

USA: Texas

High Island & Gulf Coast Migration

Sat 18th – Sun 26th April 2015



*Trip photos (clockwise, from top left): A dazzling male **Prothonotary Warbler** at Jesse Jones • Just part of the lovely flock of **American Avocets** at Rollover • A shy **Clapper Rail** peeks amongst the grass • Always a stunner, a male **Northern Parula** in the pines at Jesse Jones • The roosting **Common Nighthawk** at Texas Point – one of several noted • This displaying **Great Egret** is like a firework going off! © all photos from the tour by leader Chris Charlesworth/Limosa Holidays*

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

Trip Diary

Tour Leader: Chris Charlesworth

with David & Janet Benwell, Keith & Margaret Butler, Ken & Jenny Dewing, Lesley Raven and Sue Spencer

Another successful tour to the bird-rich Texas Coast! We were lucky with the weather, avoiding rain until the last day. Bird-wise there were many highlights, with Red-headed Woodpeckers, roosting Common Nighthawks, and amongst the many American wood warblers it is hard to pick a favorite – though maybe Cerulean, Blackburnian or Prothonotary might take the crown. Or how about a Hooded? Or Kentucky? Or...

Sat 18 April

This afternoon I met group at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston and we made the short transfer to our hotel before venturing out for dinner.

Sun 19 April

As we set out from our hotel in the northern suburbs of the sprawling city of Houston, we were happy see the sun was out and it was a pleasant temperature. We began at Jones State Forest where various woodpeckers were our main target species. It didn't take us long to find some glorious Red-headed Woodpeckers showing off their tell-tale red heads in the bright morning sun, as they sat on the trunks of the Loblolly and Short-leaf Pines. With a little persistence we saw several of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers very well this morning. Another pineywoods speciality, Brown-headed Nuthatch was also obliging as they dangled from the boughs of the pines. I had seen a gorgeous Yellow-breasted Chat a few days earlier so we returned to the same area and low and behold the same chat appeared for us again!

A good number of other species we saw nicely today included Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Summer Tanager, White-breasted Nuthatch and White-eyed Vireo. A gorgeous male Black-throated Green Warbler made a brief appearance and got quite a response from the group as this was their first of the North American 'wood warbler' species, and a stunner at that. We saw two Raccoons today, both peeking out of holes in large pine trees. Several butterfly species noted included Painted Lady, Palamedes Swallowtail and Carolina Satyr.

At Jesse Jones Nature Park near Houston, we explored the Cypress Boardwalk Trail where the most exciting bird was a gorgeous male Prothonotary Warbler! As if that weren't already enough, a dapper male Northern Parula also posed quite nicely in the trees above us as it sang its buzzy song. We bumped into a father and his son who had been out fishing and the little boy was very proud to show us his catch of a couple of juicy catfish as he posed for photos.

Mon 20 April

After breakfast we packed up the van and jumped head first into Houston morning rush hour traffic! It wasn't that bad and we made it through town and down to Winnie in about an hour and a half. Upon arrival in Winnie we dropped off our stuff at the hotel, grabbed some lunch to take with us, and made our way south on Hwy 124. We found a flooded field along the way, where we stopped and had our first views of Black-necked Stilts, Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Belted Kingfisher, Snowy Egret and the ever-so-common, but still stunning Red-winged Blackbird. Along FM 1985 we tried to make our way to Anahuac but there were so many birds along the way it took us a long time to get there. Flooded fields held many waders, including Stilt Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Whimbrel and Semipalmated Plover. In open fields were our first Eastern Meadowlarks, Loggerhead Shrikes and overhead Swainson's Hawk. White-faced Ibis paraded about in flooded fields along with numerous Blue-winged Teal and some Mottled Ducks.

