parking area we had seen a Curve-billed Thrasher, a new species for our trip list. As we neared the visitor's center, birds were numerous at the feeders with Plain Chachalacas, Northern Cardinals, Golden-fronted Woodpecker and more. Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were seen, but rather briefly as they zipped by. From the viewing deck, overlooking a wetland area we saw Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Mottled Duck, Least Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, and an assortment of herons, egrets and ibis. We walked through the 'Tropical Zone' and found a couple of Clay-coloured Thrushes. As we were enjoying good views of the thrush, our target species appeared and showed off nicely, a male Rose-throated Becard. This species rarely strays north of the Mexican border. Very content, we hit the trails to look for more birds. It was hot and sunny, but there was a strong wind that cooled things off for us. Ray spotted our first Vermilion Flycatcher of the tour, a gorgeous male. On the various ponds and pools we had a nice selection of waterfowl including quite a few Cinnamon Teal and one or two female Ruddy Ducks. Our first Sharp-shinned Hawk of the tour, a tiny adult male, flapped his way by and we saw our first Purple Martins at their condominium nest box. At Llano Grande Lake, though the wind made it difficult to view through the scope as we stood up on the exposed dyke, we saw Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Long-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper and more.

We picked up lunch and took it with us to Anzalduas Park, a small somewhat manicured park that is snuggled right up against the Rio Grande. As we chomped away at our sandwiches, the first House Finches of the tour appeared rather briefly, while Ospreys called from overhead. Down along the river we picked up our first Black Phoebes of the tour, as well as several Northern Rough-winged and Cave Swallows. Out on the river, and quite possibly in Mexico, we saw a group of Lesser Scaup with a single immature Snow Goose and a single female Canvasback accompanying them. An Eastern Bluebird paused briefly, long enough for us to add her to the list, and several Killdeer paraded by on the grass. Before we left the park we fanned out across a grassy field in search of Sprague's Pipits. We flushed several and heard them call as they flew up into the sky. After an afternoon siesta, we headed out once again in the late afternoon hoping to see some parrots and parakeets. We succeeded in finding a massive roost of Green Parakeets in McAllen, with hundreds of birds present, as well as possibly into the hundreds of thousands of Great-tailed Grackles. The Red-crowned Parrots, on the other hand, did not cooperate, though in the process of searching for them we did see Cedar Waxwings, Black-crested Titmouse, Clay-coloured Thrush, Great Kiskadee and Tropical Kingbird.

After dinner at Chili's we made our way down to Bentsen State Park where we heard two Eastern Screech Owls calling, a male and a female. Also heard were several Common Paurques. Paul and Mark found a Giant Toad, hopping about as well.

**DAY 8** – Our first destination this morning was not far from our hotel, the McAllen Nature Center. We hoped to find an Audubon's Oriole here, a species that doesn't often venture this far east in the Rio Grande Valley, but has been frequenting this location for several weeks. Luck was on our side and as we watched feeders, a young lady came to inform us the oriole had been found near the park entrance. We had lovely looks at the male Audubon's Oriole, a species only found in North America in a very limited range along the Rio Grande. Others species noted here included a flock of Cedar Waxwings, several Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Purple Martins overhead, and our first Cactus Wrens.

We then drove west towards Rio Grande City and we noticed the gradual change in habitat to a more arid region. This part of the valley is less inhabited than the Harlingen & McAllen areas as well. We paused to pick up sandwiches, which took a little longer than usual, due to a very slow-paced working fellow in the shop, and took our lunch with us to our next destination, Salineno. We first scanned up and down the Rio Grande with hopes of spotting a Ringed Kingfisher. No luck there, but there were birds about including Osprey, Gray Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Harris's Hawk, and a rather brief fly-by sighting of a Red-billed Pigeon. Up at the old DeWind's property we watched feeders that were quite busy with patrons such as Green Jay, Altamira and Audubon's orioles, Golden-fronted and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Northern Cardinal, Olive Sparrow, Inca Dove, Great Kiskadee, Black-crested Titmouse and the usual flock of resident Red-winged Blackbirds. We returned to the river and had a picnic there before making our way to Chapeno and the El Rio RV Park. I stopped the van at the entrance, honked the horn and an old chap came out to collect our money. We drove down to the Rio Grande once again and scanned for kingfishers without the desired result. Birds we did see here included Black Phoebe, Spotted Sandpiper, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Verdin and Purple Martins. On our way back to Rio Grande City we stopped in the town of Roma and enjoyed a nice refreshing ice cream. Dinner tonight, at Chili's, was very good, after which we returned to our hotel for the evening.

