



TEXAS: UPPER COAST SPRING MIGRATION APRIL 15-20, 2021

IN COLLABORATION WITH ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Tour leader: Josh Engel

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This was the Texas Coast Migration trip of dreams: the coastal woodlots were full of migrants day after day after day. Local birders told us it was the best they had seen in decades. I can't take any credit--it was just the luck of good timing. But we reveled in it. Hooded Warblers were rarely out of view. A Summer Tanager hopped on our shoes to catch bugs. Swallow-tailed Kites, freshly arrived over the Gulf, cruised over the saltmarshes. A Philadelphia Vireo sang from a branch just feet over our head. A Cerulean Warbler visited a birdbath. Thousands of shorebirds crowded the Bolivar Flats. 25 species of warblers; 31 species of shorebirds; 14 species of wading birds. The hits just kept on coming.

Rather than a full trip report, see the annotated trip list below for highlights and details.



Top 5 Birds as voted by the group**1. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher****2. (tie) Summer Tanager, Swallow-tailed Kite, American Avocet, Hooded Warbler, Purple Gallinule**

BIRD LIST. 204 species (including 6 heard only and 3 leader only). Taxonomy follows the Clements/eBird Checklist, 2019 update. Former (or alternate) English names are in parentheses. (Heard) = heard only; (Leader) = tour leader only. The global IUCN red list status is listed for threatened and near-threatened species: CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near-threatened.

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| Black-bellied Whistling-Duck | <i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i> |
| Fulvous Whistling-Duck | <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i> |
| Blue-winged Teal | <i>Spatula discors</i> |
| Northern Shoveler | <i>Spatula clypeata</i> |
| American Wigeon | <i>Mareca americana</i> |
| Mottled Duck | <i>Anas fulvigula</i> |
| Lesser Scaup | <i>Aythya affinis</i> |
| Pied-billed Grebe | <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i> |
| Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) | <i>Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)</i> |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> |
| White-winged Dove (Heard) | <i>Zenaida asiatica</i> |
| Mourning Dove | <i>Zenaida macroura</i> |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | <i>Coccyzus americanus</i> |
| We had excellent views of a remarkable number of cuckoos on this trip | |
| Black-billed Cuckoo | <i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i> |
| Lesser Nighthawk | <i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i> |
| One was perched across from Boy Scout Woods for a day | |
| Chimney Swift (VU) | <i>Chaetura pelagica</i> |
| Ruby-throated Hummingbird | <i>Archilochus colubris</i> |
| King Rail (NT) (Heard) | <i>Rallus elegans</i> |
| Clapper Rail | <i>Rallus crepitans</i> |
| We enjoyed watching one run across the road multiple times in the coastal wetlands | |
| Virginia Rail | <i>Rallus limicola</i> |
| Sora | <i>Porzana carolina</i> |
| Common Gallinule | <i>Gallinula galeata</i> |
| American Coot | <i>Fulica americana</i> |
| Purple Gallinule | <i>Porphyrio martinica</i> |
| Black-necked Stilt | <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i> |
| American Avocet | <i>Recurvirostra americana</i> |
| Absolutely astounding numbers were in the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary | |
| Black-bellied Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> |

