

Texas:

Gulf Coast Migration Special

Sat 10th-Sun 18th April 2010



Photographs (clockwise from top): male **Hooded Warbler**; never smile at an... **American Alligator**; **Wilson's Plover**; a superb **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** sails by; and **Royal Terns** at Bolivar © Chris Charlesworth. For a more extensive selection of photos taken on our Texas tours visit our online Gallery feature at: www.limosaholidays.co.uk

report compiled by tour leader:
Chris Charlesworth

Trip Diary

Tour Leaders: Chris Charlesworth

with Barbara Greateorex, Brian and Ann Hague, Allan Hansen, Alan Josephs, Peter Josephs, and Andrew & Lois Pattison

The Texas Coast has long been known as an excellent trap for migrant songbirds. After gathering on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico on their northbound migration, when conditions are right, birds set off on the long flight across the Gulf of Mexico, travelling more than 500 miles across open water. By the time these birds reach the Texas coast they are exhausted and drop in to feed at coastal 'hot spots' such as High Island and Sabine Woods. If these birds encounter a storm along the way, a 'fall' can occur along the coast. The Texas Coast, with vast miles of marsh and wetlands, is also fantastic for migrant waders, egrets, herons, terns and many more. While just north of Houston lies the piney-wood forest, home to the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker and one of few USA endemics, the Brown-headed Nuthatch. Put these locations together and you have a fantastic birding tour!

We started out from Houston, one of the largest cities in the U.S, with over four million people living in the area. Behind our hotel was a small pond surrounded by trees, where Northern Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Carolina Chickadees, White-throated Sparrows and a few other goodies were seen by our group. The piney-woods region to the north of Houston was our first scheduled birding stop of the tour. A leisurely walk through the Loblolly and Longleaf pines produced an impressive list of woodpeckers including Red-cockaded, Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, together with Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. We experienced a bit of raptor migration here as well, enjoying Broad-winged Hawk, Mississippi Kite, Black and Turkey Vultures, and Osprey soaring overhead. An eye-popping male American Kestrel was soaked up by all through the scope as he sat on a branch in the forest. We also found a few warblers in the W.G. Jones State Forest, including several stunning Hooded Warblers and numerous Pine Warblers, while handsome Eastern Bluebirds were nesting near the visitor's centre. Also in the Houston area, we visited the Jesse Jones Nature Park, not far from the busy international airport, where a lovely walk through towering trees and along boardwalks through swamps produced a nice list of birds. Here we watched a gorgeous male Prothonotary Warbler singing his little heart out, and a male Summer Tanager which glowed in a tall pine as he sang in the morning sun. Some of the group were lucky enough to see a Red-shouldered Hawk hunting around the edges of the swamp, but everyone enjoyed a Pileated Woodpecker that was seen poking his head out of a nest-hole alongside a river, and a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird which briefly came in to feed at the visitor's centre.

Once we reached the coast, we followed the general pattern of visiting wetlands and beaches during the morning, then a migrant trap or two in the afternoon. The reason for visiting the migrant traps in the afternoon is because the birds take off from the Yucatan at night and they generally make landfall in Texas in the mid-afternoon. Indeed, we could often see the species diversity and numbers rise as the afternoon wore on. We made two very lucrative stops at the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Here, vast marshes and open fields are home to an array of waterbirds, and we drove the Shoveler Pond loop making stops along the way to enjoy the waders, herons and egrets. Black-necked Stilts were common, as were Solitary Sandpipers, and we enjoyed seeing Wilson's Snipe in the water-filled roadside ditches. Stilt Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitchers in breeding plumage fed side by side in freshwater pools; flocks of White-faced Ibis glided low over the marshes, and Mottled Ducks were also seen well. We watched both American and Least Bitterns at Anahuac; the latter we saw several very well, but the American Bittern was seen only briefly by a fortunate few before it slinked back into the reeds and out of sight. Luck was on our side, however, as we got brilliant views of Sora and several King Rails at the edge of the marsh. Anahuac is not only good for birds but is also a great place to watch Alligators and we saw many hauled out sunning themselves on the shore. En route to Anahuac we encountered graceful Scissor-tailed Flycatchers on roadside fence posts, and in flooded fields near Anahuac we found Upland Sandpiper, American Golden Plover and Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

We also spent a morning at Texas Point National Wildlife Refuge, where we walked along a road surrounded by marshes. Highlights here included two rather elusive sparrows: the Seaside Sparrow and the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. We also got good views of Clapper Rails here and were able to watch Boat-tailed and Great-tailed Grackles side-by-side for comparison.