**DAY 9** – This morning we got a slightly earlier start from our base in Rio Grande City and we made our way back to the Rio Grande at Salineno with high hopes of picking up one or two target species. We were not disappointed as two hefty Ringed Kingfishers showed themselves this morning. In addition to the kingfishers we had satisfactory looks at several Red-billed Pigeons as they hurtled past at treetop level along the banks of the river. We popped back up to the old Dewind property to view the feeders one last time before leaving the area and again, it was well worthwhile. Feeder attendants included Altamira Oriole, Black-crested Titmouse, Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Long-billed Thrasher and Olive Sparrow, a nice list of Rio Grande specialities.

Our next stop was at Falcon State Park where we walked about on the trails through the comparatively arid habitat and found several new bird species including Pyrrhuloxia, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Black-throated Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird and Bewick's Wren. After picking up lunch in Zapata we made our way down to the little city park where we had a picnic and then proceeded to search for the area specialty, White-collared Seedeater. We searched around a little pond surrounded by weeds and bulrushes and found species such as Blue-winged Teal, Vermilion Flycatcher and finally a lovely little male White-collared Seedeater. From Zapata we began the drive back to Rockport, taking about 3.5 hours, with a pit stop in Alice. Raptors were numerous along the way and included American Kestrel, White-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara, Osprey and Turkey Vultures. We had our final dinner together as a group back at the Oyster House, a fitting place for a meal tonight since it was the opening evening of 'Oysterfest' in Rockport.

**DAY 10** – Our last morning in Texas and the weather changed significantly over night. This morning it was cool and overcast. We made our way from Rockport to Goose Island State Park, where we tallied a long list of birds. New to our trip list were Greater Scaup, Eared Grebe and a Gray Catbird, and in addition to the new species we saw many others. In the wetlands we enjoyed lovely views of Roseate Spoonbills, along with Reddish Egret, Tricolored Herons, Blue-winged Teal, Clapper Rail, and more. Waders included Killdeer, Black-bellied Plover, Least Sandpiper and Greater Yellowlegs. Out on the open ocean there were Red-breasted Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Horned Grebe, Brown Pelican and others. Brushy areas along the shore harboured Swamp and Savannah sparrows, Common Yellowthroat, Brown-headed Cowbird and Red-winged Blackbirds.

We then began the drive back towards Houston, with raptors again being quite numerous along the way; Red-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Turkey and Black vultures and Northern Harrier. We paused for lunch in Wharton and while we ate we witnessed a car accident outside. Free entertainment! Nobody was injured, which was a good thing. We headed for the south end of Houston and the Sims Bayou Nature Center. A very friendly lady came out and greeted us and took us back to the feeders where we quickly saw our target species; Monk Parakeets. The lady told us there was an Eastern Screech Owl roosting in a box in the back of the property so we excitedly followed her down to the bayou. Only a couple of us saw the 'red' morph owl before it disappeared back into its box. We waited quite a while just in case the owl reappeared, but unfortunately it did not. Our final stop of the tour was at Jesse Jones Nature Park where we spent a little over an hour exploring the pine forests. Several new species were added to our list including White-throated Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Fish Crow, Pine Warbler and American Goldfinch. Our trip list had nearly reached 200 species, and we headed to the Houston airport where I said goodbye to the group. It had been a fantastic tour, with great birds and excellent company.

**Annotated List of Birds Recorded***(Total species - 198)***Black-bellied Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Seen fairly regularly on tour, with majority of sightings occurring while we were driving or outside our hotel in the mornings as the birds traveled from roosts. Locations we saw them included Brazos Bend SP & Goose Island SP, amongst others.

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*

One immature bird seen on the Rio Grande at Anzalduas Park.

**Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*

Pair seen in flight at Brazos Bend SP.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

Fairly common. First noted from boat at Aransas NWR. Seen later at most wetland locations including the boardwalk at South Padre Island, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Goose Island SP.

