

Texas

High Island & Houston Woods

Sat 16–Sun 24 Apr 2016



Texas highlights (Clockwise from top left): Summer Tanager • Red-cockaded Woodpecker • Rose-breasted Grosbeak • Common Nighthawk • Prothonotary Warbler • Swainson's Hawk. Photos © Chris Charlesworth

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

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Leader – Chris Charlesworth

Tour participants – Pauline & Robert Blewitt, Shirley Bruce, Sandy Davis, John & Lynne Hunt, Mike Johnson and Paul Shilling.

April 17

The group arrived after a long day of travel in the afternoon of Apr 16. This morning we were keen to get out in the field and do some birding after a night's rest. The weather forecast did not look good today with rain and thundershowers called for. Luckily the rain never did happen, apart from a little 'mizzle'. We began birding at W.G. Jones State Forest about 35 minutes north of Houston where we spent the morning exploring the piney-woods. Our first stop took us into the heart of a colony of endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, which proved quite hard to see, though we did get brief views of one, thanks to John Coons and his group. We saw quite a few other species while looking for the Red-cockaded, including the tiny Downy Woodpecker and the largest living woodpecker in North America, the Pileated Woodpecker. I say the 'largest living woodpecker' because the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, which was the largest woodpecker in N.A. is now almost certainly extinct, used to roam these same forests. We saw a number of common eastern North American forest birds for the first time this morning; Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Northern Cardinal, Blue Jay, Eastern Bluebird and Pine Warbler among others. The most obliging Yellow-breasted Chat in the world sat still for about 5 minutes while we enjoyed scope views. We heard an Eastern Screech Owl call several times, but couldn't locate where the sound was coming from. Though some of the group saw a Coypu the previous day, our first official mammal for the trip list was an Eastern Fox Squirrel.

After a short 'pit-stop' to use the facilities and pick up lunch to go, we headed for another trail in Jones State Forest, suggested by a local birder as a good place to look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. His advice was spot on and it didn't take us long to find a Red-cockaded Woodpecker foraging in a small burned pine tree at eye level! We saw Red-bellied Woodpecker here as well to top it off. We also ran into a 'celebrity birder' if there is such a thing. Sandy Komito, of 'The Big Year' fame walked and chatted with us for a while, entertaining us with his stories. We ate lunch then had a walk along the Middle Lake Trail, picking up yet another woodpecker, this time in the form of several stunning Red-headed Woodpeckers. Could it really get any better? When a male Hooded Warbler appeared on the scene, the group buzzed with excitement. Another highlight was a great sighting of a male Summer Tanager through the scope. White-eyed Vireo showed quite well here this afternoon.

To finish off the day we explored Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston International, where the new birds just kept coming. The first day or two of a tour sure are exciting when new birds come a dime a dozen. The star highlight here was a pair of Prothonotary Warblers hanging around a cypress swamp. These particular warblers foraged below us just above the water as we stood on the boardwalk. I gave my best Barred Owl imitation and within a few minutes one of the group members yelled out 'owl', just as it leaped into the air and flew off, leaving us wanting a better look. Northern Parulas sang their buzzy songs from the trees, which were cloaked in Spanish Moss. Three Red-shouldered Hawks soared overhead at once and we saw one perched briefly near the visitor center. Feeders outside the center had House Finches, Blue Jays, Red-headed Woodpecker, Mourning Dove and Carolina Chickadee as well as the ever-opportunistic Eastern Gray Squirrel. Our first butterflies appeared, with Palamedes Swallowtail and Monarch stealing the show. What a first day it had been, topped off with a scrumptious dinner at the local Olive Garden, we were a happy bunch.

April 18

In the early morning hours, many of us were awakened by loud claps of thunder as a tremendous storm raged. The power went out shortly thereafter and when we emerged for breakfast at 6 AM we were quite surprised that the staff of the hotel had managed to provide a hot breakfast. Kudos to them for taking great care of us during the power outage. We loaded up the van with our bags and began the journey from Houston to Winnie. Throughout the entire two-hour journey a torrential rain followed us along, accompanied by very frequent flashes of lightning. We were quite relieved to get to our motel in Winnie in one piece. We had coffee and nestled into our rooms while waiting for the storm to pass. After lunch the

rain let up and we dashed out to see what we could find. Along French Road, just south of Winnie, a visiting birder informed us we could expect a good number of shorebirds and he was correct. There were several Hudsonian Whimbrel here, along with Long-billed Dowitchers, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Semipalmated and Least Sandpiper and Black-necked Stilt. A Crested Caracara flew past and landed in a distant tree for scope views and a female Northern Harrier also sailed low over the horizon. Our first Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Kingbird, Savannah Sparrow and Tree Swallows were noted here. A flock of Fulvous Whistling Ducks flew by, followed by a small number of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. A group of White-faced Ibis disappeared into the grass of a flooded field and Snowy Egrets pranced around not far from us.