Once we arrived at Anahuac we paid a short visit to Skillern Tract, where we heard well (and one or two of the group saw) a King Rail lurking in the reeds. Several White-crowned Sparrows popped in and out of grass along the walkway, while Orchard Oriole and Eastern Kingbird were also noted. Everyone's attention shifted when our first Scissor-tailed Flycatcher appeared and sat still for a long time as we watched its long tail wave in the breeze. Over at the visitor centre we had a picnic lunch while watching a pair of busy Barn Swallows tend to their nest. Briefly, a Bronzed Cowbird appeared amongst the Brown-headed Cowbirds, but it disappeared all too quickly.

As we drove around Shoveler Pond we saw a good number of birds as well as some fat American Alligators resting along the banks of the waterways. Marsh birds were numerous as well, and we had excellent views of a Marsh Wren that came out of its reedy hiding spot. Boat-tailed Grackles were numerous and had mostly replaced the Great-tailed Grackles here. After sorting through numerous Common Gallinules we finally locked eyes on the elusive Purple Gallinule. A friendly gentleman stopped and told us he had just seen a Least Bittern fly into the reeds next to our van, so we waited a few minutes and low and behold the Least Bittern appeared and gave us excellent views before flying off across the road. We were doing well indeed at Anahuac today. Two Soras then trotted across the pavement and a Tricolored Heron sat on the shore showing off its lovely blue bill. We watched a Double-crested Cormorant gulp down a rather large catfish, then watched as the 'bulge' made its way down the bird's snaky neck. Feeling we had conquered Anahuac we dashed off towards High Island with hopes of some migrants. On the way we startled two Turkey Vultures and a Crested Caracara from their meal of carrion.

At High Island there were birders everywhere. We walked into Boy Scout Woods and did a little loop of the more productive areas picking up some nice, but common migrants such as Grey Catbird, Eastern Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher and Brown Thrasher. Warblers included the dazzling Hooded Warbler, as well as Black-and-white Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler and Chestnut-sided Warbler. There were a few each of Scarlet and Summer Tanagers about here as well, mostly eating the ripening Mulberries. I pointed out a roosting Common Nighthawk on a branch; several people commented it looked like nothing more than just a growth on the tree with its excellent camouflage. At the end of the day we had seen nearly 90 species, a very respectable total.

Tue 21 April

Today was a gorgeous day with blue skies and sunshine, and nice temperatures. We began along Hwy 124 south of Winnie, where flooded rice fields held all sorts of surprises including up to nine Hudsonian Godwits, two gorgeous female Wilson's Phalaropes and oodles of other shorebirds such as Stilt Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Willet and Grey (Black-bellied) Plover to name a few.

On the Bolivar Peninsula we began at the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary, where thousands of shorebirds scurried about on the beach. Highlights included a thousand American Avocets in large clusters on the beach and several Red Knot. The usual feast of plovers were present with Piping, Semipalmated and Wilson's showing nicely, though no Snowy Plovers could be seen today. There were flocks of Short-billed Dowitchers, and several Marbled Godwits striding about at the waters' edge. Little pools up on the beach were crowded with Sanderling and Dunlin, plus Semipalmated, Western and Least Sandpipers. Terns were about in impressive numbers including Least, Royal, Caspian, Black, Forster's, Cabot's and a single Common Tern. Two Gull-billed Terns foraged over grassy fields just in from the beach.

Along Yacht Basin Road we found up to six Clapper Rails in the marsh, including one that decided to have a bath and a preen right beside our van! At Rollover Pass we were again inundated with terns and gulls. American Oystercatchers were seen here along with a Reddish Egret that caught a fish and gobbled it down. Amongst the Laughing Gulls I picked out a Franklin's Gull but couldn't get anyone else on it as it was hiding behind the other larids. Off in the distance we nabbed our first American White Pelicans as well.

To finish off the day we visited Smith Oaks at High Island where there were many birds feasting in the mulberries including dazzling Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, numerous Swainson's Thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Grey Catbirds and more. Warblers were few and far between here today, but we did get excellent views of a male Cerulean Warbler. Our first Yellow-bellied Sapsucker of the trip was seen, along with Hermit and Wood Thrushes at 'Don's Drip'. We made our way over to the heronry where we watched in awe as dozens of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Tricolored Herons, Roseate Spoonbills and Neotropic Cormorants tended to their nests and tried to attract mates. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo flew right past us on two occasions here as well. By the end of the day we had seen over 100 species!