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana*

Noted at Sunset Lake Park near Corpus Christi and on the resaca at Sabal Palm Sanctuary near Brownsville.

**Mottled Duck** *Anas fulvigula*

Fairly common at wetlands. We saw them at Aransas NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, South Padre Island boardwalk, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Anzalduas Park and Goose Island SP.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors*

Fairly common in wetland areas including Aransas NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, boardwalk at South Padre Island, Santa Ana NWR and Goose Island SP.

**Cinnamon Teal** *Anas cyanoptera*

Up to a dozen tallied on wetlands at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

Seen on wetlands as Santa Ana NWR and at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

First sighting was from boat at Aransas NWR. Female later seen at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis*

First sighting was at Sunset Lake Park near Corpus Christi, and again at Tule Lake. Other locations include Santa Ana NWR and Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Canvasback** *Aythya valisineria*

One female on Rio Grande at Anzalduas Park.

**Redhead** *Aythya americana*

Sightings occurred from boat at Aransas NWR as well as at the boardwalk on South Padre Island and at Goose Island SP.

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*

Seen at Aransas NWR from boat, at Goose Island SP and on the Rio Grande at Anzalduas Park.

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marilis*

One male with Lesser Scaup at Goose Island SP.

**Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola*

Fairly numerous on boat trip at Aransas NWR and at Goose Island SP.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

One noted from boat at Aransas NWR and later in trip another seen at Goose Island SP.

**Hooded Merganser** *Lophodytes cucullatus*

Male and female seen on boat trip at Aransas NWR.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Seen from boat trip at Aransas NWR, as well as at Sunset Lake Park near Corpus Christi. Also at Goose Island SP and South Padre Island.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Two female types on ponds at Santa Ana NWR and two more females at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Plain Chachalaca** *Ortalis vetula*

First encounter was at feeding stations at Laguna Atascosa NWR, with later sightings at Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, and at feeder at Salineno.

**Great Northern Diver (Common Loon)** *Gavia immer*

Quite numerous in the Rockport area with sightings from our boat trip into Aransas NWR and later in the trip at Goose Island SP.

**Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus*

We first saw this species on the resaca at Sabal Palm Sanctuary near Brownsville. Later sightings occurred at Santa Ana NWR and at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*

Common in wetland areas with best sightings at Brazos Bend SP. Later at Aransas NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, South Padre Island, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Goose Island SP.

**Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

One noted from boat at Aransas NWR and one or two more towards end of tour from Goose Island SP.

**Black-necked (Eared) Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Noted at Goose Island SP.

**American White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus*

Common throughout, especially in wetland areas.

**White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi*

Small numbers at Aransas NWR, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, and Goose Island SP.

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja*

A couple flew over our boat at Aransas NWR and at Laguna Atascosa we noted a pair on the far side of the lake. Seen well at both South Padre Island from the boardwalk and at Goose Island SP.

**American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus*

Up to 5 seen exceptionally well at Brazos Bend SP, and another seen well from boat at Aransas NWR.

**Yellow-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax violacea*

Two, an adult and an immature, noted at shallow bay as we approached South Padre Island.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

Noted only a couple of times, from the moving van as we traveled along. Once near Brazos Bend SP, and once on the way to Laguna Atascosa NWR.

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*

Common in wetland areas throughout.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

Common in wetland areas throughout.

**Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens*

First noted from boat trip at Aransas NWR, and later at Sunset Lake Park. Also seen well on South Padre Island and at Goose Island SP. Several white morph birds noted as well.

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens*

Great views from boardwalk at South Padre Island, and one also seen at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor*

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

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*

Small numbers noted at Brazos Bend SP, South Padre Island boardwalk, Estero Llano Grande SP, and Goose Island SP.

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*

Fairly common in wetland areas with best observations from the Boardwalk at South Padre Island.

**American White Pelican** *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

First sightings from boat at Aransas NWR. Also found at Sunset Lake Park, Tule Lake, Falcon SP and Goose Island SP.

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Common along the coast and noted from boat trip at Aransas NWR, and at Sunset Lake Park, South Padre Island and Goose Island SP.