Another location we visited was the Bolivar Peninsula, near High Island. This is the region that was pummelled by Hurricane Ike a couple of years ago, and people here are still rebuilding their lives. The birds don't seem to mind the disruption though, and still swarm over the beaches and flats. Our first stop at Rollover Pass was fantastic. Here we watched American Oystercatchers, Marbled Godwits, Whimbrel, Grey Plovers, Short-billed Dowitchers and many

other waders here as well as Tricolored and Great Blue Herons and Reddish, Snowy and Great Egrets. A walk along the beach at Bolivar Flats produced flocks of Brown Pelicans and Neotropic Cormorants, while Least Terns were seen in huge numbers and Royal Terns sailed by over the murky waters of the gulf. We also had a terrific showing of plovers here, finding Killdeer, Snowy, Piping, Wilson's, Semipalmated and Grey Plovers!

The Texas 'migrant traps' at High Island and Sabine Woods once again provided many exciting birding moments for us on this tour. Yellow-rumped Warblers (of the eastern 'Myrtle' race) were abundant this year and we sifted through them daily trying to find other gems. Our diligence was rewarded with such prizes as Kentucky, Black-throated Green, Yellow, Orange-crowned, Worm-eating and Tennessee Warblers, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat and Northern Waterthrush. On this year's trip, we tallied 20 beautiful species of warbler. Other prizes included elusive Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Wood Thrushes as well as eye-candy provided by the likes of Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, and Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Perhaps the most colourful (or gaudy – depending upon your perspective!) bird in all of North America was eventually seen after some searching, the male Painted Bunting. Dressed in bright green, blue and red, this bird really does look like somebody painted it adding unreal bits of colour here and there. We watched as he and his dull green lady partner came to bath in 'the drip' at Boy Scout Woods. The heronry at High Island is another 'must see' place - we visited twice and enjoyed close up encounters with nesting Great and Snowy Egrets, Great Blue and Tricolored Herons, Roseate Spoonbills and Neotropic Cormorants. An Anhinga was seen with its wings held spread to dry them after fishing – they have no natural waterproofing and, like cormorants, the feathers become saturated so they must dry them by holding the wings open to let the wind do this for them.

As the tour neared its end we headed to Tyrell Park in Beaumont, where Yellow-crowned Night Herons and Cattle Egrets slowly stalked alongside puddles in search of their prey. Fish Crows were easily found here and a walk through the woods produced a fair number of Blue Grosbeaks, Painted Buntings and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, the latter we even saw copulating. At Taylor Bayou, I was able to call a pair of Barred Owls which came right in to investigate!

We made our way back to Houston for late afternoon flights back to London but were thwarted by the volcanic ash cloud from Iceland, which resulted in a delay of several days as all flights to Europe had been cancelled. This unexpected delay caused chaos around the world but I hope that our group managed to find one or two new species on their explorations around Houston^{*1}. All in all, this was a really fantastic trip during which we tallied 191 species of birds, as well as some fascinating mammals, butterflies and reptiles.

Chris Charlesworth

^{*1} *Phew, what a relief to finally get everyone home again! After the best part of an extra week stuck in Houston, and several false starts as the volcanic ash cloud refused to shift, we finally managed to get everyone booked on the first available flight back to London, leaving Texas on the afternoon of Fri 23rd April. Still, the enforced delay was not without its rewards and the group managed to enjoy some fine additional birding locally, even hiring the hotel's courtesy bus to explore nearby habitats. An email from Peter (Josephs) to our office on 3rd May reported:*

"I promised a summary of what we saw around our hotel patch when we were delayed by the volcano. The hotel was in a built-up area underneath the approach the Houston Airport but it did have a pond behind it a belt of mixed trees and a drainage ditch behind that. When migrants were about the belt of trees attracted them (together with a racoon and various snakes): Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Wood Duck, White Ibis, Green Heron, Cattle Egret, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Neotropic Cormorant, Anhinga, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Collared Dove, American Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Cedar Waxwing, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Carolina Wren, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Northern Mockingbird, Starling, House Sparrow, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting. There may be a couple more that I have missed but quite a good list..."