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| American Golden-Plover | <i>Pluvialis dominica</i> |
| Snowy Plover (NT) | <i>Charadrius nivosus</i> |
| Wilson's Plover | <i>Charadrius wilsonia</i> |
| Excellent views of a pair on the beach in Bolivar Flats | |
| Semipalmated Plover | <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i> |
| Piping Plover (NT) | <i>Charadrius melodus</i> |
| We saw a banded bird named Georgia Peach on the beach in Bolivar Flats | |
| Killdeer | <i>Charadrius vociferus</i> |
| Upland Sandpiper | <i>Bartramia longicauda</i> |
| Whimbrel | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> |
| Long-billed Curlew | <i>Numenius americanus</i> |
| One was on the baseball field in Sabine Pass | |
| Marbled Godwit | <i>Limosa fedoa</i> |
| Ruddy Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> |
| Red Knot (NT) | <i>Calidris canutus</i> |
| Stilt Sandpiper | <i>Calidris himantopus</i> |
| Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> |
| Dunlin | <i>Calidris alpina</i> |
| Least Sandpiper | <i>Calidris minutilla</i> |
| Buff-breasted Sandpiper (NT) | <i>Calidris subruficollis</i> |
| We saw a very cooperative individual on the beach at Bolivar Flats | |
| Pectoral Sandpiper | <i>Calidris melanotos</i> |
| Semipalmated Sandpiper (NT) | <i>Calidris pusilla</i> |
| Western Sandpiper | <i>Calidris mauri</i> |
| Long-billed Dowitcher | <i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i> |
| Wilson's Snipe | <i>Gallinago delicata</i> |
| Wilson's Phalarope | <i>Phalaropus tricolor</i> |
| Spotted Sandpiper | <i>Actitis macularius</i> |
| Solitary Sandpiper | <i>Tringa solitaria</i> |
| Greater Yellowlegs | <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i> |
| Willet | <i>Tringa semipalmata</i> |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | <i>Tringa flavipes</i> |
| Laughing Gull | <i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i> |
| Ring-billed Gull | <i>Larus delawarensis</i> |
| Herring Gull | <i>Larus argentatus</i> |
| Least Tern | <i>Sternula antillarum</i> |
| Gull-billed Tern | <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> |
| Caspian Tern | <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> |
| Black Tern | <i>Chlidonias niger</i> |
| Common Tern | <i>Sterna hirundo</i> |
| Forster's Tern | <i>Sterna forsteri</i> |
| Royal Tern | <i>Thalasseus maximus</i> |
| Sandwich Tern | <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i> |

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| Black Skimmer | <i>Rynchops niger</i> |
| Anhinga | <i>Anhinga anhinga</i> |
| Neotropic Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i> |
| Double-crested Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i> |
| American White Pelican | <i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i> |
| Brown Pelican | <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i> |
| Least Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus exilis</i> |
| Great Blue Heron | <i>Ardea herodias</i> |
| Great Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> |
| Snowy Egret | <i>Egretta thula</i> |
| Little Blue Heron | <i>Egretta caerulea</i> |
| Tricolored Heron | <i>Egretta tricolor</i> |
| Reddish Egret (NT) | <i>Egretta rufescens</i> |
| Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> |
| Green Heron | <i>Butorides virescens</i> |
| Yellow-crowned Night-Heron | <i>Nyctanassa violacea</i> |
| White Ibis | <i>Eudocimus albus</i> |
| Glossy Ibis | <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> |
| White-faced Ibis | <i>Plegadis chihi</i> |
| <i>We also saw a hybrid Glossy x White-faced Ibis</i> | |
| Roseate Spoonbill | <i>Platalea ajaja</i> |
| Black Vulture | <i>Coragyps atratus</i> |
| Turkey Vulture | <i>Cathartes aura</i> |
| Osprey | <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> |
| White-tailed Kite | <i>Elanus leucurus</i> |
| Swallow-tailed Kite | <i>Elanoides forficatus</i> |
| We watched two newly arrived migrants fly across the coastal saltmarshes heading north near the Louisiana/Texas state line | |
| Mississippi Kite | <i>Ictinia mississippiensis</i> |
| We had a fortuitous sighting of a flock of them as we returned towards the coast from the Big Thicket | |
| Northern Harrier | <i>Circus hudsonius</i> |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | <i>Accipiter striatus</i> |
| Cooper's Hawk | <i>Accipiter cooperii</i> |
| Bald Eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> |
| Red-shouldered Hawk (Heard) | <i>Buteo lineatus</i> |
| Broad-winged Hawk | <i>Buteo platypterus</i> |
| Swainson's Hawk | <i>Buteo swainsoni</i> |
| Red-tailed Hawk | <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i> |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i> |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i> |
| Downy Woodpecker | <i>Dryobates pubescens</i> |
| Red-cockaded Woodpecker (NT) | <i>Dryobates borealis</i> |