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

The smaller cormorant, noted from boat at Aransas NWR, as well as S. Padre Island boardwalk, Estero Llano Grande SP, Anzalduas Park and Goose Island SP.

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*

Quite common with sightings at Brazos Bend SP, Aransas NWR, where we watched one take on an eel, Sunset Lake Park, South Padre Island, Santa Ana NWR, and at Salineno.

**Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga*

We saw our first one as we drove from Houston to Rosenberg. Excellent views had by all at Brazos Bend SP. Also seen at ponds at Santa Ana NWR and along the Rio Grande at Anzalduas Park.

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*

Common throughout tour.

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*

Fairly common throughout, but not quite as common as Turkey Vulture.

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

Quite common around water.

**White-tailed Kite** *Elanus leucurus*

First, and best sighting, was of two birds on the entrance road to Laguna Atascosa NWR. Later seen in open areas near Sabal Palm Sanctuary, as well as at Santa Ana NWR.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*

An immature at Estero Llano Grande SP, and later a single bird was seen at the Rio Grande at Salineno.

**Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*

We had an immature Cooper's Hawk at the harbour in Fulton as we waited to board our boat. Other sightings were made at Laguna Atascosa NWR and at the Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Northern Harrier** *Circus hudsonius*

Our first was a female at Aransas NWR, seen from the boat. Subsequently, one en route to South Padre Island, as well as at Santa Ana NWR. We saw one near Salineno and finally, a male at Goose Island SP.

**Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*

Surprisingly common in the lower Rio Grande Valley, where seen almost daily, most often from the van as we traveled. Also noted at Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana NWRs, as well as at Salineno and at Falcon Dam SP.

**White-tailed Hawk** *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*

We saw our first of this South Texas speciality soaring overhead in open country near Laguna Atascosa NWR. Other sightings occurred as we traveled in the van.

**Gray Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus*

Our first was an immature perched next to the resaca briefly at Sabal Palm Sanctuary. Others seen at Santa Ana NWR, Salineno and at Anzalduas Park.

**Red-shouldered Hawk** *Buteo lineatus*

Seen rather briefly at Brazos Bend SP.

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*

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

**Clapper Rail** *Rallus crepitans*

One seen from boat at Aransas NWR and another seen at Goose Island SP.

**Sora** *Porzana carolinensis*

One seen well at boardwalk at South Padre Island and another at Pintail Lakes at Santa Ana NWR.

**Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata*

Fairly common in wetland areas at Brazos Bend SP, Sabal Palm Sanctuary and at Santa Ana NWR.

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*

Common in wetlands throughout.

**Sandhill Crane** *Grus canadensis*

Flock of 42 noted in fields near entrance to Brazos Bend SP.

**Whooping Crane** *Grus americana*

Up to 20 seen very well on our boat trip aboard the Skimmer at Aransas NWR.

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus*

Seen at Tule Lake, Corpus Christi, and later noted at Estero Llano Grande SP, as well as at S. Padre Island.

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*

Several noted from boat at Aransas NWR. Also seen near Corpus Christi at Sunset Lake and Tule Lake. In the Lower Rio Grande, we had a few at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Gray (Black-bellied) Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Small numbers at Sunset Lake, as well as at South Padre Island and at Goose Island SP.

**Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Small numbers noted on the beach at Sunset Lake Park.

**Snowy Plover** *Charadrius nivosus*

Several on beach with assorted plovers and sandpipers at Sunset Lake Park.

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*

First sighting was of a single bird in flight over parking area at Santa Ana NWR. Other sightings came from Estero Llano Grande SP, Goose Island SP, and Anzalduas Park.

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Large flock at Tule Lake near Corpus Christi; others at Estero Llano Grande SP and S. Padre Island.

**Marbled Godwit** *Limosa fedoa*

Only ones on the tour were at Tule Lake, Corpus Christi.

**Long-billed Curlew** *Numenius americanus*

Single bird flew over our boat at Aransas NWR. Two more seen in grassy verge of entrance road to Laguna Atascosa NWR. Others were at Sunset Lake and Tule Lake, as well as at Goose Island SP.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

One flew over our boat at Aransas NWR.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*

Seen at Aransas NWR, as well as at Sunset Lake, Tule Lake, South Padre Island and Goose Island SP.