Wed 22 April

Our morning began in Taylor Bayou where the cypress trees are cloaked in Spanish Moss and the various frogs of the swamp make strange noises. It was hot and steamy in the bayou this morning with warm temperatures and no wind. Birding was pretty good though and we nailed some of our target species such as Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks, Yellow-throated Warbler, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-crowned Night Heron and Little Blue Heron to name a few. We peered down into the bayou from a bridge and were shocked and horrified to see literally millions of mosquito larvae floating around with the current. I would not want to be here in a few days, I'll tell you that.

Onwards we traveled to Texas Point where we explored the marsh habitat and had fantastic views of Seaside Sparrow as it perched in a bare bush right in front of us. Just after I had told the group their chances of seeing the Sedge Wren were rather slight, one popped up and sat in plain view along the edge of the marsh for about 15 seconds! Clapper Rails and Soras were both seen quite well also as we bumped down the potholed road. A Common Nighthawk called several times and eventually we spotted it roosting in the open on an oil and gas structure.

After lunch at Tammie's Diner in Sabine Pass we headed out to Sabine Woods and we nearly had the whole place to ourselves. Birding was a little slow, but there were quite a few migrants about to keep us occupied. Warblers were about in dribs and drabs with Yellow-rumped, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, Hooded, Black-throated Green, Tennessee, and Black-and-white, along with Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat and American Redstart present. The slightly larger migrants such as Grey-cheeked, Hermit, Swainson's and Wood Thrushes were numerous on the forest floor, along with the usual Grey Catbirds and a few Brown Thrashers. There were quite a few Scarlet and Summer Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in the woods, and we had good views of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Edges of clearings yielded numerous Indigo Buntings and several female Painted Buntings, though the colorful males had eluded us thus far. Other migrants included Eastern Wood Pewee, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, and Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos. Eventually the mosquitoes got to us and we decided it was time to head back to Winnie for the evening.

Thu 23 April

Today turned out to be quite hot and muggy, with a mixture of sun and cloud as we made our way to Anahuac NWR, via some back roads where we searched for more shorebirds. We found some fantastic fields with hundreds and hundreds of birds to scan through. Highlights included a White-rumped Sandpiper, along with the other usual species, and an adult Peregrine Falcon! A male American Kestrel sat on a telephone wire alongside the road, giving us our first view of this species. In a distant field we watched a Coyote saunter along. Dickcissels, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Eastern Meadowlarks and Loggerhead Shrikes on telephone wires and fence posts kept us entertained as well. We paused at a culvert under the road and scrutinized the swallows that were nesting under the structure, picking out both Cliff and Cave Swallows.

Once at Anahuac, we made our way to the visitor centre where we had a cup of coffee and some had a little retail therapy in the gift shop. We then took a walk through 'The Willows' where the highlight certainly had to be a male Cerulean Warbler. At a flooded field we scanned for a Ruff that had been reported the day before, but had no luck. We did spot a Wilson's Phalarope and several Stilt Sandpipers here though. We had a picnic lunch then made our way back out to do the Shoveler Pond

loop. Our target bird was King Rail and we were rewarded with fantastic views of this large, well-marked species as it called from the edge of the marsh. We had good views again of Least Bittern as well as Purple Gallinule. Loads of Alligators kept watch from the water, some splashing about when we got too close for their comfort.

Our attention then turned to migrant passerines at High Island and we began our search at Boy Scout Woods. The drip was busy today with Indigo and Painted buntings, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Northern Cardinals, Grey Catbirds and several warbler species including Yellow, Tennessee, Magnolia and Nashville coming in to bathe. At 'Prothonotary Pond' we got views of a lovely male Golden-winged Warbler, while Black-and-white Warblers crept along the branches of the cypress trees and a Northern Waterthrush skulked near the waters' edge.