It seems every cloud has a silver lining - even volcanic ones!!

Chris Kightley (Ed).

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

(A total of 191 species was recorded on tour)

Fulvous Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Seen on both visits to Anahuac NWR.

Black-bellied Whistling-duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Small numbers seen at Anahuac NWR and Texas Point NWR. One in woods behind the hotel in Houston.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Seen twice on tour, both in flight. First seen at W.G. Jones State Forest and later at Taylor Bayou.

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula*

Fairly common at marshes such as Anahuac, Texas Point and the wetlands just north of High Island.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

Common on ponds and lakes.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Fairly common at wetlands such as Anahuac NWR, where seen on both visits.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

Pair seen twice at the heronry at Smith Oaks unit of High Island.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

Small numbers on both visits to Anahuac NWR.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

Fairly common in wetland areas. Seen at Texas Point NWR, the small pond at Sabine Woods and at Anahuac NWR.

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*

Common in wetland areas, especially numerous at Anahuac NWR.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

A few in flight near Sabine Pass, and many nesting at High Island heronry.

American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*

One briefly at the edge of the marsh along drive around Shoveler Pond at Anahuac NWR.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*

A few seen very well at Anahuac NWR.

(Black-crowned) Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

An immature at Anahuac NWR.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax violacea*

A few at Anahuac NWR, Taylor Bayou and in Beaumont at Tyrell Park.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Seen almost daily at ponds and bayous.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common in open agricultural fields where livestock present.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

Common and seen almost daily anywhere near water.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Common anywhere water present. Many seen nesting at High Island heronry.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens*

Seen only on Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass and at Bolivar Jetty.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Common anywhere near water. Seen well at nesting colony at High Island.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Small numbers in wetland areas, perhaps best views were at Taylor Bayou.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Common in wetland areas including Anahuac NWR and at the heronry at High Island.

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

Small numbers at Texas Point NWR and at Rollover Pass on Bolivar Peninsula.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Common along Gulf Coast where often flying low over surf in formation.

Neotropical Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

This smaller and more slender cousin of the Double-crested Cormorant was seen most days near water. Many nesting at High Island heronry.

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*

Larger and thicker necked than the more common Neotropic Cormorant. Small numbers present throughout, particularly at locations along Bolivar Peninsula.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Seen on only two occasions. One sunning with wings spread at High Island heronry, and another in flight over High Island.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Common and noted daily cruising over open areas in search of carrion.

American Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Common and seen most days soaring overhead with slightly more numerous Turkey Vultures.

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

Uncommon along Gulf Coast. One briefly in flight near High Island and another watched at length near Sabine Woods as it was mobbed by grackles.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Noted in small numbers. One in flight with a few other raptors over W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston. Others at Bolivar Peninsula and near Sabine Woods.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

One in flight at heronry at High Island.

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*

Group of about six soaring overhead at W.G. Jones State Forest and a single bird over High Island.

Northern (Hen) Harrier *Circus (cyaneus) hudsonius*

Common and seen almost daily over open fields and marshes. The North American race *hudsonius* is often treated as Northern Harrier, a distinct species from Hen Harrier of the Old World.

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

One in flight at W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperi*

Seen just twice, both times in flight in the High Island area.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

One briefly overhead along Middle Lake Trail at W.G. Jones State Forest. Up to five in the vicinity of Taylor Bayou.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

Just one adult, soaring with other raptors near visitors centre at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*

Several from the bus alongside freeways.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Seen most days in open country. Up to five at W.G. Jones State Forest.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

A lovely male at W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds noted several times in the Anahuac NWR and Sabine Woods vicinity. One was seen well as it sat atop at tree near entrance to Smith Oaks unit of High Island.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

One at Texas Point NWR.

Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris*

Seen and heard in marshes just north of High Island, and in extensive marshes at Texas Point NWR.

King Rail *Rallus elegans*

Seen exceptionally well in watery ditches along loop road at Shoveler Pond, Anahuac NWR.

Sora *Porzana carolina*

Seen very well at Anahuac NWR and at marsh just north of High Island.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Several at High Island heronry and Anahuac NWR.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Common and seen on most freshwater marshes including Anahuac NWR.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Common shorebird at marshes and wetlands throughout, especially numerous at Anahuac NWR.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

Wintering flock of up to 3,000 at Bolivar Jetty, where wintering numbers can peak close to 10,000. Also, two on beach near Sea Rim State Park.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

Up to ten in flooded fields along road to Anahuac NWR.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A few in flooded fields near Anahuac NWR and many on beach at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. Some were starting to attain breeding plumage!

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Seen at Bolivar Flats, Texas Point NWR and Anahuac NWR.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*

Three of these large-billed plovers at Bolivar Flats, and one somewhat lost bird was on the paved road at Texas Point NWR.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Common and seen throughout tour in open fields and along shorelines.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*

Up to 15 of these endangered little plovers at Bolivar Flats, and another two on the beach near Sea Rim State Park.

Kentish (Snowy) Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Three of these 'Snowy Plovers' as they are called in America, were at Bolivar Flats.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*

Two were seen very well feeding in the water-filled ditch alongside road at Shoveler Pond, Anahuac NWR.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Seen well at Bolivar Peninsula. This species generally favours brackish areas.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Favouring fresh-water areas, we saw these at Anahuac NWR.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

Quite numerous along Bolivar Peninsula, especially at Rollover Pass.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

This bird of the distinctive dark rumped, North American race *hudsonicus* was seen at Bolivar Flats, Anahuac NWR and Texas Point NWR.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

Seen well at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary, and in flight at Texas Point NWR.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

Numerous along edges of pools and ponds, especially at Anahuac NWR.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

Numerous along edges of pools and ponds, especially at Anahuac NWR. Seen side by side with Greater Yellowlegs on several occasions for comparison.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

This Green Sandpiper look-a-like was seen very well on several occasions at Anahuac NWR.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Two 'well spotted' birds seen together at Texas Point NWR, and another pair at Anahuac NWR.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

Many birds of the 'eastern' race seen well, especially at locations along the Bolivar Peninsula.

(Ruddy) Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Small numbers present at Bolivar Flats and Texas Point NWR.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Fairly numerous along beaches of the Bolivar Peninsula where these ghostly little waders chase waves back and forth.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

Four in flooded fields along road to Anahuac NWR.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

Two seen well on pools at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Most numerous 'peep' in region. Common at Anahuac NWR and several locations along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Just one in flight over marshes north of High Island.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Quite numerous at Anahuac NWR and along Bolivar Peninsula.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

Seen well at Anahuac NWR and Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. Some flew over the marshes just north of High Island. Often found feeding alongside dowitchers.

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*

Two sightings in grassy fields en route to Anahuac NWR, the first group comprising ten birds, the second up to 30 birds present.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

Six in flooded fields en route to Anahuac NWR.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

One brightly coloured female in flooded fields en route to Anahuac NWR.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Just a couple of birds noted on beaches of Bolivar Peninsula.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

Good numbers present on beaches of Bolivar Peninsula.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*

The most common gull along Texas Coast, noted in great numbers along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

One immature on beach near Sea Rim State Park.

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*

Common along Texas Coast. A thousand or more were seen at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Small numbers over marshy areas, including some just north of High Island and others at Anahuac NWR.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

A few of these large red-billed terns amongst Royal and other terns along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Up to ten along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Small numbers on beaches of Bolivar Peninsula.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*

Large numbers along beaches of Bolivar Peninsula and at Texas Point NWR.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

Fairly numerous along beaches of Bolivar Peninsula. Also seen at Anahuac NWR, Texas Point and at the marsh just north of High Island.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*

Large flocks seen along Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass, and a few on beach at Sea Rim State Park.

