

Texas

High Island & Houston Woods

Sat 22nd – Sun 30 Apr 2017



Texas highlights (Clockwise from top left): Roseate Spoonbill • Orchard Oriole • Wilson's Plover • American Alligator • Louisiana Waterthrush • Long-billed Curlew. Photos © Chris Charlesworth/Limosa

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

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Day 1, April 22 – After meeting up from seemingly points all around the globe in what was a truly international group, we went out for dinner at the Olive Garden and then got a good night's rest before all the excitement of the coming morning.

Day 2, April 23 – A cold front arrived overnight, bringing with it cool temperatures and northerly winds, so as we emerged from the hotel we reached for our warm fleeces. The sun was shining all day and by noon it was a comfortable temperature in the low 20s Celsius. Before we had left the parking lot a few species were added to the trip list such as House Finch, White Ibis and Little Blue Heron. We drove north to W.G. Jones State Forest where the birding was very good amongst the Loblolly Pines. It didn't take us too long to find our big target species for the day, a Red-cockaded Woodpecker, foraging on the trunk of a large pine. Woodpeckers in general were quite cooperative this morning, with lovely views of both Red-bellied and Red-headed woodpeckers as well. A Pileated Woodpecker called in the distance, but remained unseen. Eastern Bluebirds appeared as if on cue and paused long enough for all to enjoy in the scope. Other goodies that performed for us included two studies in red; Northern Cardinal and Summer Tanagers, plus studies in yellow; Yellow-breasted Chat and Pine Warbler. Carolina Wrens sang from every corner of the woods and eventually we laid eyes on one, pointed out by Aiden. Flitting in the pines were both Brown-headed Nuthatches and Carolina Chickadees, while overhead, Turkey and Black vultures, and Broad-winged Hawk sailed by. A group of Cedar Waxwings posed nicely in the morning sun and Blue Jays were numerous, their calls ringing throughout the woods.

We took a break to use nearby facilities and pick up lunch before venturing out on the Middle Lake Trail, where the good birds continued to roll in. Two lovely warbler species appeared and showed well in the undergrowth: a male Hooded Warbler and a male Kentucky Warbler. As we watched for birds in the undergrowth, the shadows of passing Turkey Vultures overhead kept us raising our eyes towards the sky, which paid off with sightings of several Red-shouldered Hawks - one carrying a snake - and one or two Mississippi Kites sailing over. Some of the first butterflies of the trip began to appear as the day warmed up with Painted Lady and Black Swallowtail noted on our pre-lunch walk. Also, the first mammal was seen, a pair of Eastern Fox Squirrels squabbling along an old fence. We had a picnic lunch, then made our way to Jesse Jones Nature Park, not far from our hotel. We attempted, but failed, to find a reported Swainson's Warbler here, though as a consolation prize we were rewarded with lovely views of a singing male Prothonotary Warbler. A Green Heron called as it came in for a landing in the lovely cypress trees at a little swamp, while Red-eared Sliders popped up from the murky water. A Wood Thrush sang its lovely song from the forest, but only Joan got a glimpse of the bird. A short stop at the visitor's center provided us with views of several Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as they fed on flowers and feeders. House Finch, White-winged Dove and Northern Cardinal patronized seed feeders nearby. Flowers attracted more butterflies as well with Gulf Fritillary, Pipevine Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail and an unidentified duskywing appearing. Our first Eastern Grey Squirrel, not the most popular mammal for many, appeared in Jesse Jones Park this afternoon. To finish off our exploration of the park we strolled along the Cypress Boardwalk trail, catching a glimpse of another gorgeous male Prothonotary Warbler. Northern Parulas sang high in the trees and we eventually got a view of a male as he bobbed about amongst the leaves. Several Indigo Buntings skulked in the underbrush along with our first Grey Catbird of the trip. Feeling as though we'd had a very productive day we returned to our hotel and took a little rest before venturing out for a tasty dinner.

Day 3, April 24 – We left Houston this morning and made our way down to Winnie in fairly good time. After a short stop at our hotel to drop off luggage, then a stop at the grocery store to pick up provisions for lunch, we headed out to do some birding. It was a lovely sunny day with pleasantly warm temperatures as we began our birding. The first birds we encountered were a couple of stunning Scissor-tailed Flycatchers along a fence line next to our van. Next, Eastern Meadowlarks appeared, followed by Eastern Kingbirds and Savannah Sparrows. A little farther along I noticed a group of about four Dickcissels in the shrubbery next to our van. A grassy field, where the previous week I had seen Upland Sandpipers, again produced the birds, with up to a dozen appearing. However, the sandpipers seemed a bit skittish and when we got out for a look, most of them flew back to the far end of the field. Christine spotted a pair of Common Nighthawks roosting on a metal bar and, a little farther along, I paused to show the group their first Crested Caracara of the tour. We stopped at a little bridge over a ditch and scanned through the Cliff Swallows, eventually picking out several Cave Swallows.