At Smith Oaks the birding continued to be good and here we picked up more species of warbler at 'Don's Drip', including several Ovenbirds, a lovely male Black-throated Green Warbler, a male Cerulean Warbler, numerous Tennessee Warblers and a Worm-eating Warbler that Lesley photographed while the rest of us were looking in a different direction. High in the trees, two or three Bay-breasted Warblers flitted about and we tracked down a gorgeous Blue-winged Warbler. Warbler numbers had certainly improved and there were a few Hooded Warblers about, as well as a skulky Kentucky Warbler on the ground. Chestnut-sided Warblers flitted about in the trees and here we good numbers of the larger migrants such as Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Swainson's Thrushes. At the end of the day we had tallied over 100 species once again!

Fri 24 April

Skies were grey and cloudy when we emerged from the hotel this morning but the temperatures were hot and the humidity was steamy. A light rain fell as we made our way south through High Island to the Bolivar Peninsula. Our first birding stop was at Rollover Pass where as usual there was a lot to see, though we found nothing new. We had good views of several Reddish Egrets, two of which were of the white morph. There were plenty of waders about including American Oystercatcher, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, American Avocet and Short-billed Dowitcher. Terns were numerous as were Black Skimmers, which were estimated to number over 100. We watched two Clapper Rails have a little battle along the edge of the marsh, which was quite entertaining.

After a short coffee break at Crystal Beach we carried on to Bolivar Flats and walked a stretch of beach where there were again lots of birds to see. A flock of a few hundred American Avocets flew in a tight flock and then descended down to an area where we couldn't see them. We felt lucky to have seen thousands of them on the beach during our first visit to the flats a few days earlier. There were a couple of Red Knots about, one with some nice red underparts, the other still in non-breeding plumage. Piping and Wilson's Plovers were seen very well once again, but there was no sign of a Snowy Plover here. A pair of Shore Larks pranced around on the sand, showing themselves nicely as we gazed through the 'scopes. A Reddish Egret fed in the shallows, performing its 'drunken sailor dance', until a second Reddish Egret arrived and a vicious battle ensued. For several minutes they chased each other through the air, low over the marsh. The victor returned to its prized piece of real estate and continued to feed.

We made our way back to Crystal Beach to have some lunch and I spotted a pair of Long-billed Curlews in the short grass of a golf course near the road. We had great views of them before heading into the restaurant for some sustenance. After lunch we returned to High Island, visiting Boy Scout Woods first. The drip was pretty busy as Black-and-white, Tennessee and Hooded Warblers appeared, along with legions of Grey Catbirds and a few Indigo Buntings and Summer Tanagers. As we sat on the bleachers a Black-billed Cuckoo appeared in the Mulberry tree above our heads and gave us spectacular views. On to Smith Oaks we went, where frustratingly I saw a Swainson's Warbler that disappeared before anyone else in the group could see it. Otherwise, we had the usual suspects lurking in the forest here including Acadian Flycatcher, Hooded Warbler, Swainson's Thrush and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Fri 25 April

Our final bit of birding in Texas began with exploration of Taylors Bayou as thunderclouds loomed. It was hot and humid once again in the bayou, and the rains did come and they were hard. Luckily we picked up a couple of new bird species before the weather turned as we saw and heard a couple of Fish Crows as well as a couple of Great Crested Flycatchers.

We had a coffee at Denny's while the rains fell and the thunder rumbled. We had been awfully lucky with the weather during this trip as this was the only time the weather had really affected our birding. We made our way down to High Island and explored Smith Oaks. As we pulled into the town, I spotted a couple of Blue Grosbeaks along the road edge, a new species for us. Rain fell lightly and thunder continued but some of us braved the elements and saw some very nice birds along trails at Smith Oaks. New for us were Warbling and Philadelphia Vireos, and Blackpoll and Canada Warblers. There were numerous warbler species in the woods this morning, with Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-and-white, Tennessee, Kentucky and Blue-winged Warblers noted.

From High Island, we made our way back to Winnie, had lunch and drove back to Houston. After a short stop to 'freshen up' in Houston I drove us to the airport and said goodbye to a group I had thoroughly enjoyed leading.