**'Western' Willet** *Tringa semipalmata*

Fairly common in coastal areas where we saw them on our boat trip at Aransas NWR, as well as at Sunset Lake, Tule Lake, South Padre Island and at Goose Island SP.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*

Small numbers at Tule Lake and at Santa Ana NWR.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*

Usually seen singly, but at a number of locations including Aransas NWR boat trip, South Padre Island, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Anzalduas Park, the Rio Grande at Salineno and at Goose Island SP.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Frequent at coastal locations at Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake Park, South Padre Island and Goose Island SP.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*

A few seen at Sunset Lake Park, and a nice sized flock chasing waves on beach at South Padre Island.

**Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri*

A few noted on beach at Sunset Lake Park.

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*

Seen well at Sunset Lake Park and at Tule Lake near Corpus Christi, and at Estero Llano Grande SP in the Rio Grande. A few noted at Goose Island SP as well.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

One or two at Sunset Lake Park, the only ones positively identified on our tour.

**Black Skimmer** *Rynchops niger*

First noted at South Padre Island, where we had great views of flocks coming down to the water to skim. On our last day of the tour we had a distant flock at Goose Island SP as well.

**Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla*

Common throughout, especially at coastal locations.

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*

Seen from boat at Aransas NWR as well as at Tule Lake and Sunset Lake Park, South Padre Island and Goose Island SP.

**American Herring Gull** *Larus smithsonianus*

Small numbers seen from boat at Aransas NWR, as well as at Sunset Lake Park, South Padre Island and Goose Island SP.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

Adult seen from boat at Aransas NWR.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica*

One winter plumage bird seen at shallow bay as we neared bridge to South Padre Island. Only one on tour.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*

Sightings from boat trip at Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake Park, South Padre Island, the Rio Grande at Anzalduas Park and Goose Island SP.

**Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri*

Fairly common near water with observations made by group from boat at Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake and Tule Lake near Corpus Christi, Laguna Atascosa NWR, South Padre Island, and Goose Island SP.

**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus*

A few at coastal locations including boat trip at Aransas NWR, Sunset Lake Park and at South Padre Island.

**Feral (Rock) Pigeon** *Columba livia*

Common throughout, especially in towns and cities. Introduced.

**Red-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas flavirostris*

Several in flight along Rio Grande at Salineno.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common throughout, especially in towns and cities.

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*

Tiny dove noted at Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Salineno Falcon SP, Goose Island SP.

**Common Ground-Dove** *Columbina passerina*

Very tiny dove, seen just once on tour at Santa Ana NWR.

**White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi*

Rio Grande specialty seen at Laguna Atascosa NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary and Salineno.

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*

Common throughout.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*

Became increasingly common as we moved west up the Rio Grande at Estero Llano Grande SP, Salineno, Falcon SP, Zapata area, Goose Island SP and in Houston at the Sims Bayou Nature Center.

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*

One seen well along edge of entrance road at Laguna Atascosa NWR. Another near the village of Salineno.

**Eastern Screech Owl** *Megascops asio*

Heard a pair calling at Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, and some briefly saw a 'red' morph bird roosting at entrance to nest box at Sims Bayou Nature Center in Houston.

**Great Horned Owl** *Bubo virginianus*

Adult on nest in palm tree near visitor's center at Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Barred Owl** *Strix varia*

One called, revealing its roosting location in large oak at Refugio Lion/Shelley Park.

**Burrowing Owl** *Athene cunicularia*

One hunkered down atop a berm along a farm road near the entrance to Santa Ana NWR.

**Common Pauraque** *Nyctidromus abicollis*

A roosting pauraque was shown to us by staff at the Laguna Atascosa NWR along the Kiskadee Loop. We also heard them calling at Bentsen-Rio Grande SP.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** *Archilochus colubris*

One female at feeders at Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Buff-bellied Hummingbird** *Amazilia yucatanensis*

Brief encounters at feeders at Estero Llano Grande SP and at Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Green Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle americana*

One male at small pond at Lion / Shelley Park in Refugio is surprisingly the only one we saw on the trip.

**Ringed Kingfisher** *Megaceryle torquata*

Two seen along Rio Grande from boat launch at Salineno.