Next, we turned down Pear Orchard Road, where the previous week we had seen American Golden Plovers. This was not the case today as a crop dusting plane was buzzing over the fields at about 20 feet elevation. The

Gull-billed Terns were still there, however. Once we reached the entrance to Anahuac, we stopped to view a flooded field with good numbers of shorebirds. The lighting made things a bit tricky, but a nice little group of birds was huddled in the corner close to where we stood. There were Semipalmated Sandpipers, as well as eight White-rumped Sandpipers. An adult Stilt Sandpiper, coming into breeding plumage, foraged next to a Lesser Yellowlegs, while a few Least Sandpipers scurried about on the mud. Farther out in the deeper water, a Dunlin probed about, as did Black-necked Stilts and a Willet. A single Semipalmated Plover also showed nicely for us. At the Anahuac visitor's center we found a male Bronzed Cowbird and a short walk produced a little group of White-crowned Sparrows. Our first Giant Swallowtail, an impressive butterfly, was found in flowers near the visitor's center as well. Warbling and Red-eyed vireos appeared rather briefly in the trees and a nice male Orchard Oriole showed well. We had a picnic lunch under a shelter where Cliff Swallows and Barn Swallows were nesting, then we headed off on a drive around Shoveler Pond. Herons and egrets were numerous with Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets and Great Blue, Green, Tricolored and Little Blue Herons found, as well as many White-faced Ibis, White Ibis and Roseate Spoonbills. An American Bittern was probably our best catch at Anahuac this afternoon, as it sat motionless near the edge of the pond. American Coots, Common Gallinules and lovely Purple Gallinules were seen well, while a Sora was just briefly seen. Waterfowl noted included both Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Mottled Ducks and a single Northern Shoveler called out by Joan. A Marsh Wren sat atop the reeds long enough for us to get scope views of the little skulker, while a female Common Yellowthroat only briefly appeared and left us wanting more. As we drove around the pond, we saw several American Alligators of various sizes, as well as Red-eared Sliders and many fishes.

The afternoon was getting on so we began the short drive over to High Island and visited Boy Scout Woods, which was quite active with migrant birds. In the parking lot, a mulberry attracted several Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, both Summer and Scarlet Tanagers and a group of Cedar Waxwings. As we neared the park's entrance, we were distracted by a lovely Baltimore Oriole. We watched the drip for quite some time this afternoon and were rewarded with sightings of Wood Thrush, many Swainson's Thrushes and some nice Grey-cheeked Thrushes. Warblers that appeared included Hooded and Tennessee and several American Redstarts. Though there was a lack of warblers, the larger migrants were very numerous, especially Scarlet Tanagers, Summer Tanagers, thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Grey Catbirds, Baltimore Orioles and Orchard Orioles. A short stroll through the woods produced an Eastern Wood Pewee, as well as a Northern Waterthrush at another little pond. We heard a Painted Bunting singing away, but it just wouldn't appear for us, though a few Indigo Buntings did cooperate. I pointed out a female American Redstart flitting about in a bush and Christine pointed out a lovely male foraging on the other side of the same bush. Also spotted by sharp-eyed Christine was our first Red-tailed Hawk of the tour. On our way back to the van after a very productive session at Boy Scout Woods, an Inca Dove diverted our attention as it displayed from a power line. We had dinner at Tony's BBQ this evening and tallied up our bird list which had reached over 90 species for the day.

Day 4, April 25 – The calm, serene surroundings of Taylors Bayou provided the backdrop for our first birding destination this morning. As we made our way into the bayou I spotted a Fish Crow flapping alongside the van and, thankfully, the bird let out its croaky call, confirming its identity. A pair of Wood Ducks was precariously perched atop a snag next to the bayou, allowing us to have a look at them, the male in his spectacular breeding garb. Joan spotted a Yellow-crowned Night Heron along a ditch as we drove along and, once we stopped the van and got out, we found there to be quite a number of night herons in cypress trees nearby. A lovely surprise was finding a group of up to four River Otters playing in the waters of the bayou this morning! After a little searching we found a lovely singing male Yellow-throated Warbler here and had scope views of a female Prothonotary Warbler. Northern Parulas sang their buzzy songs from the trees around us, but remained hidden.