Sat 26 April

The group arrived back in London. We had seen 193 species of birds during our week-long tour, a respectable total indeed.

Systematic List of Species Recorded

(193 bird species)

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

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

Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Fairly common in wetland areas.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Seen briefly on both visits to the Taylor Bayou area.

Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula*

Fairly common in wetland habitats.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

Fairly common in wetland areas, especially at Anahuac NWR.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Noted on both visits to Anahuac NWR.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

One male seen on tour, at Taylor Bayou.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

Noted at Anahuac NWR, on both visits.

Slavonian (Horned) Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

One seen from jetty on 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*

Seen on both visits to Anahuac NWR, and seen in marsh at Texas Point as well.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One or two seen hiding in vegetation along edge of pond at Smith Oaks at High Island.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax violacea*

One at Taylor Bayou on 22/7.

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*

Seen at Rollover Pass, at the Bolivar Jetty and at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

At Rollover Pass we saw a white morph Reddish Egret.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Seen in small numbers in wetland areas including at Anahuac NWR and at Texas Point NWR.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Seen well at Taylor Bayou, east of Winnie.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Fairly common throughout, near water.

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

Seen at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*

Seen on both visits to the Bolivar Peninsula at several locations.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Fairly common, especially near wetlands.

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*

Much less common than Neotropic, and seen at Anahuac NWR and at Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

One seen at Taylor Bayou.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Common and seen daily.

American Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Common and seen nearly every day.

Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway*

Seen along FM 1985 near Anahuac NWR and along Hwy 124 near High Island.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*

Uncommon. Seen at Texas Point NWR, Anahuac NWR and along the Bolivar Peninsula.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

One seen in flight over visitor's center at Anahuac NWR.

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis*

One seen in flight over W.G. Jones State Forest, north of Houston.

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius*

One was noted at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary and others were seen over marshes at Anahuac NWR – now 'split' by IOC.

Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii*

Seen at W.G. Jones State Forest near Houston and overhead at High Island.

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

Two noted at Taylor Bayou.

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*

Several seen in sky at Taylor Bayou.

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*

Several seen in open farm country, especially along FM 1985 along the way to Anahuac.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Up to three seen in the pineywood forest north of Houston.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

One male seen near Anahuac NWR.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

One along FM 1985 near Anahuac NWR checking out shorebirds in flooded fields.

Sora Rail *Porzana carolina*

Two at Anahuac and others at Texas Point

Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans*

Seen very well at Yacht Basin Rd on the Bolivar Peninsula and at Texas Point NWR.

King Rail *Rallus elegans*

Seen on both visits to Anahuac NWR, fleetingly the first time and quite well on our second attempt.

American Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*

Seen on both visits to Anahuac NWR, both times around Shoveler Pond.

American Moorhen *Gallinula galeata*

Quite common in wetland areas including Anahuac NWR and ponds at High Island's Smith Oaks.

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Fairly common on ponds and in other freshwater wetland areas.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*

Seen on both visits to the Bolivar Peninsula at Rollover Pass, Bolivar Flats and at the Bolivar Jetty.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

Common in wetland areas.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana*

Large numbers noted along Bolivar Peninsula at the Bolivar Flats Sanctuary, at the Bolivar Jetty and at Rollover Pass.

Grey (Black-bellied) Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Good numbers seen at locations along the Bolivar Peninsula. Also noted at Anahuac NWR and at Texas Point NWR.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Seen in flooded fields along FM 1985 and along Hwy 124 near Winnie. Also noted in numbers at Bolivar Peninsula locations.

Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*

Seen on both visits to the Bolivar Peninsula at various locations.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Common and seen in variety of habitats and locations.

Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*

Seen on both of our visits to the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*

Good numbers noted on both trips to Bolivar Flats.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Seen in flooded fields along Hwy 124, north of High Island, and at Anahuac NWR.

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*

We saw this species on both of our visits to the Bolivar Peninsula.