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*

Most common kingfisher on tour, seen at Aransas NWR from our boat, as well as at Tule Lake in Corpus Christi, the boardwalk at South Padre Island, Willow Lakes at Santa Ana NWR and at Goose Island SP.

**Golden-fronted Woodpecker** *Melanerpes aurifrons*

Common in the Rio Grande with sightings daily at various parks and refuges.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** *Melanerpes carolinus*

Restricted, on this tour, to eastern areas of itinerary. We saw one or two at Brazos Bend SP, and at end of tour we saw several at Jesse Jones Park in Houston.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus varius*

Sightings at Brazos Bend SP and Jesse Jones Park.

**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Dryobates scalaris*

Common throughout tour with near daily sightings at parks and refuges.

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*

Single male of 'Yellow-shafted' race seen at Jesse Jones Park, our final stop on the tour.

**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.

**Aplomado Falcon** *Falco femoralis*

One atop telephone pole along highway near Laguna Vista.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

One seen several times in open habitat near entrance to Laguna Atascosa NWR.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

One perched on water tower near parking lot at Santa Ana NWR.

**Monk Parakeet** *Miopsitta monachus*

Up to 4 at Sims Bayou Urban Nature Center in Houston.

**Green Parakeet** *Psittacara holochlorus*

Hundreds at roost in urban McAllen at intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> St and Trenton Road.

**Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet** *Campostoma imberbe*

One seen along Pintail Lakes Trail near the Rio Grande River at Santa Ana NWR. Heard, but not seen at Estero Llano Grande SP in the 'Tropical Zone'.

**Eastern Phoebe** *Sayornis phoebe*

Fairly common with sightings at Brazos Bend SP, Lions / Shelley Park in Refugio, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, and at Jesse Jones Park in Houston.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*

Sightings near the dam at Anzalduas Park and along Rio Grande at Salineno.

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Prycephalus rubinus*

First noted at Estero Llano Grande SP. Also noted at Anzalduas Park and at Zapata City Park.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens*

One seen along roadway between Salineno and Falcon SP.

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus*

Big and bold flycatcher common in the Rio Grande, with sightings at most refuges and parks.

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus*

One with Couch's Kingbirds, verified by calls, near entrance to Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also seen in McAllen along Houston Ave while we were searching for parrots. Seen also at Santa Ana NWR along Pintail Lk Trail.

**Couch's Kingbird** *Tyrannus couchii*

Look-alike of Tropical Kingbird, best separated by voice. We saw and heard this species at a number of locations including Laguna Atascosa NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, McAllen Nature Center, Salineno and Falcon SP.

**Rose-throated Becard** *Pachyramphus algaiae*

Immature male at 'Tropical Zone' at Estero Llano Grande SP. Rarity in the USA, from Mexico.

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*

Fairly common, especially along roadsides. We saw this species well on the approach road at Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also seen at Santa ANA, Salineno, Falcon SP and near Goose Island SP.

**White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus*

Heard often, but seen just a few times. Scope views had along trail at Laguna Atascosa NWR. Other sightings from Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Santa Ana NWR, Salineno, Goose Island SP and Jesse Jones Park.

**Blue-headed Vireo** *Vireo solitarius*

Sightings occurred at Brazos Bend SP, Shelley / Lions Park in Refugio, Sabal Palm Sanctuary and at Santa Ana NWR.

**Green Jay** *Cyanocorax luxuosus*

Lovely, gaudy species seen at most refuges and parks where feeding stations attract them; Laguna Atascosa NWR, Santa Ana NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Salineno, Falcon SP.

**Blue Jay** *Cyanocitta cristata*

Brief sightings at Brazos Bend SP and at Jesse Jones Park.

**American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

Several seen in the Houston / Brazos Bend SP area.

**Fish Crow** *Corvus ossifragus*

Several in flight, calling over Jesse Jones Park.

**Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus*

One seen along roadway in Brownsville near entrance to Sabal Palm Sanctuary. Two more seen later in trip from Zapata City Park. Also seen in flight near Salineno.

**Cedar Waxwing** *Bombycilla cedrorum*

Flock flew over our hotel in Rosenberg on our first morning, leaving us wanting more and better views. We had them later at a number of locations including urban McAllen, Goose Island SP, and at Jesse Jones Park.