As we carried on south down the 124, we paused to look at a female Belted Kingfisher on a telephone wire. We had our first experience with fire ants here, as John went to pick up our step stool (lovingly named 'Trevor') and found it was covered in the tiny pests. He was no worse for wear, however. Once we arrived at High Island we headed for Boy Scout Woods. Before we even left the parking lot the birds began to stack up. There were loads of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Red-eyed Vireos, Orchard Orioles and more. Several Inca Doves foraged in the parking lot as well, a first for the group. We entered the woods and the great birding continued. Warblers began to appear with around 15 tallied this afternoon. Star attractions included Blackburnian, Black-and-white, Worm-eating, Bay-breasted, Blue-winged, Golden-winged, American Redstart and Ovenbird. Thrushes were numerous with Veery and Wood Thrush noted, while Gray-cheeked Thrush was unusually numerous. Yellow-throated Vireo showed nicely, as did Scarlet Tanagers, which were particularly common this afternoon. A Common Nighthawk circled overhead, along with Purple Martins. Paul spotted a male Painted Bunting, but it didn't hang around long enough for all to see. Both Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos appeared briefly, as did House Wren and an Eastern Wood-Pewee. It was a buffet of birds to say the least. What a great end to what had started out as a pretty miserable day.

April 19

When we started out this morning we were not too optimistic about the weather since there was very heavy dark cloud and a short but intense rainstorm as we made our way to Anahuac NWR. As soon as we turned off onto FM 1985 though the weather improved and we had a fantastic day. Flooded fields were easy to find because of all the rain and we racked up some nice shorebirds, with highlights being Upland Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Hudsonian Whimbrel and a group of five Hudsonian Godwits! In addition to shorebirds there was a nice selection of open country birds like Eastern Meadowlark, Eastern Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike and some stunning Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. We paused at a culvert and watched as both Cliff Swallows and Cave Swallows swooped about in front of us for comparison. A little farther down the road Swainson's Hawks posed nicely for photographs, though they looked a bit wet and bedraggled.

Once at Anahuac we first explored Skillern Tract where a walk along the nice paved path produced a few migrants including Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Orioles, Hooded Warbler, Painted Bunting and Red-eyed Vireo to name a few. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were rather numerous and were feeding on honeysuckle. In the marshes of Skillern we had nice scope views of a Least Bittern as it hunted at the edge of the reeds. Both American Moorhen and Purple Gallinule were quite visible today, while our first Double-crested Cormorant was noted, along with both Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons. Marsh Wrens were unusually obliging and perched out in the open for us several times. The largest rodent of the region - though introduced - a Coypu was seen well as it poked its nose out from the edge of the trail.

Next, a stop at the visitor's center at Anahuac was made and some did a little shopping. Before we headed off we poked our heads into a little picnic shelter where Cliff Swallows were nesting. Along the Shoveler Pond loop we ate our lunch before taking a stroll along a boardwalk. We didn't see too much on the walk, though several Orchard Orioles posed very nicely. After a bit of searching we were finally rewarded with excellent views of a King Rail and we heard several Soras calling from the reeds. Swamp Sparrows and Common Yellowthroat played hard to get at first but eventually gave themselves up for viewing. Forster's Terns hunted in the channels and Pied-billed Grebes were rather numerous. We had an up close and personal look at an adult Neotropic Cormorant beside the road as well. American Alligators were quite common and we saw several large adults and some tiny youngsters as well.

Feeling quite content with our Anahuac experience we headed off to High Island for some afternoon 'warbling' and it was quite busy at Smith Oaks. Walking the trails of the woodland we picked up a nice

tally of warblers with the big highlight being at least two Cerulean Warblers, a male and a female. Also in the warbler department were Worm-eating, Tennessee, Hooded, Black-and-white, plus a Kentucky Warbler that didn't sit still long enough for anyone to see it except me. There were American Redstarts, Northern Waterthrush and Northern Parula here as well. Scarlet and Summer tanagers were common, and we had nice views of a splotchy immature male Summer right beside our van. A Baltimore Oriole showed off nicely in a tall mulberry, and we had views of both Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos this afternoon. New for the list was our first 'empid', an Acadian Flycatcher. At the end of the day we had racked up an impressive 108 species!