We drove east to Sabine Pass, where we paused to use the facilities before heading off to explore Pilot Station Road and associated wetlands. In this area we tallied an impressive list of over 70 species of birds! In the wetlands we had fantastic views of a Seaside Sparrow as it sang from sedge grasses just in front of us. Shorebirds were well represented with Dunlin, Least and Semipalmated sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Sanderling, Spotted Sandpiper and Black-bellied Plovers all in the mix. On the beach were assorted gulls and terns, including Forster's and Common Terns, as well as Royal, Sandwich, Black and diminutive Least Terns, plus a single Black Skimmer picked out by Christine. Clapper Rails were making a great racket all around us, but remained hidden until we came to a nice clearing where one came down to the edge of the water and allowed fantastic scope views. A Sora also crossed the road, though it wasn't seen by everyone in the group. Other species that were tallied this morning included a couple of Red-breasted Mergansers, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting and Eastern Kingbird. A treat for our mammal list today was the sighting of several Bottlenose Dolphins riding the bow of a giant tanker out in the waters of Sabine Pass.

After a delicious lunch at Tammy's Diner in Sabine Pass we headed for Sea Rim State Park. On the lagoons near the parking area a male Redhead was present, along with Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Mottled Duck and American Coot. We walked out to the beach and enjoyed a plover bonanza with several Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, plus singles each of Wilson's, Piping and Snowy Plovers. Other shorebirds noted here included Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, Willets and Dunlin. Two interesting gulls were sighted, a first-year Lesser Black-backed Gull and an adult Franklin's Gull. Reluctantly we left the beach and headed for Sabine Woods, where I hoped we would find a rarity that had been present for a few days, a Yellow-green Vireo. The rather elusive vireo, even though it was sighted several times while we were in the park, eluded us. Lots of other goodies were seen here this afternoon, however, including large numbers of the bigger migrants such as Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles and an array of thrushes, including Veery, Grey-cheeked, Swainson's and Wood. A few warblers were about, too, including Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, Hooded Warbler and Canada Warbler, though unfortunately the latter disappeared before anyone in the group could get onto it. A highlight in the warbler department this afternoon were two Ovenbirds. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo dashed through the leaves behind the drip, but eluded us for a better look. Though we couldn't track down the rare Yellow-green Vireo, there were several Red-eyed Vireos lurking about in the canopy and a few Eastern Wood Pewees made appearances, while our first Brown Thrashers of the tour were tallied. The drive back to Winnie went fairly swiftly and after a little rest we headed out for a tasty Mexican dinner.

Day 5, April 26 – First things first, we stopped and picked up lunch in Winnie this morning, before visiting a flooded field along Hwy 124 south of town. This field produced some fantastic birds including a couple of Hudsonian Godwits and two Buff-breasted Sandpipers. We took a spin down Oilfield Road and enjoyed close up views of Least and Semipalmated sandpipers, Black-necked Stilts, Dunlin, egrets, ibises and a Sora. Once we made it to the Bolivar Peninsula we stopped in at Rollover Pass where we added an American Oystercatcher to our trip list, as it strolled right in front of us. Otherwise, we enjoyed nice studies of terns and gulls there. Along Yacht Basin Road we got scope views of a Nelson's Sparrow out in the marsh, while a Crested Caracara flew past. After a short pit-stop we checked out Gregory Park in Crystal Beach where we got great views of a Long-billed Curlew probing the grass. At Bolivar Flats we scanned the beach where hundreds of shorebirds were feeding, with species such as Dunlin, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Ruddy Turnstone, Willet and Semipalmated Plover the dominant ones. We did add a few new birds here including a non-breeding plumaged Red Knot and a couple of Reddish Egrets, with both white and dark morph birds present. In the dunes along the edge of the beach we had nice scope views of a Horned Lark, another new species for the bulging trip list. Waterfowl included three birds new for us; Greater and Lesser Scaup and the continuing Long-tailed Duck. A Northern Harrier did its stooping display over a large open field, another first for the tour. A light rain began to fall as we made our way back to the van. We drove back to Gregory Park where we had lunch under the sheltered picnic area, though by then the rain had stopped.