Feral Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Common in urban and suburban areas throughout.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common in towns and cities throughout.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

Common throughout.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

A few at Sabine Woods.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*

Seen on most visits to High Island, where they often visited 'the drip' at Boy Scout Woods.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

Single birds at Sabine Woods and High Island. Up to five, including a pair copulating, at Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

One flew over hotel in Winnie after dark. Leader only bird unfortunately.

Barred Owl *Strix varia*

Pair responded to calls almost immediately in flooded cypress swamp at Taylor Bayou and showed well.

Eastern Screech Owl *Megascops asio*

One 'brown' morph bird seen poking head out of cavity in dead tree at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

Single roosting birds near Shoveler Pond at Anahuac NWR and at Sabine Woods.

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

Common migrant over Sabine Woods and High Island.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*

Only hummingbird regularly found in the eastern US. Quite numerous throughout and seen at W.G. Jones State Forest as well as migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods. Visited feeders at visitors centre at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

Seen fairly regular, but usually just as singles wherever water present, including Anahuac NWR and along hwy just north of High Island, amongst other places.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*

Seen at Sabine Woods and Smith Oaks at High Island.

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

Up to eight put on a great show at W.G. Jones State Forest, and also in Tyrell Park, Beaumont.

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*

Fairly common in wooded areas. Noted at W.G. Jones State Forest, Jesse Jones Nature Park, Sabine Woods, High Island and Tyrell Park.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

Fairly common in wooded areas. Seen well in W.G. Jones State Park, High Island and Sabine Woods.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis*

Two of these endemic and endangered woodpeckers at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*

The largest North American woodpecker! Seen at W.G. Jones State Forest, and at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston where one poking head out of nest hole, and another seen in flight at Taylor Bayou.

Eastern Wood Pewee *Contopus virens*

One at Sabine Woods.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

Perhaps the most graceful and beautiful bird in Texas? Seen several times alongside highways, especially the road to Anahuac NWR.

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*

Common migrant at High Island, Sabine Woods and Anahuac NWR.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*

Frequents open country, seen en route to Anahuac NWR and at a couple of other roadside locations.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*

Seen well at W.G. Jones State Forest as well as High Island and Sabine Woods.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

Common migrant at High Island and Sabine Woods. First noted at Jesse Jones Nature Park.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*

Small numbers present at High Island, Sabine Woods and near visitors centre at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

Formerly known as Solitary Vireo, then split into 3 species! We saw single Blue-headed Vireos at Sabine Woods and the Boy Scout Woods unit of High Island.

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*

Common in wooded areas throughout.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

Small numbers in the Houston area.

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*

Small numbers of this 'frog-voiced' crow at Taylor Bayou and at Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*

This handsome bird was fairly numerous in wooded areas. Good numbers present along Middle Lake Trail at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*

Seen in woods behind hotel in Houston as well as at W.G. Jones State Forest and Jesse Jones Nature Park.

Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor*

Common in the piney-woods region, including W.G. Jones State Forest and at Jesse Jones Nature Park.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

One in flight at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*

Abundant migrant throughout.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

Common around High Island and Sabine Woods.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

One over pond near heronry at Smith Oaks unit of High Island.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common throughout and seen daily.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

Common throughout, including nesting under bridge just north of High Island and along road to Anahuac NWR.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*

A few with Cliff Swallows at bridge along road to Anahuac NWR. Cave Swallow has paler throat than Cliff.

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis*

Heard at several locations but only seen in marshes just north of High Island.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

Fairly common in marshy areas. Seen just north of High Island and in marshes of Anahuac NWR.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Heard at several locations, but only seen on two occasions at High Island.

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Common in woods throughout tour. First noted in W.G. Jones State Forest. Nesting in roof above information kiosk at Boy Scout Woods, High Island.

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea*

Small numbers present on all visits to High Island sanctuaries and Sabine Woods.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*

Common migrant at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*

Uncommon resident of piney-woods region of SE USA where it is endemic. A few were encountered at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Grey Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*

Common migrant at Sabine Woods and High Island sanctuaries.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

Common in open areas throughout.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*

Large, long-tailed and rather secretive, encountered in small numbers at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Abundant throughout.

