

FIELD REPORT

HIGH ISLAND MIGRATION

APRIL 20–27, 2024



Rose-breasted Grosbeak eating mulberries © Michael O'Brien

LEADERS: MICHAEL O'BRIEN & LOUISE ZEMAITIS
LIST COMPILED BY: MICHAEL O'BRIEN

VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78746
WWW.VENTBIRD.COM

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By Michael O'Brien

Year in and year out, when April comes around, there is no place we would rather be than the Upper Texas Coast. With such a rich diversity of both breeding and migratory birds, our visits there are always exciting. This year we were lucky to see a strong push of migrant songbirds early in the week, a fabulous display of shorebirds, a few rarities, and a wonderful show of wildflowers. In fact, we had so many highlights, it was hard to pick our favorites!



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher © Michael O'Brien

Our tour began north of Houston at W. G. Jones State Forest, a small tract of East Texas “pineywoods,” home to several very localized nesting species. We found one of them as soon as we got out of the car, a Brown-headed Nuthatch, which was taking food to its nest. Upon strolling through the woods, we quickly found Wood Duck, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, and Pine Warbler, all characteristic species of this habitat. And with a little patience, we eventually had good views of the federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker, a species restricted to mature, open pine forests of the Southeast. We even enjoyed seeing its nesting trees with their telltale oozing sap, a defense mechanism against snakes created by the woodpeckers drilling numerous shallow holes on the trunk around the nest cavity. With a bit of rain in the area and a forecast of north winds and cloudy skies, our next move was to head straight to the coast at High Island. Conditions like this are conducive to trans-Gulf migrant songbirds stopping along the coast rather than continuing inland. Visiting both Boy Scout Woods and Hook Woods, we indeed found a good variety of songbirds, including numerous thrushes,

orioles, tanagers, and grosbeaks, plus ten species of warblers, highlighted by Blackburnian, Cerulean, and Chestnut-sided. What a great start to the tour!

The following day, we explored farm fields south of Winnie to look for grassland specialties and were pleased to have superb views of Northern Bobwhite and Upland Sandpiper, as well as numerous Dickcissels, Eastern Meadowlark, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, and Swainson's Hawk. At nearby Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, we enjoyed a fabulous array of both marsh birds and songbirds. Small woodlots around the refuge harbored a good number of migrants including the very scarce Golden-winged and Cape May warblers, and showy tanagers, orioles, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Around the wildlife drive, we scored nice views of the secretive Least Bittern, numerous herons, ibises, gallinules, and Black-bellied and Fulvous whistling-ducks. We also found fifteen species of shorebirds including the stunning Wilson's Phalarope. Our afternoon was spent back at High Island, this time visiting Smith Oaks Woods. A wonderful canopy walkway to a large heron colony stole the show here. Hundreds of Neotropic Cormorants, Snowy and Great egrets, and Roseate Spoonbills were all noisily tending their nests with eggs or young. Among them, smaller numbers of Anhinga, Tricolored Heron, and Western Cattle Egret were also nesting. In the marshy margins, we had stunning views of Purple Gallinule, as well as several turtle species and a coiled up Rough Green Snake. Lingering songbird migrants from the previous day's weather included numerous cuckoos, thrushes, and vireos, including a Philadelphia Vireo that was so close we could have touched it!



Birding the canopy walkway at Smith Oaks © Louise Zemaitis

Always keeping an eye on the weather, with the forecast showing a bit of rain, cloud cover, and northeast winds just on the Louisiana border, we opted to visit Sabine Woods

the next morning. This was a good move as we found hundreds of birds there! We immediately noticed hundreds of swallows moving past and many others gathering to feed near the woodlot. Everywhere we walked, we flushed up Indigo Buntings, Gray Catbirds, and orioles. We encountered dozens of cuckoos, flycatchers, vireos, and thrushes, some possibly searching for their first meal since departing the Yucatan Peninsula. A whopping twenty species of warblers included Worm-eating, Blue-winged, Prothonotary, Nashville, Kentucky, Hooded, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Prairie. Many of these warblers offered remarkably close views as they jostled for position in water features, joined by colorful Indigo and Painted buntings, Blue and Rose-breasted grosbeaks, tanagers and more—what a sight! And to add a cherry on top, we had remarkable views of a roosting Chuck-will's-widow! As if this weren't enough for one day, we also visited nearby Sea Rim State Park to explore the Gulf of Mexico shoreline. A drive down the beach yielded excellent views of many shorebirds including Piping, Wilson's, and Snowy plovers among the more numerous Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, and other species. We also saw several gull species, including the uncommon Lesser Black-backed Gull, and six species of terns including nesting Least Terns. Short cut grass around the campground had several Savannah Sparrows and two immature male Yellow-headed Blackbirds, a scarce migrant this far east.