The afternoon was spent strolling about the High Island area looking for migrants - and they were plentiful. We had upwards of 17 species of warblers including several new ones; a rather elusive Canada Warbler, a stunning male Blackburnian Warbler, several Yellow Warblers, a male Black-and-white Warbler, a male Blackpoll Warbler spotted by Malcolm, a male Magnolia Warbler and several Black-throated Green Warblers. American Redstarts were common, along with Tennessee Warblers and Common Yellowthroats. A Yellow-breasted Chat sang periodically. Vireos were well represented with multiples of Yellow-throated, Philadelphia, Warbling, Red-eyed and White-eyed. Painted Buntings were numerous today and we had good views of several males. I spotted a Yellow-billed Cuckoo and we had fantastic and lengthy scope views of the bird. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Baltimore Orioles, Orchard Orioles, Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Grey Catbirds and Eastern Kingbirds were abundant. Eastern Wood Pewees were quite common and a few thrushes remained including Veery, Grey-cheeked and Swainson's. It really was quite a bonanza of migrants at Smith Oaks this afternoon. We saw a rather large Yellow-bellied Water Snake beside the path, our first snake of the trip. Before we left the High Island area we headed over to Boy Scout Woods to check out a report of a Cape May Warbler in a bottlebrush near the entrance. As soon as we arrived somebody called out, 'here it is' and they were right. A gorgeous male Cape May Warbler put on a lovely show for us in an attractive bottlebrush. Other birds were also flocking to the same tree; Tennessee Warblers, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles and several Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. On our way back to Winnie, I spotted a Peregrine Falcon on a tall radio tower, our first for the tour. What a day! We tallied up our list at dinner and we'd seen close to 130 species of birds. After dark we headed out to Taylors Bayou and managed to hear a pair of Barred Owls, but they wouldn't show themselves. It was great to take in the sights and sounds of the night, with several species of frogs calling, including a very noisy Bullfrog that John imitated quite well. Fireflies danced through the sky and the stars were stunning.

Day 6, April 27 – Our day began lovely and sunny, though a bit cool and it remained very nice throughout the entire time we were out. We began along FM 1941 south of Winnie where, in the grassy fields, we enjoyed watching a group of 20 or so Upland Sandpipers. Also at this grassy field, a flock of upwards of 50 Buff-breasted

Sandpipers circled overhead, looking for somewhere to land. This is the largest gathering of this species I have ever encountered. The usual Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, Dickcissels, and Loggerhead Shrikes were also seen, in addition to a Western Kingbird, which was a new bird for the tour list. We turned down S. Pear Orchard Road, seeing another couple of Western Kingbirds and happening upon a nice, flooded rice field. In the rice field were several American Golden Plovers, as well as Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Stilt Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet and our first Solitary Sandpiper. Joan exclaimed she had seen something resembling a Northern Bobwhite, so we backed up the van and were ecstatic when a pair of bobwhites erupted out of the grass and flew a short distance ahead of us. One of the birds, a stunning male, ran back towards the van, trotting just a few meters from us, right out in the open! If only the camera had been ready.

At Anahuac NWR we headed for Skillern Tract where it didn't take us too long to find our target species. A Least Bittern was spotted as it lurked in the reeds and we had great views through the scope. A trio of Black-crowned Night Herons flapped lazily overhead, two new ticks for the trip list. After a short stop at the Anahuac visitor's center we drove around Shoveler Pond, this time with two species in our sights; Glossy Ibis and King Rail. We scanned through dozens of White-faced Ibis until eventually we picked out a couple of adult Glossys. Success! King Rails, however, did not want to 'play ball' and we only heard them calling. A Sora came into the open, however. Purple Gallinules were numerous and we had some very impressive American Alligators out basking in the sun. From Anahuac we made our way back to Winnie where we had lunch, then we re-visited High Island in the afternoon. First thing we did was head over to the rookery at Smith Oaks where the usual commotion of nesting and rearing young was in full swing for Great and Snowy Egrets, Roseate Spoonbills and Neotropic Cormorants. Hungry Alligators waited beneath the rookery, in case an unlucky youngster got shoved out of its nest. Once we'd had our fill of nesting herons, we headed out in search of passerine migrants. It was very slow for the first half hour or so, but it didn't take too long for birds to begin to drop in. A smattering of warblers was present this afternoon with Black-and-white, Hooded, Kentucky, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian and our first and only Wilson's Warbler noted. With the afternoon fading we made our way to Boy Scout Woods for a look and John Coons told me of a Bay-breasted Warbler in a large oak nearby. Off we trotted, and it didn't take long to spot the lovely male Bay-breasted Warbler foraging in the tree, alongside a beautiful male Magnolia Warbler. We watched a flurry of activity at a little cypress swamp next, where a variety of warblers, tanagers and thrushes came down to the water to drink and bath. Back at Purky's Pond and the drip we spent the final half hour of the day watching, as mostly Grey Catbirds came and went. All in all it was a good day and we tallied about 110 species.