April 20

We were getting used to waking up to very dismal, dark and rainy weather, but we had been quite lucky because by the time we arrived at our destination the weather had greatly improved. Today also followed that rule as we entered Taylor's Bayou. The waters of the bayou were very high today and many of the local residents had been cut off from their homes by flooded driveways. The birds didn't mind the high water though, and we had a few good species here, the best of which was a very showy Yellow-throated Warbler. Red-bellied Woodpeckers and a brief sighting of a Pileated Woodpecker was also quite nice. A local man riding on his little all-terrain vehicle pulled up to us and in a very southern accent asked, 'Y'all lookin' for birds?' He regaled us with stories of the billions of 'skeeters' that live in the bayou and the owls he hears all the time from his home. I made a mental note that we had to return to this area after dark later in the trip to try for owls.

We carried on towards the Louisiana border, turning south just before the bridge over Sabine Pass. We weaved through the extensive oil refineries and popped out on the other side at the little town of Sabine Pass where we made a quick pit stop. Our next destination was the road to the coast guard station near Texas Point. This is a very bumpy and often flooded road, and it lived up to its reputation today. The birding was great though and we had several smashing encounters with Clapper Rails. Soras were a bit harder to see at first, but eventually they appeared in the open several times. A Seaside Sparrow, our only one, sat on a sprig of grass for scope views, while Sedge Wrens called from the marsh but remained unseen. A nice list of shorebirds accumulated here with Wilson's and Semipalmated plovers, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet, Hudsonian Whimbrel and a very nice Spotted Sandpiper. We came to a flooded bit of road and had to turn around and we retreated to Sabine Pass where we had a great lunch at Tammie's Diner.

After lunch we headed for Sabine Woods, another of the famous coastal migrant traps found in this part of the world. Upon arrival the woods were very quiet, with just a few Gray Catbirds and only two species of warblers noted on our first sweep of the park. Two roosting Common Nighthawks up in a large oak were very nice to see, however. Thunder began to roar in the distance and before we knew it the rain was pelting down once again so we skulked back under a shelter and waited for it to pass. The rain fell for perhaps 20 minutes and all the other birds vacated the woodlot except us. Once the rain stopped we went for another walk and the birding had improved immensely. Right off the bat we had views of both Northern and Louisiana waterthrushes, while the trees began to fill up with colorful birds like Scarlet and Summer tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Orchard Oriole. Warblers arrived in droves and we counted Black-throated Green, Tennessee, several Blackpoll, Yellow, Prothonotary, Black-and-white, Hooded, Blackburnian, American Redstart and the like. Other firsts for the trip included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Swainson's Thrush and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. It was a great ending to the day! With all the heavy rains the back wheels of my van got stuck and my group, very eager to help, got out and pushed the van out and we averted a possible disaster. I was quite thankful and told everyone in the group I would 'buy them dinner', wink, wink.

April 21

A fairly thick fog greeted us this morning as we drove south from Winnie towards the coast. Once we neared High Island the fog had cleared enough for us to see an adult Peregrine Falcon, our first for the trip, atop a telephone pole. We spent the morning exploring the Bolivar Peninsula, where we made our first stop at Rollover Pass. Masses of Black Skimmers were a treat to see here, along with a nice selection of terns including Common, Forster's, Least, Sandwich and Royal terns. American Oystercatchers and elegant American Avocets were new for the trip list, as were Ring-billed and American Herring gull. A nicely plumaged Horned Lark foraged along the edge of the road, our first thus far. An optimistic Great Blue Heron struggled with a large rat that it was trying to swallow, and it took so long we had to leave before we could see what the outcome was. We were off to a roaring start. Along

Yacht Basin Road we birded a bit from the van and saw numerous Whimbrel, Willet, Wilson's Plover and several other species of shorebirds. A Clapper Rail, in a most un-rail-like fashion showed nicely as it preened at the edge of a marsh. Robert and Pauline pointed out a Sora as it briefly appeared and disappeared. We heard Sedge Wren here and tried to see one but, as usual, we only had the most fleeting of glimpses of this rather stubborn species.