**Carolina Chickadee** *Poecile carolinensis*

Sightings at Brazos Bend SP and at Jesse Jones Park.

**Tufted Titmouse** *Baeolophus bicolor*

Noted at Brazos Bend SP and at Jesse Jones Park.

**Black-crested Titmouse** *Baeolophus atricristatus*

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

**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*

Heard often, and seen a few times at locations including Laguna Atascosa NWR, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Salineno and Falcon SP.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

Several seen at the dam on the Rio Grande at Anzalduas Park.

**Purple Martin** *Progne subis*

Several at nest box at Estero Llano Grande SP. Also at Salineno and the McAllen Nature Center.

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*

Several in flight in loose flock at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Small numbers present at Tule Lake in Corpus Christi, the boardwalk at South Padre Island, Falcon SP, Zapata City Park and Goose Island SP.

**Cave Swallow** *Petrochelidon fulva*

Several at the dam at Anzalduas Park.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*

Small numbers present at several locations including Brazos Bend SP, Lions/Shelley Park in Refugio, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Salineno and Goose Island SP.

**Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*

Two seen well at McAllen Nature Center and another seen near Salineno.

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*

Heard several times and briefly seen in wetlands around Pintail Lakes at Santa Ana NWR.

**Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*

Noted only at Falcon SP.

**Carolina Wren** *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Heard often, and seen several times as well; Brazos Bend SP, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Goose Island SP, Santa Ana NWR.

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*

Heard often, but seen less so; Brazos Bend SP, Santa Ana NWR, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Falcon SP.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*

Fairly common in small mixed flocks in wooded areas; Brazos Bend SP, Laguna Atascosa NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, McAllen Nature Center, Salineno, Falcon SP, Jesse Jones Park.

**Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila melanura*

One male at Falcon SP.

**Gray Catbird** *Dumatella carolinensis*

One briefly seen at Goose Island SP, and another seen well at Jesse Jones Park.

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*

Common throughout.

**Long-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma longirostre*

First noted at Laguna Atascosa NWR, and later at Santa Ana NWR and at feeders at Salineno.

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre*

First at a car parking lot at Estero Llano Grande SP, and later at McAllen Nature Center and at Falcon SP.

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common throughout. Introduced.

**Eastern Bluebird** *Sialia sialis*

One at Anzalduas Park.

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*

One bird, seen by just a few observers at Lions / Shelley Park in Refugio.

**Clay-coloured Thrush** *Turdus grayi*

First noted at Santa Ana NWR and several also at Estero Llano Grande SP in the 'Tropical Zone'.

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*

Single bird at Brazos Bend SP and at end of trip impressive flocks at Goose Island SP.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout. Introduced.

**Sprague's Pipit** *Anthus spragueii*

Several flushed from grassy field at Anzalduas Park.

**House Finch** *Heamorrhous mexicanus*

Brief sighting at Anzalduas Park as we ate lunch. Later seen along fence near entrance to Falcon SP.

**American Goldfinch** *Spinus tristis*

One at Jesse Jones Park in Houston.

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*

Found at Santa Ana NWR along Pintail Lakes Trail and later seen in sunflowers at Estero Llano Grande SP.

**Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia*

Found at Lions / Shelley Park in Refugio and at Santa Ana NWR.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Leiothlypis celata*

Common throughout.

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*

Heard often, but not seen very often. Best views came from Santa Ana NWR along Pintail Lakes Trail and from boardwalk at Sabal Palm Sanctuary as well as Goose Island SP.

**Tropical Parula** *Setophaga pitiayumi*

Male seen well near photo blind at Laguna Atascosa NWR headquarters.

**Pine Warbler** *Setophaga pinus*

One or two seen high in pine trees at Jesse Jones Park.

**Myrtle Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*

Most common warbler species throughout.

**Yellow-throated Warbler** *Setophaga dominica*

One seen high in palm trees at Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Black-throated Green Warbler** *Setophaga virens*

One or two seen at Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Golden-crowned Warbler** *Basileuterus culicivorus*

One, continuing rarity, at Shelley/Lions Park in Refugio. Rarity in the USA.