Warblers at the bathing pool, Sabine Woods © Michael O'Brien

To continue the waterbird theme, on the following day we explored the Bolivar Peninsula. In beautiful morning light, Rollover Pass had a nice flock of roosting terns offering excellent comparisons of Common and Forster's, along with a single Black Tern and a flock of Black Skimmers. At nearby Yacht Basin Road, a little patience yielded close views of a rare Chestnut-collared Longspur that was hiding in roadside grasses at the edge of the marsh. Moving on to Bolivar Flats, we enjoyed superb shorebird studies including good comparisons of subtle pairs such as Short-billed and Long-billed dowitchers, Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, "Eastern" and "Western" willets (subspecies),

and an American Golden-Plover among Black-bellied Plovers. Along with those, we enjoyed the flashier American Oystercatcher and Marbled Godwit, as well as dancing Reddish Egrets. We also marveled at a flock of American White Pelicans that took flight and disappeared off to the north, apparently departing for migration. But the real show-stopper was a spectacular flock of several hundred American Avocets feeding right in front of us. Their foraging motions were like a synchronized ballet! It was also a surprise and great pleasure to have Victor Emanuel himself join us for a short time to share in these avian delights! Another visit to the wonderful Smith Oaks heron colony was a lovely way to end this wonderful day.



Ballet of American Avocets © Michael O'Brien

With weather turning favorable for migrants to depart the coast, we turned our sights inland to visit the breeding grounds of many of these birds. Cruising the back roads near Silsbee, we were focused on the much-sought Swainson's Warbler, and though we heard several, all were too far from the road to see. Our luck improved when we went north to Martin Dies Jr. State Park. Here, we had excellent views of a Swainson's, along with Yellow-throated and Prothonotary warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Red-headed Woodpecker. And with an eye to the sky, we spotted Red-shouldered and Broad-winged hawks, a lone Mississippi Kite, and several Swallow-tailed Kites, one of which was dive-bombing a Bald Eagle!

On our final day, we returned to the supremely birdy Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. As before, the refuge was loaded with a wide variety of water birds, including a few ducks we hadn't seen previously. We also enjoyed more excellent shorebird studies, highlighted by a White-rumped Sandpiper offering excellent comparisons with Semipalmated, Least, and Pectoral sandpipers. Our final stop of the tour was at High Island to make one more pass through Boy Scout Woods. In addition to a nice variety of

thrushes and warblers, we were delighted to see a roosting Lesser Nighthawk (uncommon here), and we were shaking with excitement when we watched a singing male Painted Bunting just feet away—a wonderful grand finale!



Painted Bunting © Michael O'Brien

ITINERARY

Day 1, April 20: Arrivals and 6:00 p.m. meeting at SpringHill Suites, Houston; night at SpringHill Suites, Houston.

Day 2, April 21: W. G. Jones State Forest; High Island (Boy Scout Woods and Hook Woods); night at Holiday Inn Express, Winnie.

Day 3, April 22: FM-1941 fields; Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge; High Island (Smith Oaks Woods); night at Holiday Inn Express, Winnie.

Day 4, April 23: Sabine Woods; Sea Rim State Park; back to Sabine Woods; night at Holiday Inn Express, Winnie.

Day 5, April 24: Bolivar Peninsula including Rollover Pass, Yacht Basin Road, Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary (beach and 17th Street jetty), and Tuna Road; High Island (Smith Oaks Woods); night at Holiday Inn Express, Winnie.

Day 6, April 25: Big Thicket area (Gore Store Road and Jim Burns Road); Martin Dies Jr. State Park; night at Holiday Inn Express, Winnie.

Day 7, April 26: Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge; High Island (Boy Scout Woods); night at SpringHill Suites, Houston.

Day 8, April 27: Departures.

KEY

N = Nest observed

Y = Dependent young observed

BIRDS

WATERFOWL: ANATIDAE

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – Seen every day.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – Numerous at Anahuac.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) – Seen at Jones SF, Winnie, and Martin Dies SP.