We picked up lunch and headed for Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary where we drove along the sandy beach, racking up a nice list of birds along the way. Both Piping and Snowy plovers were welcome additions to the trip list as were Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper and six beautiful Red Knots. Black Terns sat amongst hordes of other mixed terns on the beach and we saw at least one Caspian Tern. Paul pointed out a White-tailed Kite that was sitting on a post eating some sort of rodent. Just as we were about to leave John shouted out 'Reddish Egret' and we had great views of it as it fed in a shallow pool before flying off out of sight. At Fort Travis Park we had lunch while a heavy thunderstorm passed over. A good number of shorebirds dropped in during the storm including numbers of Ruddy Turnstones, Short-billed Dowitchers, Gray Plovers, Marbled Godwit, Willet and Least Sandpiper. We headed back towards High Island, stopping along the way to see a nice Long-billed Curlew feeding alongside the road in a grassy field.

Our afternoon was spent at Smith Oaks where the birding was a little slow, though many of us did pick up a Kentucky Warbler. Other warblers, though few and far between, included Northern Parula, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Hooded Warbler and Ovenbird. Ruby-crowned Kinglets showed quite well this afternoon, along with Yellow-throated Vireo and White-eyed Vireo. A few Scarlet and Summer tanagers were about, but it was decidedly quiet, so we decided to go have a look at the heronry where Roseate Spoonbills, Great, Snowy and Cattle egrets and Neotropic Cormorants were busily going about their nesting duties. An American Alligator was lying in the water below the nests hoping for a nestling to drop into the water.

After dinner we tried our luck with some owling back at Taylors Bayou and it didn't take us long to find a Barred Owl. As we watched the owl we could hear a couple of young owls calling in the woods nearby. We stopped at one more spot to listen for an Eastern Screech Owl, which we didn't find, but we did hear another Barred Owl hooting in the trees nearby. What a great way to end the day.

April 22

This morning, our last full day in Texas, marked the first sunny morning of the trip! We headed out to find some shorebirds in the flooded fields along country roads south of Winnie and we had great luck. We had our first White-rumped Sandpipers of the tour and our first good looks at Pectoral Sandpiper this morning. Upland Sandpipers were seen very well in good numbers in one particular field as well. Several Hudsonian Godwits were nice to see again. We pointed the godwits out to John Coons and his Field Guides tour group and it was a first for them as well. In addition to shorebirds we also had great views of Dickcissels this morning and after a bit of searching we saw a Northern Bobwhite!

A quick check at High Island looked promising, as there was loads of cars in the parking lot so we thought something good must be happening. It turned out all the birders had just come out to enjoy the nice weather as it was still somewhat quiet here. After picking up lunch in Winnie we made our way east to Taylors Bayou and searched for Fish Crow. Eventually two Fish Crows flew over, a new trip tick. Other goodies in the bayou today included Broad-winged Hawk and Eastern Bluebird, amongst others. We arrived at Sabine Woods with high hopes for migrants and we were not disappointed. Birders we met near the entrance said they had seen 20 species of warblers during their visit this morning. We gobbled down our lunches and headed in to see what we could find. It was a buffet of birds! New warblers included Canada Warbler, Nashville Warbler and Magnolia Warbler and we had a great look at Kentucky Warbler and Golden-winged Warbler, two species we had only glimpsed before. Other species of warbler present included lots of Blackburnian Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, Blackpoll Warblers, Black-and-white Warblers, Hooded Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Ovenbird and Northern Waterthrush. Least Flycatcher was a new tick for the trip as was a slightly out of range Great Kiskadee! The birding was really exceptional here this afternoon and we decided this had ended up being perhaps the best day of birding yet on the tour.

April 23

Our last morning in Texas was quite good, with sunny warm weather and quite a few birds. We began along French Road but the flooded fields that had been so productive a few days before had dried out substantially. There were not many shorebirds around, other than a Solitary Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Black-necked Stilt and some Long-billed Dowitchers. As we headed south on Hwy 124 we saw a nice Swainson's Hawk that was eating a Sora on a fencepost. As our cameras snapped a Northern Mockingbird arrived on the scene and began harassing the hawk!