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*

Fairly common especially in open farm country where they are found in flooded and ploughed fields.

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*

Pair seen on grass beside road at Crystal Beach on Bolivar Peninsula.

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*

One flew overhead calling at Taylor Bayou.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

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

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

One seen at Anahuac NWR.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Small numbers seen on both of our visits to the Bolivar Peninsula, in particular at Rollover Pass and at Bolivar Flats.

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*

Seen in flooded fields south of Winnie, and also in good numbers on the Bolivar Flats.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

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

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Noted at Bolivar Flats and in flooded rice fields near Anahuac NWR.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

One seen in flooded fields just north of Anahuac NWR.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Seen on two occasions in flooded rice fields near Winnie.

Dunlin *Calidris aplina*

Large numbers at Bolivar Flats and in flooded rice fields around Anahuac.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

Several noted in flooded rice fields near Winnie and at Anahuac NWR.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

Seen in flooded rice fields south of Winnie.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

Several seen along Bolivar Peninsula.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

Several seen along Bolivar Peninsula.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

Common, especially on Bolivar Peninsula.

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum*

Fairly common along Bolivar Peninsula.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Seen at Anahuac NWR and at flooded fields near Winnie.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Seen at Bolivar Flats.

(American) Black Tern *Chlidonias niger surinamensis*

On both visits to Bolivar Peninsula we saw Black Terns at Rollover Pass and Bolivar Flats.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acutiflavus*

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

Royal Tern *Thalasseus 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*

One picked out amongst 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 a couple of times at High Island near entrance and also seen at Taylor Bayou.

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica*

Fairly common throughout.

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*

One above grandstands in Mulberry Tree at Boy Scout Woods, High Island.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

Seen well at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

Several found roosting during excursions to High Island and to Texas Point NWR in particular.

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

Common and seen daily zipping overhead.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilocus colubris*

Common, especially in migrant traps at High Island and Sabine Woods. Our first were at visitor's center at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

Several seen quite well in the vicinity of Anahuac and along Hwy 124 north of High Island.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*

Several noted at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Red-headed Woodpecker *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*

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

Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*

Fairly common in pineywoods region north of Houston. Also seen at Taylor Bayou.

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*

Noted in both the pineywoods, north of Houston and at Taylor Bayou.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Picoides borealis*

Several seen very well amongst pines at W.G. Jones State Forest north of Houston.

Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*

The largest woodpecker currently inhabiting the area. Seen twice at Taylor Bayou near Winnie.

Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*

Seen at Boy Scout and Smith Oaks

Eastern Wood Pewee *Contopus virens*

Seen regularly at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus*

Fairly common in open field 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*

Seen at Taylor Bayou on last day of tour.

Loggerhead Shrike *Lanius ludovicianus*

Fairly common and often seen in open country 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.

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*

One noted on our final day at Smith Oaks, High Island.

Philadelphia Vireo *Vireo philadelphicus*

One seen well at Smith Oaks Sanctuary on final day of tour.

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*

One seen quite nicely at Sabine Woods.

Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

Uncommon migrant seen at Sabine Woods and at High Island.

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*

A pair were seen well at Taylor Bayou on our final day of the tour.

Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*

Fairly common, seen in flocks flying about, but not often seen perched, but we did have nice looks as they fed from bushes near entrance to Boy Scout Woods at High Island one afternoon.

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.

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Several seen at Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary.

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.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common throughout.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

Common, especially under bridges where they nest colonially. In Winnie we passed by one particular highway overpass each morning with over a hundred Cliff Swallows swirling by.

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*

Several picked out amongst Cliff Swallows under bridges and in culverts along FM 1985 near Anahuac NWR.

Sedge Wren *Cistothorus platensis*

One seen hiding in the sedge grasses at Texas Point NWR.

Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*

Seen quite well in the reeds at Anahuac NWR.

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Seen well at W.G. Jones State Forest in the pineywoods north of Houston and at

Taylor Bayou. Heard often in other forested locations.

Brown-headed Nuthatch *Sitta pusilla*

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

White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*

Seen in Jones State Forest.