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) – Numerous and seen on four days.

Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) – A few at Anahuac.

Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*) – Four at Anahuac.

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) – One male at Anahuac.

Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) – One male at Anahuac.

NEW WORLD QUAIL: ODONTOPHORIDAE

Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) – One seen and another heard at FM-1941.



Northern Bobwhite © Michael O'Brien

PIGEONS & DOVES: COLUMBIDAE

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) (I) – At least a few seen on five days.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Seen every day; numerous at Sabine Woods.

Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) – Seen every day.

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) (I) – Seen every day.

CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) – Seen on four days; 10 at Sabine Woods.

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) – One at Smith Oaks.

NIGHTJARS: CAPRIMULGIDAE

Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*) – One roosting at Boy Scout Woods.
Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) – Roosting birds seen at Boy Scout Woods and Sabine Woods, and a displaying bird seen in flight at noon on the Bolivar Peninsula.
Chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – Roosting bird at Sabine Woods.



Chuck-will's-widow © Michael O'Brien

SWIFTS: APODIDAE

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) – Small numbers at several locations.

HUMMINGBIRDS: TROCHILIDAE

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) – Small numbers seen on five days.

RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS: RALLIDAE

Clapper Rail (*Rallus crepitans*) – Seen at Yacht Basin Road and Bolivar Flats.

Sora (*Porzana carolina*) – Nice views at Sea Rim SP plus two flying over the marsh at Yacht Basin Rd; heard at Sabine Woods.

Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*) – Numerous at Anahuac; a few elsewhere.

American Coot (*Fulica americana*) – Numerous at Anahuac; singles at Sea Rim SP and Smith Oaks.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – Amazing views at Smith Oaks, plus one heard at Anahuac.

STILTS & AVOCETS: RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Numerous at several locations.

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) – Amazing “ballet” performance by about 400 Bolivar Flats; smaller group seen in the surf at Sea Rim SP.

OYSTERCATCHERS: HAEMTOPODIDAE

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) – Three at Bolivar Flats.

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Numerous at Sea Rim SP, Rollover Pass, and Bolivar Flats; a few elsewhere.

American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) – One among Black-bellies at Bolivar Flats.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Small numbers seen at numerous locations.

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Seen Anahuac, Sea Rim SP, and at multiple locations along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) – Seven on the beach at Sea Rim SP.

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*) – One on the beach at Sea Rim SP.

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) N – Five at Sea Rim SP; one sitting on a nest.



Wilson's Plover © Michael O'Brien

SANDPIPERS & ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) – Six at FM-1941.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) – Small numbers at several locations.

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) – Eight at Bolivar Flats.

Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) – Numerous at Bolivar Flats, plus a few at other tidewater areas along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – Numerous in the freshwater pools at Anahuac, plus two birds at Bolivar Flats offering fine comparisons with Short-billed Dowitchers.

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – Excellent views at Anahuac, plus flyby groups at several locations, including a flock that landed on the beach at Bolivar Flats.

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) – Small numbers at several locations.

Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) – Small numbers at several locations.

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) – Numerous at multiple locations.

Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) – Seen whenever we were near the coast; the local breeding subspecies, Eastern Willet (*T. s. semipalmata*), was numerous around coastal saltmarshes and meadows where they actively defended territories; the larger, paler interior breeding

subspecies, Western Willet (*T. s. inornata*), was abundant on coastal beaches and pools, as well as a few at interior freshwater wetlands (e.g., Anahuac).



“Eastern” Willet © Michael O’Brien

- Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Small numbers at multiple locations.
Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) – Small numbers along the beach at Sea Rim SP, Rollover Pass, and Bolivar Flats.
Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*) – Seen well at Anahuac, plus many flyby flocks at several locations.
Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) – Numerous on Gulf beaches at Sea Rim SP, Rollover Pass, and Bolivar Flats.
Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) – Good numbers at multiple locations, including both freshwater and saltwater sites.
White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) – One seen well at Anahuac, plus several flocks flying by there.
Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) – Numerous at multiple locations.
Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) – Several at Anahuac
Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) – Small numbers at Anahuac and Bolivar Flats.