Smith Oaks at High Island was quite busy with birds, especially Red-eyed Vireos, which seemed to be everywhere this morning. Warblers were about in good numbers with a male Golden-winged, a Worm-eating, Blue-winged, Black-and-white, Hooded, Cerulean, Prothonotary, Magnolia, Tennessee and Yellow warblers, American Redstart and Ovenbird noted. Other migrants included Yellow-billed Cuckoo, many Scarlet and Summer tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Orchard and Baltimore orioles, Wood, Swainson's and Gray-cheeked thrushes, and much more. A group of Cedar Waxwings fed in a mulberry tree near the parking lot, attracting a horde of photographers.

We reluctantly left High Island and made our way towards Houston, stopping for lunch along the way. Our final birding stop was at Sims Bayou Nature Center in South Houston. Overhead two Cooper's Hawks, a male and a female, the only ones for our tour, circled lazily on the afternoon thermals. With a bit of patience a Monk Parakeet arrived at feeders at the nature center, our 204th species of bird for the tour. We stopped near the airport and tallied up our daily bird list before I took people to the airport for flights home.

Systematic List of Species Recorded
(204 bird species)

Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus*

One seen quite well along FM 1941, southwest of Winnie. Others heard in same area.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

First seen after thunderstorm in flooded fields along French Road, south of Winnie. Later seen well at the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Fairly common in wetland areas. Numerous at Anahuac NWR, and seen most days along Hwy 124 south of Winnie.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Two flew past in W.G. Jones State Forest.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Two seen on pond at W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston.

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula*

Fairly common in wetland habitats, especially those at Anahuac NWR.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

Fairly common in wetland areas, especially at Anahuac NWR.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Seen just once, at Anahuac NWR.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One in flight over Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

Several at Anahuac NWR. Also noted on the Bolivar Peninsula.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

Fairly numerous, especially in wetlands, and seen almost daily.

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*

Fairly common in wetlands and in open fields, especially at Anahuac NWR.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

Seen most days, often in flight over flooded fields. Excellent views at nesting colony at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*

Great views at Skillern Tract at Anahuac NWR.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

First noted at Skillern Tract at Anahuac NWR and seen along roadsides as well.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Seen in wetland habitats throughout tour.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Common in open farming areas where livestock present. Seen nearly every day.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

Fairly common throughout, near water.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Fairly common throughout, near water.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens*

One noted at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Seen in small numbers in wetland areas including at Anahuac NWR and at Texas Point NWR where we watched one individual eat dozens of fish.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Seen fairly often, mostly along water-filled roadside ditches and in wetland habitats.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Fairly common throughout, near water.

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

First seen in flight at entrance to Sabine Woods. Later noted at Rollover Pass on Bolivar Peninsula.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Seen along immediate coast at Bolivar Peninsula and at Texas Point NWR.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Fairly common, especially near wetlands.

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*

Much less abundant than Neotropic. Seen first at Anahuac NWR's Skillern Tract and later at the Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

One soaring at Skillern Tract at Anahuac NWR. One also seen from van as it flew by along hwy east of Winnie.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Common and seen daily.

American Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Common and seen nearly every day.

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

First noted at French Road where one landed in the distance atop a tree. Also noted at the Bolivar Peninsula and in flooded fields near Anahuac.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*

One at French Road provided our first sighting of this species. Otherwise we noted Osprey on two more occasions, as we drove along area highways.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

On Bolivar Peninsula we saw our first over Yacht Basin Rd and later saw one on a fence post eating prey at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus hudsonius*

Our first was coursing low over fields on French Road. Later we saw two along FM1941 near Winnie.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*

Two in flight over Sim's Bayou Nature Center in Houston on last day of tour.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

Seen quite well at Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

First seen from the van near our hotel in Winnie. Later seen well atop phone pole at Taylors Bayou.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*

Seen in open farm areas between Winnie and Anahuac NWR, especially FM 1985 and FM 1941.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Noted in the pineywood region north of Houston.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

One flew by at entrance to Boy Scout Woods at High Island. Another Merlin made a fly-by of Smith Oaks at High Island the next day.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

One along Hwy 124 near the bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway, north of High Island.

Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris*

Seen well at Texas Point NWR along Coast Guard Rd and at Bolivar Peninsula at Yacht Basin Rd.

King Rail *Rallus elegans*

Seen quite well along south side of Shoveler Pond Loop at Anahuac NWR.