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

Pair of these lovely birds near visitor centre at W.G. Jones State Forest and Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Veery *Catharus fuscescens*

One skulking on or near ground at Sabine Woods.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

Seen in small numbers at Sabine Woods and High Island.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common in urban and suburban areas throughout.

Tennessee Warbler *Vermivora peregrina*

Noted twice at Sabine Woods.

Orange-crowned Warbler *Vermivora celata*

Common and seen in numbers at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Nashville Warbler *Vermivora ruficapilla*

Just one at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston.

Northern Parula *Parula americana*

Seen at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston, and also at Taylor Bayou and at High Island.

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia*

One in Boy Scout Woods at High Island and several at Sabine Woods.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Dendroica virens*

One at Sabine Woods.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata*

Most numerous warbler on this tour. Present in large numbers at High Island and Sabine Woods. All were of 'Myrtle' race.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Dendroica dominica*

Seen at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston and at Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Blackpoll Warbler *Dendroica striata*

One female type bird at Sabine Woods.

Pine Warbler *Dendroica pinus*

Common at W.G. Jones State Forest and at Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston.

Palm Warbler *Dendroica palmarum*

Good numbers present at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

Small numbers at High Island and Sabine Woods.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

Small numbers at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

Good numbers present at Sabine Woods and High Island. A bumper year for this species.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*

Good numbers present at High Island and Sabine Woods. An excellent year for this species.

Swainson's Warbler *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

Singing male of this hard-to-find species at Taylor Bayou, east of Winnie.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

Small numbers creeping about on forest floor at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Northern Waterthrush *Seiurus noveboracensis*

A few around edges of ponds at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Kentucky Warbler *Oporornis formosus*

Small numbers of this 'masked' warbler at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Seen in marshy areas such as Anahuac NWR, where it nests. Migrants also noted at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Hooded Warbler *Wilsonia cintrina*

Good numbers at both High Island and Sabine Woods migrant traps. Also noted in W.G. Jones State Forest where species breeds.

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*

Seen just once, and very briefly, at 'the drip' at Boy Scout Woods, High Island.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*

Common at Sabine Woods and High Island. Good numbers visited 'the drip' at Boy Scout Woods, High Island.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

Common and seen daily.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Common and seen daily in marshes and wetland areas.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

Common and seen daily.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Common and seen daily.

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major*

Common and seen most days near Gulf Coast.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

Fairly common in open grassy areas throughout tour. The only meadowlark present here at this time of year.

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*

Seen in small numbers at W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston and at Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii*

Small numbers at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*

Good numbers present in wet and marshy areas throughout tour. Particularly numerous at Anahuac NWR.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*

Common in open areas throughout, especially along Shoveler Pond Loop at Anahuac NWR.

Seaside Sparrow *Ammodramus maritimus*

Two in marshes at Texas Point NWR.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *Ammodramus nelsoni*

Six in marshes at Texas Point NWR.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*

Common migrant throughout.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

A few at Anahuac NWR feeding on grassy lawn near visitor's centre.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

Fairly common at migrant traps such as Sabine Woods and High Island. Also noted at Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

Fairly common at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

Fairly common at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Common throughout.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*

Fairly common in open areas at migrant traps including High Island and Sabine Woods. Good numbers found at Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

Numerous at migrant traps including Sabine Woods and High Island. Also seen at Tyrell Park in Beaumont.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

Most gaudy of North American birds, seen in numbers at Tyrell Park in Beaumont, at High Island 'drip', and at Sabine Woods.

MAMMALS

Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*

Eastern Grey Squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*

Swamp Rabbit *Sylvilagus aquaticus*

White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*

REPTILES

American Alligator *Alligator mississippiensis*

Green Anole *Anolis carolinensis*

BUTTERFLIES

Giant Swallowtail *Papilio cresphontes*

Palamedes Swallowtail *Papilio palamedes*

Cloudless Sulphur *Phoebis sennae*

Pearl Crescent *Phycoides tharos*

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

Goatweed Leafwing *Anaea andria*

Carolina Satyr *Hermeuptychia sosybius*

Monarch *Danaus plexippus*

Funereal Duskywing *Erynnis funeralis*