GULLS, TERNS, & SKIMMERS: LARIDAE

- Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Seen every day.
Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) – Small numbers along the coast.
Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) – Singles at Sea Rim SP, Rollover Pass, and Bolivar Flats.
Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) – One immature with a Herring Gull at Sea Rim SP.
Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) – Nice views at Rollover Pass and Bolivar Flats.
Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) N – Numerous at Sea Rim SP and Bolivar Flats.
Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – Seen at Sea Rim SP, Yacht Basin Rd, and Bolivar Flats.
Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – One Sea Rim SP.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) – Seen at Anahuac plus at several along the Bolivar Peninsula.
Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) – Seen at Port Arthur plus several locations along the Bolivar Peninsula.
Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) – Nice studies at Sea Rim SP and Rollover Pass.



Common Tern © Michael O'Brien

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Numerous along the coast.
Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Numerous along the coast.

ANHINGAS: ANHINGIDAE

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) N – Numerous at Smith Oaks and Martin Dies; a few elsewhere.

CORMORANTS: PHALACROCORACIDAE

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) N, Y – Abundant around the Smith Oaks rookery where nests had large young. Smaller numbers seen elsewhere.

PELICANS: PELECANIDAE

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – One flock of about 50 at Bolivar Flats took off and circled high, disappearing to the north; perhaps departing migrants?
Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Numerous along the coast.

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE

Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – Excellent views of several at Anahuac.
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – A few seen every day, including around suburban Houston, where they hunted in roadside ditches, likely looking for crawfish.
Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – A few seen at Anahuac and Smith Oaks.
Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) – Small numbers seen every day; numerous at Martin Dies SP where they seem to nest.

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) N – Seen every day, and apparently increasing as breeders at the Smith Oaks rookery.

Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*) – Seen at Yacht Basin Rd and Bolivar Flats.

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) N – Seen every day, including large numbers nesting at the Smith Oaks rookery.



Snowy Egret © Michael O'Brien

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) – A few seen every day.

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Numerous and seen every day, wherever there were cattle.

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) N – Small numbers at multiple locations, plus about 15 nesting at Rollover Pass.

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) N, Y– Seen every day including large numbers nesting at the Smith Oaks rookery.

IBISES & SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) N – Small numbers seen on five days; more numerous at Martin Dies SP, where they were nesting.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) – A few seen at Anahuac and near Sabine Woods.

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) N – Large numbers around the colony at Smith Oaks; a few seen elsewhere.

NEW WORLD VULTURES: CATHARTIDAE

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – Numerous in mainland areas and High Island, but very few on Bolivar Peninsula.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – Numerous and seen every day.

OSPREY: PANDIONIDAE

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Singles seen at several locations.

HAWKS, EAGLES, & KITES: ACCIPITRIDAE

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) N – One building a nest at Bolivar Flats.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) – Six at Martin Dies SP, including one dive-bombing a Bald Eagle!



Swallow-tailed Kite dive-bombing Bald Eagle © Michael O'Brien

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – One at Martin Dies SP.

Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) – Singles seen on four days.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Two at Martin Dies SP.

Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) – Six at Martin Dies SP.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) – Three at Martin Dies SP.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Seen at several locations around farm fields and along the highway.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Several roadside sightings.

KINGFISHERS: ALCEDINIDAE

Belted Kingfisher (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – Three singles seen along roadsides.

WOODPECKERS: PICIDAE

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – Two at Smith Oaks and two at Sabine Woods; in both cases, birds were around extensive sapsucker wells, so these were likely lingering winter residents.

Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) N – Three at Jones SF and three at Martin Dies SP.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – Seen or heard at multiple locations.

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*) – Seen at Jones SF and Sabine Woods.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) – Four birds at Jones SF.

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – Flyover seen at Anahuac, plus others heard at Gore Store Rd and Martin Dies SP.

FALCONS & CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) – Several along the coast.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) – One hunting along the beach at Sea Rim SP.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: TYRANNIDAE

Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) – At least a few seen every day.

Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) – One at Sabine Woods, another heard at Martin Dies SP.

Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – Seen or heard on four days.

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – Seen on five days, mainly along roadsides.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Seen on five days, mainly along roadsides.

VIREOS: VIREONIDAE

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) – Seen or heard on three days.

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) – Seen on three days including five at Smith Oaks; an above average showing for this species.

Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*) – Two at Smith Oaks and three at Sabine Woods; a couple of these were so close we could have reached out and touched them!



Philadelphia Vireo © Michael O'Brien

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) – Heard singing at Anahuac.

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Seen on five days including up to 20 at Sabine Woods.