Sora *Porzana carolina*

Seen along Coast Guard Rd at Texas Point. Also seen along Bolivar Peninsula along Yacht Basin Rd. We saw a Swainson's Hawk eating a Sora along Hwy 124, near High Island as well.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*

Seen well at Anahuac NWR, both at Skillern Tract and at Shoveler Pond Loop. Also at the Heronry at Smith Oaks at High Island.

American Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Seen at Anahuac NWR, both at Skillern Tract and at Shoveler Pond Loop. Several noted at Heronry at Smith Oaks at High Island as well.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Numerous at Anahuac NWR at Shoveler Pond Loop.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

Seen on the Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Common in wetland areas.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

Quite numerous at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula as well as at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Tallied at Texas Point along Coast Guard Rd, as well as in flooded fields at French Rd, FM 1941, FM 1985 and at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. Several at Ft. Travis Seashore Park during thunderstorm.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Seen at a number of locations including flooded fields along French Rd, FM 1941, FM 1985, Ft. Travis Seashore Park, and at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius vociferus*

Noted at several Bolivar Peninsula locations including Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary, Yacht Basin Rd, Tuna Rd and Rollover Pass. Seen as well at TexasPoint along Coast Guard Rd.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Common and seen in variety of habitats and locations, especially flooded fields of French Rd, FM 1941 and FM 1985.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*

Several seen well at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

Several at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Numerous along Bolivar Peninsula and at coastal locations near Sabine Pass.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Abundant at fresh water flooded fields along French Rd, FM 1941, FM 1985 and at Anahuac NWR.

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*

Up to five noted in flooded fields along FM 1985 and half a dozen or more seen in fields along FM 1941 as well.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

Fairly numerous at Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass, Ft. Travis Seashore Park and at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*

Fairly common in flooded fields of French Rd, FM 1941, FM 1985.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

One on short grass along Hwy 124 near Crystal Beach on Bolivar Peninsula.

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*

Seen on a couple of occasions in fields along FM 1941 and FM 1985.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

Common in wetland habitats, especially at Anahuac NWR and in flooded fields.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

Seen several times in flooded fields and around edges of ponds.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

Noted on small pond behind our hotel in Humble. Also noted along French Rd near Winnie and in flooded fields along FM 1985 near Anahuac.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

Good numbers present on the Bolivar Peninsula, as well as at Texas Point NWR and in flooded fields.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Noted along Coast Guard Rd at Texas Point as well as at Rollover Pass and Tuna Rd on Bolivar Peninsula.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common on the Bolivar Peninsula with single also noted at Texas Point.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Seen well at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary where there was a group of half a dozen or so.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Good numbers on the Bolivar Peninsula, especially at Rollover Pass and at Bolivar Flats. Seen also at Texas Point NWR.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

Noted in flooded fields along French Rd. Also at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary, and flooded fields along FM 1941.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

Small numbers mixed in with other 'peeps' at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Seen in flooded areas of French Rd as well as at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary and in flooded fields along FM 1941.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

Several in flooded fields along FM 1941.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Seen along Yacht Basin Rd on the Bolivar Peninsula and later seen well in flooded fields along FM 1941.

Dunlin *Calidris aplina*

Seen in flooded fields along FM 1985 and FM 1941 as well as at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary and Rollover Pass.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

Seen several times, though never exceptionally well. Noted in flooded fields along FM 1941 and FM 1985 as well as at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary and at Coast Guard Rd at Texas Point.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Several seen along Bolivar Peninsula.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

Several seen along Bolivar Peninsula.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*

Common, especially on Bolivar Peninsula.

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*

A few noted at Texas Point, and large numbers all along Bolivar Peninsula, especially at Rollover Pass and at Bolivar Flats.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Briefly seen on Bolivar Peninsula at Tuna Rd.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

First noted at French Rd and later seen on beach at Bolivar Flats.

(American) Black Tern *Chlidonias niger surinamensis*

Several noted on Bolivar Peninsula at Bolivar Flats.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acufflavivus*

Good numbers tallied on Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass and Bolivar Flats.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*

Common on Bolivar Peninsula.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

Common on Bolivar Peninsula, and also noted at Anahuac NWR and at Texas Point NWR.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

A couple amongst the Forster's Terns at Rollover Pass on Bolivar Peninsula.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*

Numerous at Rollover Pass on Bolivar Peninsula where they number in the hundreds.

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Common throughout.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common throughout.

American Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

Common throughout.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca*

Seen well at entrance to Boy Scout Woods at High Island.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

Seen at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*

Singles at Boy Scout Woods and at Smith Oaks, High Island.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

Noted at Smith Oaks and at Boy Scout Woods at High Island. One also seen in road side bushes along FM 1941.

Barred Owl *Strix varia*

One seen well at night at Taylors Bayou, while young birds called in woods nearby. A second adult was also heard at another location in Taylors Bayou. Early on in trip, one briefly seen at Jesse Jones Nature Park.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

Seen overhead at High Island, as well as Sabine Woods. Seen well roosting on fence post at Bolivar Flats as well.

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

Common and seen daily zipping overhead.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilocus colubris*

Fairly common migrant in woods of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

Seen well along Hwy 124, south of Winnie. Also noted at Anahuac NWR and along roads near Sabine Woods.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*

Seen on two visits to Sabine Woods and seen by single observer at High Island.

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

Seen at Jones State Forest as well as at Jesse Jones Nature Park.

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*

Several in pineywoods at Jesse Jones Nature Park and W.G. Jones State Forest. Also noted in Taylors Bayou and at Sabine Woods.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

In pineywoods we had Downy at W.G. Jones State Forest. Later on in trip we had one at Sabine Woods and on our last day we had another at Sims Bayou Nature Center.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis*

A couple of these endangered woodpeckers seen, one particularly well, at W.G. Jones State Forest, north of Houston.

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*

Noted in pineywoods region at W.G. Jones State Forest and later seen at Taylors Bayou as well.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus*

A couple at feeders at Sims Bayou Nature Center in Houston.

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*

Seen regularly at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods, but our first sighting came at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*

Seen at Sabine Woods as well as at Smith Oaks, High Island.

Least Flycatcher *Empidonax minimus*

One noted near end of trip at Sabine Woods.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

Fairly common in open habitats where they are often seen along fence lines or on telephone wires.

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*

Fairly common migrant in open habitat throughout.

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

Two sightings, one at Sabine Woods and the other at Taylors Bayou.

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*

One, out of range individual, at Sabine Woods. Normally a species found only in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*

Fairly common and often seen in open habitats, perched on telephone wires or on fence lines.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*

First views came at W.G. Jones State Forest and later seen several times at migrant traps.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

Noted at High Island and at Sabine Woods where they are a fairly common migrant.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*

Seen quite often at High Island and Sabine Woods migrant traps.

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*

Fairly common in pineywoods and at migrant traps.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

A few seen along freeways in the Houston area.

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*

At least two noted at Taylors Bayou.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Seen at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*

Quite numerous this year and seen at a variety of locations including our hotel in Houston, W.G. Jones State Forest and High Island, amongst other locales.

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*

We saw this species well in the pineywoods region north of Houston at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Tufted Titmouse *Baeophus bicolor*

Good views on our first day at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Noted over flooded fields on FM 1941 near end of tour.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*

Fairly common and seen often in open country. Usually on the wing.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

Fairly common in towns where they nest colonially. Often seen overhead in most habitats.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

Small numbers noted at Anahuac NWR.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common throughout.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

Common, especially under bridges where they nest colonially.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*

Several picked out amongst Cliff Swallows under bridges and in culverts along FM1985 near Anahuac NWR.

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis*

Heard a number of times. Some lucky observers caught a glimpse of this elusive wren at Tuna Rd and Yacht Basin Rd on Bolivar Peninsula.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

Quite a number heard, but only one or two seen at Anahuac NWR.

Northern House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Seen at Anahuac NWR and at High Island.

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Seen quite well at W.G. Jones State Forest. Heard at many other locations, and seen at High Island's Smith Oaks also.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea*

One at Sabine Woods.

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*

Several seen well in the pineywoods at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*

Noted first at W.G. Jones State Forest and seen again several times at High Island sanctuaries.

Gray Catbird *Dumatella carolinensis*

Common migrant in wooded areas.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

Common throughout.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*

Seen fairly often at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common throughout.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*

One seen on lawn near Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston at beginning of trip and another seen on ground at Sabine Woods near end of trip.

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

Seen in W.G. Jones State Forest as well as at Taylor Bayou.

Veery *Catharus fuscescens*

Found at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*

Encountered at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

This was quite a good year for Gray-cheeked Thrush and we saw them several times at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

Several seen at High Island and Sabine Woods.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout in urban areas.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

Seen several times at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*

Several sightings at both High Island sanctuaries; Smith Oaks and Boy Scout Woods.