Day 7, April 28 – On our last full day on the Upper Coast, we deviated from the usual schedule and drove to Silsbee and the lower end of the Big Thicket. I set myself the goal of finding the group four new species, and we did pretty well, finding three out of four. The first new addition was one of the more sought-after warbler species on the Upper Coast, a Swainson's Warbler. The bird sang and called from deep within the thickets alongside Gore Store Road and, after a bit of effort, most of us had a pretty good view of the little skulker. At a nearby creek crossing we found the second target species, a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, flitting in tall trees next to the road. We drove on, searching for short, regenerating pines and, once found, it didn't take long to locate a singing male Prairie Warbler. Feeling pretty good about our haul of new birds we began the journey back towards the coast, stopping in at Sabine Pass for lunch at Tammie's Diner.

After lunch we made our way to Sabine Woods. It was a slow for migrants here, though we did add one more bird, a very obliging Louisiana Waterthrush. Otherwise, we had the usual migrant species here such as Orchard Oriole, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Hooded Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Wood Pewee etc. We returned to Winnie and went out for Mexican food.

Day 8, April 29 – With one last morning to try and add a few species to our list, we bid adieu to Aiden then headed south towards the Bolivar Peninsula. A storm was whipping up and the waves were coming right up over the highway, bringing with them a lot of debris. We almost turned around, but decided to brave it and go through, which worked out fine, as it was not as bad as it looked. Shortly thereafter I spotted the target bird for this destination, a White-tailed Kite, sailing over a field near the highway. We had a quick look at Rollover Pass, where there was very little due to the high water, then made our way back to High Island. We strolled around Boy Scout Woods, which was decidedly quiet. Only a very few migrants were about; a Northern Waterthrush, a Swainson's Thrush, Orchard Oriole and some Chimney Swifts. One of the few Red-tailed Hawks of the tour flew over the woods.

Thinking of Plan B, Joan suggested we look for shorebirds, so off we headed towards Anahuac. A flooded rice field along the way looked promising so we stopped and, low and behold, we added two more birds to the trip list, a fabulous female Wilson's Phalarope and a Pectoral Sandpiper! At Anahuac, after a quick coffee stop at the headquarters, we saw the usual things, including Least Bittern, White-faced Ibis, Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Long-

billed Dowitcher, amongst others. We heard several King Rails and one of the group got lucky and caught a glimpse of the bird lurking in the reeds. This was our 204th bird species for the trip - a very respectable total. We tried for Monk Parakeet on the way back to Houston, without luck. I dropped the tour members off at the airport and local hotel and it was all over. This was another fantastic group, providing excellent company, and easy atmosphere and superb birding skills. Thanks for the good times.

Systematic List of Species Recorded
(203 bird species)

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Seen several times, but most numerous around Shoveler Pond at Anahuac NWR.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Fairly common, especially at Anahuac NWR around Shoveler Pond.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

A pair in the bayous along Boondocks Road, east of Winnie.

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*

Small numbers noted at Anahuac NWR, ironically on Shoveler Pond, as well as at Bolivar Flats and at Sea Rim State Park.

Redhead *Aythya americana*

One male at Sea Rim State Park.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

A couple of males at Bolivar Flats alongside Lesser Scaup for comparison.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

Several flocks on gulf at Bolivar Flats.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

One at Bolivar Flats. Quite rare in the area.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Noted at Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass and at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One in flight over Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

We saw Pied-billeds several times on our visits to Anahuac NWR, specifically along the Shoveler Pond Loop.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

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

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi*

Quite numerous at Anahuac NWR.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

One or two picked out amongst the White-faced Ibis at Shoveler Pond at Anahuac.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

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

American Bittern *Botaurus lentiginosus*

One seen very well at edge of reeds at Shoveler Pond at the Anahuac NWR.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*

Excellent views of several at Anahuac NWR.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

First and only sightings were at Anahuac NWR at Skillern Tract.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

Good views at Taylors Bayou.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Seen in wetland habitats throughout tour.

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*

Several seen well at Rollover Pass and at Bolivar Flats on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Fairly common and seen almost daily in wetland areas.

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*

Seen at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula, Bolivar Flats and in flight over Anahuac NWR.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Fairly common along the immediate coast at Bolivar Peninsula and at the Sabine Pass area.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Fairly common, especially near wetlands.