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*

Seen at Lions/Shelley Park in Refugio and at Laguna Atascosa NWR.

**Western Meadowlark** *Sturna neglecta*

Fairly common in open areas where we saw them in farm fields near Santa Ana NWR, as well as at Anzalduas Park, the village of Salineno, and at Falcon SP.

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturna magna*

Good views of singing birds in grassy habitat along entrance road at Laguna Atascosa NWR.

**Audubon's Oriole** *Icterus graduacauda*

Male at McAllen Nature Center and another at feeders at Salineno.

**Altamira Oriole** *Icterus gularis*

Fairly common in the Rio Grande with sightings at Laguna Atascosa NWR, Santa Ana NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary and feeders at Salineno.

**Hooded Oriole** *Icterus cucullatus*

One female type at orange halves at Sabal Palm Sanctuary.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*

One of the most abundant birds on the tour.

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*

First noted at Falcon SP near feeders and later seen at Goose Island SP.

**Boat-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus major*

Species associated more with upper coastal areas, where we saw them at Brazos Bend SP.

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Abundant, with roosts perhaps numbering into the hundreds of thousands, especially at 10<sup>th</sup> St and Trenton Rd in McAllen.

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*

Noted at Lions / Shelley Park in Refugio, Sabal Palms Sanctuary and at Santa Ana NWR.

**Swamp Sparrow** *Melospiza georgiana*

Seen at Brazos Bend SP and at Goose Island SP.

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*

Fairly common and seen at locations including Laguna Atascosa NWR, Santa Ana NWR, Estero Llano Grande SP, Anzalduas Park and Goose Island SP.

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*

Several found at Lions / Shelley Park in Refugio and also at feeders at Jesse Jones Park.

**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*

A number seen on grassy edge of road in Rio Hondo, as we attempted to find Laguna Atascosa NWR. Also several noted along grassy edge of road at Falcon SP.

**White-throated Sparrow** *Zonotrichia albicollis*

Several played hide and seek with us at Jesse Jones Park in Houston.

**Olive Sparrow** *Arremonops rufivirgatus*

Rio Grande specialty seen at most feeding stations including at Laguna Atascosa NWR, Sabal Palm Sanctuary, Santa Ana NWR, and Salineno.

**White-collared Seedeater** *Sporophila torqueola*

One male seen at little marsh at Zapata City Park.

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Common throughout, especially at feeding stations.

**Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus*

Several noted in the Salineno / Falcon SP areas.

**MAMMALS****Eastern Cottontail** *Sylvilagus floridanus***Desert Cottontail** *Sylvilagus audubonii***Eastern Gray Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis***Eastern Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus niger***Mexican Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus mexicanus***Nutria (Coypu)** *Myocaster coypus***White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus***Feral Pig** *Sus scrofa***Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus*

## REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

**Red-eared Slider** *Chrysemys scripta*  
**Spiny Softshell Turtle** *Apalone spinifera*  
**Giant (Cane) Toad** *Rhinella marina*  
**Green Tree Frog** *Hyla cinerea*  
**American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis*  
**Green Anole** *Anolis carolinensis*  
**Eastern Fence Lizard** *Sceloporus undulatus*  
**Texas Indigo Snake** *Drymarchon melanurus*  
**Common Garter Snake** *Thamnophis sirtalis*

## BUTTERFLIES

**Eastern Tiger Swallowtail** *Papilio glaucus*  
**Pipevine Swallowtail** *Papilio philenor*  
**Giant Swallowtail** *Papilio cresphontes*  
**Checkered White** *Pontia protodice*  
**Cloudless Sulphur** *Phoebis sennae*  
**Red-bordered Pixie** *Melanis pike*  
**Zebra Heliconian** *Heliconius charithonia*  
**Gulf Fritillary** *Agraulis vanillae*  
**Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta*  
**White Peacock** *Anartia jatrophae*  
**Texan Crescent** *Anthanassa texana*  
**Goatweed Leafwing** *Anaea andria*  
**American Snout** *Libytheana carinenta*  
**Monarch** *Danaus plexippus*  
**Queen** *Danaus gilippus*  
**Tropical Checkered Skipper** *Pyrgus oileus*