SHRIKES: LANIIDAE

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Small numbers seen on four days.

CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES: CORVIDAE

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Small numbers seen every day.

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Seen on five days, around Houston and from Winnie northward; none along the coast.

Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*) – A few around Port Arthur and Silsbee.

CHICKADEES & TITS: PARIDAE

Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) – Seen at Anahuac, heard at Jones SF and Martin Dies.

Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Heard at Jones SF and seen at Martin Dies SP.

SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) – A few seen on the move at Sabine Woods, Sea Rim SP, and Anahuac.

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Seen on four days; large numbers of migrants at Anahuac and Sabine Woods.

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) N – Small numbers seen every day.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – A few at Anahuac.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) N – Seen every day, often in large numbers; there was a nearly constant stream of these birds moving east along the coastline, plus a few locals already nesting.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) N – Numerous and seen every day; they nest under many bridges in the area, and we had close views of nests at Anahuac.



Cliff Swallow © Michael O'Brien

KINGLETS: REGULIDAE

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) – One at Sabine Woods.

NUTHATCHES: SITTIDAE

Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) N – Several at Jones SF.

GNATCATCHERS: POLIOPTILIDAE

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*) – One at Jim Burns Road.

WRENS: TROGLODYTIDAE

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus stellaris*) – Several heard around the marshes and fields near Anahuac and along the Bolivar Peninsula

Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) – Heard at Anahuac.

Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – Heard every day and seen briefly a few times.

STARLINGS: STURNIDAE

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) N – Seen every day

MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS: MIMIDAE

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Seen every day, including at least 30 at Sabine Woods.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) – Singles at Gore Store Rd, Anahuac, and Boy Scout Woods.

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Numerous and seen every day.

THRUSHES & ALLIES: TURDIDAE

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) N – Several at Jones State Forest and Gore Store Rd.

Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) – Seen at Anahuac, Sabine Woods, and Boy Scout Woods.

Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) – Seen on four days with at least eight at Sabine Woods.



Gray-cheeked Thrush © Michael O'Brien

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) – Seen on four days with at least ten at Sabine Woods.

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – Seen or heard on five days at many locations.

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) – A few at Jones SF and around Silsbee.

WAXWINGS: BOMBYCILLIDAE

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – Numerous around Gore Store Rd.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – Small numbers seen every day.

LONGSPURS & SNOW BUNTING: CALCARIIDAE

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) – A worn male at Yacht Basin Road was a real surprise. A rarity on the Texas Coast, this species normally inhabits prairie grasslands on the Canadian border in summer, and vast fields in the southern plains in winter. This bird had been present for a few weeks, and we felt lucky to find it hiding in the marsh-edge grasses.



Chestnut-collared Longspur © Michael O'Brien

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERELLIDAE

Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) – Two at Jones SF.

White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) – One at Anahuac.

Seaside Sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus*) – Seen at Yacht Basin Rd. and Tuna Rd.

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Numerous at Anahuac and nearby farm fields, as well as at Sea Rim SP.

Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) – Heard at Boy Scout Woods.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT: ICTERIIDAE

Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) – Seen at Jim Burns Rd., heard elsewhere.

TROUPIALS & ALLIES: ICTERIDAE

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) – This primarily western species is a scarce migrant along the Upper Texas Coast, so we were pleased to see two young males at Sea Rim SP plus two more flybys at Rollover Pass.



Yellow-headed Blackbird © Michael O'Brien

Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) – Another scarce migrant along the Upper Texas Coast, this species migrates primarily through the Caribbean and Florida, so we were pleased to see a male flying over Anahuac.

Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) – Small numbers seen on four days in farm country and along the Bolivar Peninsula.

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) – Seen every day with at least 25 at Sabine Woods.

Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – Seen on three days at multiple locations.

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – Numerous and seen every day.

Bronzed Cowbird (*Molothrus aeneus*) – One at Anahuac and another on a roadside lawn on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) – Numerous and seen every day.

Common Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Seen on five days, mainly near trees such as at High Island, Winnie, and many interior sites.

Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*) – Seen on five days, mainly in areas of fresh marsh; particularly numerous around Anahuac, Sea Rim SP, and Sabine Woods.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Numerous and seen daily in all open habitats.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: PARULIDAE

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – A few each at Boy Scout Woods and Sabine Woods.

Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – Two at Sabine Woods.

Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Nice views of several at Sabine Woods; heard elsewhere.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – Single male at Anahuac.

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – Three at Sabine Woods and one at Boy Scout Woods.

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – A few seen at each of the coastal woodlots we visited.

Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) – Excellent views at Sabine Woods, but several others at Martin Dies SP and High Island.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) – Nice views at Martin Dies SP; others heard in the Big Thicket area.

Tennessee Warbler (*Leiothlypis peregrina*) – Most numerous warbler this trip; seen daily, including at least 25 at Sabine Woods.

Nashville Warbler (*Leiothlypis ruficapilla*) – One at Sabine Woods.

Kentucky Warbler (*Geothlypis formosa*) – Small numbers seen or heard on four days.

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Seen or heard on five days.

Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*) – Seen on four days, but one at Sabine Woods provided particularly outstanding views.



Hooded Warbler © Michael O'Brien

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – One female at Sabine Woods.

Cape May Warbler (*Setophaga tigrina*) – One male at Anahuac.

Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*) – One male at Hook Woods.

Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*) – Small numbers seen on three days.

Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*) – Two males at Sabine Woods.

Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*) – One male at Hook Woods.

Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) – Seen on four days with at least ten at Sabine Woods.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – One male at Hook Woods.

Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*) – Four at Sabine Woods.

Pine Warbler (*Setophaga pinus*) – Seen at Jones SF; heard around the Big Thicket and Martin Dies SP, all breeding sites.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*) – A few at Jones SF, one at Sabine Woods.
Yellow-throated Warbler (*Setophaga dominica*) – Seen briefly at Sabine Woods and seen well at Martin Dies SP.
Prairie Warbler (*Setophaga discolor*) – One male at Sabine Woods.
Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*) – One male at Sabine Woods.

CARDINALS & ALLIES: CARDINALIDAE

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – Seen every day, sometimes in good numbers.
Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) – Seen on four days; up to seven at Smith Oaks.
Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – Seen every day.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – Seen on four days at coastal woodlots, usually feasting on mulberries.
Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) – At least ten at Sabine Woods; smaller numbers elsewhere.
Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) – Seen every day, including at least 60 at Sabine Woods – just stunning!



Indigo Bunting © Michael O'Brien

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) – Seen at several locations, but four bathing at Sabine Woods and one male just feet away at Boy Scout Woods were major highlights.
Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) – At least 10 in the fields along FM-1941, plus a few others.

MAMMALS

Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – Seen at High Island, Silsbee, and Martin Dies SP.
Eastern Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) – Seen at High Island.
Swamp Rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) – Seen every day.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

Blanchard's Cricket Frog (*Acris blanchardi*)

Eastern Narrow-mouth Toad (*Gastrophryne carolinensis*)
Cope's Gray Treefrog (*Hyla chrysoscelis*)
Squirrel Treefrog (*Hyla squirella*)
American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)
Southern Leopard Frog (*Lithobates sphenoccephalus*)
Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)
Eastern Mud Turtle (*Kinosternon subrubrum*)
Spiny Softshell Turtle (*Apalone spinifera*)
River Cooter (*Pseudemys concinna*)
American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*)
Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)



Green Anole © Michael O'Brien

Western Ribbon Snake (*Thamnophis proximus*)
Graham's Crayfish Snake (*Regina grahamii*)
Rough Green Snake (*Opheodrys aestivus*)

BUTTERFLIES

Pipevine Swallowtail (*Battus philenor*)
Palamedes Swallowtail (*Papilio palamedes*)
Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*)
Cabbage White (*Pieris rapae*)
Cloudless Sulphur (*Phoebis sennae*)
Orange Sulphur (*Colias eurytheme*)
Phaon Crescent (*Phyciodes phaon*)
American Lady (*Vanessa virginiensis*)
Gulf Fritillary (*Dione vanillae*)
Common Buckeye (*Junonia coenia*)

Common Checkered-Skipper (*Burnsius communis*)
Clouded Skipper (*Lerema accius*)



Gulf Fritillary © Michael O'Brien

MOTHS (all caterpillars)

Luna Moth (*Actias luna*)

White-headed Prominent (*Symmerista albifrons*)

Fir Tussock Moth (*Orgyia detrita*)

Buck Moth (*Hemileuca maia*)

Saltmarsh Moth (*Estigmene acrea*)

OTHER CRITTERS

Alligator Gar (*Atractosteus spatula*)

Eastern Pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*)