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*

One or two at most at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

One noted at Anahuac NWR on day 5.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Common and seen daily.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Common and seen nearly every day.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Two sightings on the Bolivar Peninsula, one at Rollover Pass and one along Yacht Basin Road.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

One on last day near Crystal Beach on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus hudsonius*

Seen at Bolivar Flats, along S. Pear Orchard Road and at Anahuac NWR at Shoveler Pond.

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*

One or two overhead at W.G. Jones State Forest, north of Houston.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

Seen at W.G. Jones State Park as bird soared overhead. Another was seen along Gore Store Road at the southern end of the Big Thicket.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

Seen quite well at W.G. Jones State Forest as the birds flew overhead.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*

A few sightings, but the main migratory push of this species came through the week prior to this trip. We had a Swainson's Hawk over Boy Scout Woods at High Island, as well as at the Anahuac NWR.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

A couple of Red-tailed Hawks, of perhaps the same bird seen twice, was noted on two visits to Boy Scout Woods at High Island.

Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris*

Excellent sightings along Pilot Station Road and at the Bolivar Peninsula at Yacht Basin Road.

King Rail *Rallus elegans (H)*

Heard only this year, at Anahuac NWR.

Sora *Porzana carolina*

Quite a few sightings, especially at Anahuac. Also seen well along Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass and at S. Oilfield Road, south of High Island.

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*

Several at Shoveler Pond at Anahuac NWR and also at the heronry at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

Noted at Anahuac NWR at Shoveler Pond. Also found at the Smith Oaks / High Island heronry.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Small numbers at Sea Rim State Park and common at Anahuac NWR at Shoveler Pond.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

Two at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

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. Single bird along Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Fairly common, especially at beach locations, including Bolivar Flats and Rollover Pass, as well as at Sea Rim State Park and Pilot Station Road. Also found in open agricultural fields along S. Pear Orchard Road and along FM 1941.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

Several along S. Pear Orchard Road near Anahuac, in flooded fields.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Fairly common. Seen at most beach locations as well as in flooded fields.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius vociferus*

Found at Sea Rim State Park and at Bolivar Flats.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Common and seen nearly daily in open areas and in flooded fields.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*

Several seen well at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus*

One seen quite well on the beach at Sea Rim State Park.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Several seen along Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass. Also found on the Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass and at Bolivar Flats.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Common in flooded fields in the Anahuac area.

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*

Two seen in flooded fields along FM 1985.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

Found along Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass, Yacht Basin Road and at Bolivar Flats.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Quite common and seen in most beach locations as well as in flooded fields.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

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

Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*

Seen on two occasions along FM 1941 in grassy fields.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

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

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

One seen at edge of road in flooded ditch along S. Pear Orchard Road.

Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

Good numbers on the Bolivar Peninsula, as well as at Pilot Station Road and in flooded fields throughout

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Three noted along rocky section of beach at Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Found along beaches at Pilot Station Road, Sea Rim State Park and a number of Bolivar Peninsula locations.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Several at Bolivar Flats.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Found pretty much anywhere there were beaches; Sea Rim State Park, Pilot Station Road and a number of locations along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

Found in flooded fields as well as at most beach locations.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

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

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Common throughout, especially in flooded fields and along the upper edges of beaches on Bolivar Peninsula.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

Up to five noted in flooded field near FM 1985 and the main entrance road into Anahuac NWR.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

One in flooded fields along FM 1985 near entrance to Anahuac.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Fairly common in flooded field situations and along beaches.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

Common this year with various sightings in flooded fields on FM 1941 and FM 1985, as well as at Anahuac NWR and Sea Rim State Park.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

Seen in flooded fields along FM 1985 and FMM 1941 as well as along S. Pear Orchard Road.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

One female in flooded fields along FM 1985 near entrance to Anahuac.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Noted along Pilot Station Road, as well as at Bolivar Flats locations.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

Noted on the beach at Sea Rim State Park and south of High Island at S. Oilfield Rd.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Singles at Sea Rim State Park and at Bolivar Flats.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*

Common, especially on Bolivar Peninsula.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*

One adult at Sea Rim State Park.