It took a bit of effort, but we eventually had excellent looks at this rare woodpecker north of Houston

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| Pileated Woodpecker | <i>Dryocopus pileatus</i> |
| Crested Caracara | <i>Caracara cheriway</i> |
| Merlin | <i>Falco columbarius</i> |
| Peregrine Falcon (Leader) | <i>Falco peregrinus</i> |
| Eastern Wood-Pewee | <i>Contopus virens</i> |
| Acadian Flycatcher | <i>Empidonax virescens</i> |
| Great Crested Flycatcher | <i>Myiarchus crinitus</i> |
| Eastern Kingbird | <i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i> |
| Scissor-tailed Flycatcher | <i>Tyrannus forficatus</i> |

We eventually had tremendous views of this beautiful flycatcher, which proved more difficult to find than usual.

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| White-eyed Vireo | <i>Vireo griseus</i> |
| Yellow-throated Vireo | <i>Vireo flavifrons</i> |
| Philadelphia Vireo | <i>Vireo philadelphicus</i> |

We saw several of this uncommon vireo, best of all was incredible looks at one singing and feeding just over our heads in Smith Oaks

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| Warbling Vireo | <i>Vireo gilvus</i> |
| Red-eyed Vireo | <i>Vireo olivaceus</i> |
| Loggerhead Shrike (NT) | <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> |
| Blue Jay | <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i> |
| American Crow | <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i> |
| Carolina Chickadee | <i>Poecile carolinensis</i> |
| Tufted Titmouse | <i>Baeolophus bicolor</i> |
| Horned Lark | <i>Eremophila alpestris</i> |
| Northern Rough-winged Swallow | <i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i> |
| Purple Martin | <i>Progne subis</i> |
| Tree Swallow | <i>Tachycineta bicolor</i> |
| Bank Swallow | <i>Riparia riparia</i> |
| Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> |
| Cliff Swallow | <i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i> |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | <i>Regulus calendula</i> |
| Brown-headed Nuthatch | <i>Sitta pusilla</i> |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | <i>Polioptila caerulea</i> |
| House Wren (Heard) | <i>Troglodytes aedon</i> |
| Sedge Wren (Heard) | <i>Cistothorus platensis</i> |
| Marsh Wren (Heard) | <i>Cistothorus palustris</i> |
| Carolina Wren | <i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i> |
| European Starling | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> |
| Gray Catbird | <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i> |
| Brown Thrasher | <i>Toxostoma rufum</i> |
| Northern Mockingbird | <i>Mimus polyglottos</i> |