Grey Catbird *Dumatella carolinensis*

Common migrant in wooded areas.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

Common throughout.

Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*

Uncommon at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods. Also seen at Taylor Bayou.

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common throughout. Introduced.

Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

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

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*

Most common *Catharus* thrush at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*

Singles noted at High Island and at Sabine Woods.

Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

One seen very well at Sabine Woods.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

Several seen at High Island and Sabine Woods.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common throughout in urban areas. Introduced.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla*

A few of these ground dwelling warblers seen at migrant traps of High Island and Sabine Woods.

Worm-eating Warbler *Helmitheros vermivorum*

Uncommon migrant seen on several occasions at High Island.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

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

Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*

Male seen well at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora pinus*

Seen on two occasions at High Island.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

Fairly common at High Island and Sabine Woods where they creep along tree trunks nuthatch fashion.

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*

Seen very well at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston.

Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis ruficapilla*

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

Nashville Warbler *Leiothlypis ruficapilla*

Seen on two occasions at High Island.

Kentucky Warbler *Geothlypis formosus*

One seen skulking on ground at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Seen at Texas Point NWR in sedgy grasses.

Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

Several seen at High Island and Sabine Woods.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

One male seen at Sabine Woods.

Cerulean Warbler *Setophaga cerulea*

Seen on a couple of occasions at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

Nice male seen well at Jesse Jones Nature Park in Houston.

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*

Seen several times at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Bay-breasted Warbler *Setophaga castanea*

Nice male seen at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

Seen at both Boy Scout Woods and at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga aestiva*

Fairly common migrant at Sabine Woods and High Island.

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

Seen several times at the Upper Coast migrant traps.

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata*

Male seen nicely at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus*

Two seen at W.G. Jones State Forest in the pineywoods.

Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler *Setophaga coronata*

Just one seen at Sabine Woods.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica*

One seen very well at Taylor Bayou.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

Seen fairly often at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Yellow-breasted Chat *Icteria virens*

One seen very well at W.G. Jones State Forest. Another noted at Smith Oaks Sanctuary at High Island.

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*

Seen at Smith Oaks on our last day.

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*

Fairly common at High Island and Sabine Woods.

Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*

Common and seen daily.

Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus*

One male seen at the visitors center at Anahuac NWR.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*

Common and seen almost daily.

Common Grackle *Quiscalus quiscula*

Seen at High Island and Taylor Bayou, amongst other locations.

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.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

We saw these charismatic sparrows on both of our visits to Anahuac NWR.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*

Common in open grassland habitats.

Seaside Sparrow *Ammodramus maritimus*

Seen very well at Texas Point NWR.

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*

Flock of up to 70 seen along FM 1985 near Anahuac and seen again in smaller numbers along roads near Anahuac on our second visit.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*

Fairly common migrant at coastal migrant hotspots.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*

Common and seen daily.

Blue Grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*

Seen on ground in town of High Island on our last day.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

Fairly common at migrant traps.

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris*

Seen several times at migrant traps, though we most often encountered females.

House Finch *Heamorrhous mexicanus*

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

MAMMALS**Northern Raccoon** *Procyon lotor***Striped Skunk** *Mephitis mephitis***Nutria** *Myocastor coypus***Eastern Grey Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis***Swamp Rabbit** *Sylvilagus aquaticus***Coyote** *Canus latrans***BUTTERFLIES****Giant Swallowtail** *Papilio cressphontes***Palamedes Swallowtail** *Papilio palamedes***Cabbage White** *Pieris rapae***Cloudless Sulphur** *Phoebis sennae***Question Mark** *Polygonia interrogationis***Painted Lady** *Vanessa cardui***Carolina Satyr** *Hermeuptychia sosybius***Monarch** *Danaus plexippus***American Snout** *Libytheana carinenta***REPTILES****Red-eared Slider** *Chrysemys scripta***Snapping Turtle** *Chelydra serpentina***American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis***Green Anole** *Anolis carolinensis***Brown Anole** *Anolis sagrei*