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*

Numerous at beach locations including Pilot Station Road, Sea Rim State Pk and along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Noted at Anahuac NWR and along S. Pear Orchard Road.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Up to five at some flooded fields along FM 1985.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Good numbers this year, with birds at Pilot Station Road, Sea Rim State Park and Bolivar Flats locations.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acuffavidus*

Good numbers tallied on Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass and Bolivar Flats, with others at Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass as well as at Sea Rim State Park.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*

Common on Bolivar Peninsula and also seen along Pilot Station Road and at Sea Rim State Park.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

Numerous along Bolivar Flats and noted at Anahuac NWR, Sea Rim State Park and along Pilot Station Road.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

One or two birds along Pilot Station Road and at Rollover Pass.

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. Also noted as we traveled from one spot to the next.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

Singles at Sabine Woods and at High Island.

Barred Owl *Strix varia (H)*

Heard only, as we had a pair duetting in the forest at Taylors Bayou one evening.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

Fairly numerous throughout, with sightings at places such as Anahuac NWR, Sabine Woods, High Island and the Bolivar Peninsula.

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

Small numbers in flight seen most days.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilocus colubris*

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

Belted Kingfisher *Megasceryle alcyon*

One seen at Pilot Station Road near Sabine Pass, and another seen from the van on telephone wires between Winnie and High Island.

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

We saw this spectacular woodpecker at W.G. Jones State Forest, Jesse Jones Park and along Gore Store Road at the south end of the Big Thicket.

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*

Encountered quite a few times, at W.G. Jones State Forest, Jesse Jones Nature Pk, Sabine Woods, Sims Bayou Nature Center and along Gore Store Road to name a few places.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

Found at W.G. Jones State Forest and Jesse Jones Nature Park in the piney-woods habitat and also found at Sabine Woods.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis*

Three counted in the pineywoods at W.G. Jones State Forest N. of Houston.

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*

At W.G. Jones State Forest we kept hearing one, that was rather frustrating, but all was forgotten once we had a great view of one along Boondocks Road near Taylors Bayou.

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

Several seen, usually solitarily, flying over fields at locations including S. Pear Pear Orchard Road, FM 1941 and Boondocks Road.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

We had our only Peregrine Falcon sitting on a large radio tower in High Island, near Smith Oaks.

Eastern Wood-Pewee *Contopus virens*

We hit migration for wood-pewees well on this trip. Species seen almost daily at all the usual migrant traps.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

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

Western Kingbird *Tyrannus verticalis*

Up to 6 noted one afternoon, after a rain and wind storm, in the Sabine Pass area.

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*

Fairly common migrant in open habitat throughout.

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

Seen fairly well at W.G. Jones State Forest, and heard at a number of other locations on the tour.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*

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

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*

Heard often, and seen quite well at W.G. Jones State Forest, as well as at High Island's Smith Oaks.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

Found at W.G. Jones State Forest, at Anahuac NWR and at Sabine Woods, to name a few locations.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*

Seen quite well a couple of times at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*

We found small numbers at Anahuac NWR near the headquarters and at High Island at Sabine Woods.

Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphicus*

Several seen nicely at Smith Oaks Sanctuary, at High Island.

Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*

Fairly common in pineywoods and at migrant traps.

American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

One or two along Gore Store Road at Big Thicket.

Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*

Seen quite well, and more importantly heard, at Taylors Bayou.

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*

Found at a number of locations, including W.G. Jones Forest, Jesse Jones Nature Park, High Island and Taylors Bayou.

Carolina Chickadee *Poecile carolinensis*

We found these charismatic little birds at W.G. Jones State Forest, Jesse Jones Nature Park, Taylors Bayou and along Gore Store Road in Big Thicket.

Shore (Horned) Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Seen at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Tufted Titmouse *Baeophus bicolor*

Good views on our first day at W.G. Jones State Forest and at Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston.

Sand Martin (Bank Swallow) *Riparia riparia*

We had quite a few in the Anahuac, FM 1941 and S. Pear Orchard Road areas.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*

Up to four noted at Anahuac NWR.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

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

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*

Small numbers at Anahuac NWR, Pilot Station Road, Sabine Woods and High Island to name a few locations.

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 FM 1941 near Anahuac NWR.

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis (H)*

Heard only.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

Seen and or heard at Anahuac NWR and in marshes along Pilot Station Road.

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Seen quite well at W.G. Jones State Forest, as well as at High Island and at Sabine Woods. Heard at a number of other locations as well.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea*

Two along Gore Store Road in the Big Thicket.

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*

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

Grey 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.

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

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

Veery *Catharus fuscescens*

It was a good year for thrushes in general and we had quite a few Veery at the High Island migrant traps as well as at Sabine Woods.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*

Numerous throughout, especially at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

Seen at several locations including Sabine Woods, High Island, and Pilot Station Road. The bird at Pilot Station Rd foraged right alongside the van at the road edge, obviously tired and hungry.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

First encounter was at Jesse Jones Nature Park, and later seen at High Island, Sabine Woods and other locations.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout in urban areas.