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| Eastern Bluebird | <i>Sialia sialis</i> |
| Veery | <i>Catharus fuscescens</i> |
| Gray-cheeked Thrush | <i>Catharus minimus</i> |
| One was resting, exhausted, on a lawn near Boy Scout Woods one morning | |
| Swainson's Thrush | <i>Catharus ustulatus</i> |
| Hermit Thrush | <i>Catharus guttatus</i> |
| Wood Thrush (NT) | <i>Hylocichla mustelina</i> |
| American Robin | <i>Turdus migratorius</i> |
| Cedar Waxwing (Leader) | <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i> |
| House Sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> |
| Pine Siskin | <i>Spinus pinus</i> |
| Chipping Sparrow | <i>Spizella passerina</i> |
| White-throated Sparrow (Leader) | <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i> |
| Seaside Sparrow | <i>Ammospiza maritima</i> |
| Fantastic looks despite strong winds in the coastal wetlands near the Louisiana/Texas state line | |
| Nelson's Sparrow | <i>Ammospiza nelsoni</i> |
| Savannah Sparrow | <i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i> |
| Swamp Sparrow | <i>Melospiza georgiana</i> |
| Eastern Towhee | <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i> |
| Yellow-breasted Chat | <i>Icteria virens</i> |
| Excellent views several times, including coming into to a water feature | |
| Bobolink | <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> |
| Eastern Meadowlark (NT) | <i>Sturnella magna</i> |
| Orchard Oriole | <i>Icterus spurius</i> |
| Baltimore Oriole | <i>Icterus galbula</i> |
| Red-winged Blackbird | <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i> |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | <i>Molothrus ater</i> |
| Common Grackle (NT) | <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i> |
| Boat-tailed Grackle | <i>Quiscalus major</i> |
| Great-tailed Grackle | <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i> |
| Ovenbird | <i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i> |
| Worm-eating Warbler | <i>Helmitheros vermiveros</i> |
| We had good views many times of this often shy species | |
| Northern Waterthrush | <i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i> |
| Golden-winged Warbler (NT) | <i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i> |
| Excellent looks in Sabine Woods | |
| Blue-winged Warbler | <i>Vermivora cyanoptera</i> |
| <i>We also saw a "Brewster's" Warbler, a Blue-winged x Golden-winged hybrid</i> | |
| Black-and-white Warbler | <i>Mniotilta varia</i> |
| Prothonotary Warbler | <i>Protonotaria citrea</i> |
| Swainson's Warbler | <i>Limnothlypis swainsonii</i> |
| A couple were in Sabine Woods | |
| Tennessee Warbler | <i>Leiothlypis peregrina</i> |

Nashville Warbler*Leiothlypis ruficapilla***Kentucky Warbler***Geothlypis formosa*

Very common, we saw many of them every time we visited a coastal woodlot

Common Yellowthroat*Geothlypis trichas***Hooded Warbler***Setophaga citrina*

Extraordinarily abundant; we estimated 60 individuals on a walk through Sabine Woods

American Redstart*Setophaga ruticilla***Cerulean Warbler***Setophaga cerulea*

Very nice views of a male coming to the drip in Boy Scout Woods

Northern Parula*Setophaga americana***Blackburnian Warbler***Setophaga fusca***Yellow Warbler***Setophaga petechia***Chestnut-sided Warbler***Setophaga pennsylvanica***Blackpoll Warbler (NT)***Setophaga striata***Pine Warbler***Setophaga pinus*

Just about the first bird we saw after leaving the airport, a male landed right in front of our faces as we were setting out on our first stop after meeting at the airport

Yellow-rumped Warbler*Setophaga coronata**We saw both the expected eastern "Myrtle" Warbler the western form "Audubon's" Warbler***Yellow-throated Warbler***Setophaga dominica***Prairie Warbler***Setophaga discolor*

We watched one singing from atop a pine tree in the Big Thicket

Black-throated Green Warbler*Setophaga virens***Summer Tanager***Piranga rubra*

Not only was it very common throughout the trip, one male in Sabine Woods was so tired and so hungry, it took to feeding on mosquitoes right around us, including hopping on our feet and landing on our heads.

Scarlet Tanager*Piranga olivacea*

Many males and females seen throughout

Northern Cardinal*Cardinalis cardinalis***Rose-breasted Grosbeak***Pheucticus ludovicianus***Blue Grosbeak***Passerina caerulea***Indigo Bunting***Passerina cyanea***Painted Bunting***Passerina ciris*

A few males were in Peveto Woods

Dickcissel*Spiza americana*

One was in a weedy patch along the coast while we were looking at terns and shorebirds

MAMMAL LIST. 5 species.**Nine-banded Armadillo***Dasypus novemcinctus*

A group of four babies visited an admiring crowd near the drip at Boy Scouts Woods

Swamp Rabbit*Sylvilagus aquaticus*

Eastern Gray Squirrel

Sciurus carolinensis

Common Bottlenose Dolphin

Tursiops truncatus

Wild Boar

Sus scrofa



This friendly (and hungry and tired) Summer Tanager entertained a large group of birders.



One of two Swallow-tailed Kites that we watched migrating north over the coastal wetlands.