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*

One noted at Sabine Woods.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

Seen along edges of ponds at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*

Several sightings at both High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora pinus*

Several at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

Fairly common at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

Seen first at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston where a pair foraged below us as we stood on the boardwalk. Noted also at High Island and at Taylors Bayou.

Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis ruficapilla*

Fairly common at migrant traps at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Nashville Warbler *Leiothlypis ruficapilla*

One sighting, at Sabine Woods.

Kentucky Warbler *Geothlypis formosus*

Seen fleetingly a few times at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Seen at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Also seen along Coast Guard Rd at Texas Point. Heard and briefly seen at High Island's Smith Oaks.

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

First seen at W.G. Jones State Forest where a male showed nicely. Fairly common migrant at traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

Small numbers at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea*

Several sightings at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

First sighting at Jesse Jones Nature Park at Cypress Swamp. Later seen several times at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*

Absent during first half of trip and appeared on last few days at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Bay-breasted Warbler *Setophaga castanea*

One seen by one lucky observer at High Island.

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

Stunning species seen at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

Fairly common migrant at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

Seen several times High Island and Sabine Woods.

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata*

Two sightings, both from Sabine Woods.

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*

Several seen in W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston.

Myrtle Warbler *Setophaga coronata*

One fairly brief sighting in W.G. Jones State Forest.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*

One seen very well at Taylors Bayou and another seen at close range at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*

Several noted at end of trip at Sabine Woods.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

Seen towards end of trip at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*

One seen well at W.G. Jones State Forest. Heard at Sabine Woods and High Island sanctuaries.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*

Fairly common migrant at the coastal migrant traps. Also seen at Texas Point and at Anahuac NWR.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*

Several seen at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

Common and seen almost daily.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*

One male seen at the visitor's center at Anahuac NWR.

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

One male flew past as we ate lunch at Shoveler Pond at Anahuac.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Common and seen almost daily.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

Seen at High Island and in Sabine Woods area.

Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*

Common and seen daily.

Boat-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus major*

Fairly common in marshes near the coast such as those at Anahuac and at Texas Point NWR.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

Seen in agricultural fields between Winnie and Anahuac along FM 1985 and along FM 1941.

Swamp Sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*

Seen at Anahuac NWR as well as at Sabine Woods along edge of pond.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

Seen at Skillern Tract at Anahuac. Also seen on patch of grass on Bolivar Peninsula at Tuna Rd.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*

Common in open grassland habitats.

Seaside Sparrow *Ammodramus maritimus*

Seen very well at Texas Point along Coast Guard Rd.

Nelson's Sparrow *Ammodramus nelsoni*

Several noted on Bolivar Peninsula in marshes along Tuna Rd.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

Seen on our first day in the pineywoods and often at the coastal migrant traps.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

Seen often at migrant traps.

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*

Several noted towards end of trip along FM 1941 and Pear Orchard Rd, close to Anahuac NWR.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

Fairly common migrant at coastal migrant hotspots.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Common and seen daily.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*

Female seen feeding in grass at Anahuac's Skillern Tract. Later seen along FM1941 near Anahuac.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

Fairly common at migrant traps. Several also seen feeding in grasses at Anahuac's Skillern Tract.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

Male briefly at Skillern Tract at Anahuac NWR. Later seen well at Boy Scout Woods at High Island.

House Finch *Heamorrhous mexicanus*

Seen at our hotel in Houston where they were nesting in cedar hedges.

MAMMALS**Coypu** *Myocastor coypus***Eastern Grey Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis***Eastern Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus niger***Swamp Rabbit** *Sylvilagus aquaticus***BUTTERFLIES****Palamedes Swallowtail** *Papilio palamedes***Spicebush Swallowtail** *Papilio triolus***Small White** *Pieris rapae***Cloudless Sulphur** *Phoebis sennae***Orange Sulphur** *Colias eurytheme***Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta***Monarch** *Danaus plexippus***REPTILES****Red-eared Slider** *Chrysemys scripta***American Bullfrog** *Lithobates catesbeianus***American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis***Green Anole** *Anolis carolinensis***Rat Snake** *Elaphe obsoleta***Water Snake sp.** Several types of water snake, which we were unable to determine to species.