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*

Several at our hotel in Humble and some at feeders at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

Seen multiple times at Sabine Woods and at High Island.

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*

One at the drip at Sabine Woods. Bird not concerned with our presence and it came within just a few feet of us on several occasions.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

Found at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

A few noted most days at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

We saw a couple of Prothonotary Warblers nicely at Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston Airport, and later saw another at Taylors Bayou near Winnie.

Swainson's Warbler *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

One seen in underbrush along Gore Store Road in the Big Thicket.

Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis ruficapilla*

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

Kentucky Warbler *Geothlypis formosus*

One male seen very well along Sweewater Lake Trail at W.G. Jones State Forest.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Fairly common in moist habitats at Anahuac NWR, Pilot Stn Road, Sabine Woods and at High Island.

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

First seen at W.G. Jones State Forest where a male showed nicely. One or two seen most days at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

Small numbers at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina*

Lovely male feeding in bottle brush in garden near entrance to Boy Scout Woods at High Island.

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

One or two along the Cypress Boardwalk at Jesse Jones Nature Park, and later heard at Taylors Bayou.

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*

Small numbers noted at Smith Oaks and Boy Scout Woods sections of High Island.

Bay-breasted Warbler *Setophaga castanea*

Lovely male foraging in large oak at Boy Scout Woods, High Island.

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

A couple of sightings of this stunning warbler at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Is.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

Fairly common migrant at Sabine Woods and High.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

Not many present this year, but we did see them on a couple of occasions at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata*

One nice male seen at Smith Oaks in High Island.

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*

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

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*

Seen quite well at Taylors Bayou.

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor*

One male along Gore Store Road in the Big Thicket.

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*

One seen well at High Island's Smith Oaks.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

Several noted at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*

A pair seen well at W.G. Jones State Forest. Also heard at Boy Scout Woods.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*

Fairly common migrant at the coastal migrant traps.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*

Several seen at High Island and Sabine Woods, as well as other locations.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

Common and seen almost daily.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*

Up to three at the visitor's center at Anahuac NWR.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Common and seen almost daily.

Yellow-headed Blackbird *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*

Male seen in with mixed blackbirds and grackles in fields along FM 1941.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

Common, as the name implies.

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 Pilot Station Road.

Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna*

Fairly common in the open grassy country of the Anahuac region and the Bolivar Peninsula.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

Small numbers noted at Anahuac NWR near the visitor's center.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*

Common in open grassland habitats.

Seaside Sparrow *Ammodramus maritimus*

Seen very well along Pilot Station Road.

Nelson's Sparrow *Ammodramus nelsoni*

One seen in marshy habitat along Yacht Basin Road on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

Common throughout, especially at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

Seen often at migrant traps.

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*

Seen several times in grassy fields near 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*

Good year for Blue Grosbeaks. We found them at Anahuac NWR. Also along FM 1941, along Pilot Station Road and at Sabine Woods

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

Fairly common and seen most days.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

Several good sightings, including males at a number of locations, most memorably Smith Oaks at High Island.

MAMMALS**Eastern Grey Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis***Eastern Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus niger***Swamp Rabbit** *Sylvilagus aquaticus***River Otter** *Lontra canadensis***White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus***Feral Pig** *Sus scrofa***Bottlenose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus***BUTTERFLIES****Pipevine Swallowtail** *Battus philenor***Black Swallowtail** *Papilio polyxenes***Giant Swallowtail** *Papilio cresphontes***Great Southern White** *Ascia monuste***Little Yellow** *Eurema lisa***Red-crescent Scrub-Hairstreak** *Strymon rufofusca***Gulf Fritillary** *Agraulis vanillae***Painted Lady** *Vanessa cardui***American Snout** *Libytheana carinenta***Monarch** *Danaus plexippus***Long-tailed Skipper** *Urbanus proteus***Wild Indigo Duskywing** *Erynnis baptistiae***Common Checkered Skipper** *Pyrgus communis***REPTILES****Red-eared Slider** *Chrysemys scripta***Snapping Turtle** *Chelydra serpentina***American Bullfrog** *Lithobates catesbeianus***American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis***Rat Snake** *Elaphe obsoleta***Yellow-bellied Water Snake** *Nerodia erythrogaster***Eastern Ribbon Snake** *Thamnophis sauritus*