

TEXAS COAST MIGRATION SPECTACLE II

Apr 21, 2012 to Apr 27, 2012
John Coons



One of just a handful of bird species endemic to the continental US, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker is also one of the rarest. We had marvelous views of a pair our first morning at Jones State Forest. (Photo by tour participant Rich Frank)

We all had a quite enjoyable week of birding in the east Texas Piney Woods and on the coast at High Island. We started north of Houston at Jones State Forest where it did not take long to find a pair of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers that seemed to be tending a nest in a pine, while Red-headed Woodpeckers busied themselves nearby and Brown-headed Nuthatches came in for a look. Heading east we made a few stops and found a fair number of the warblers that breed in the Big Thicket area. Good views of Northern Parula, Prothonotary, Kentucky, Pine, Prairie, Yellow-throated, Hooded, and Yellow-breasted Chat were had, but the highlight was perhaps the nice Swainson's Warbler that perched up well for us. A singing migrant Black-throated Green Warbler also made an appearance. Also in these east Texas woods we found a group of migrating Mississippi Kites, Acadian Flycatcher, and a singing Painted Bunting, with a Barred Owl silently coming in overhead just at dusk.

Getting to the coast we arrived at Boy Scout Woods and soon saw a Chuck-will's-widow on a day-perch only two feet off the ground. Over the next three days we birded the woodlots, rice fields, Bolivar Peninsula, and Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in search of migrants and local breeders. For much of our birding here we were joined by David Geale and fellow Field Guides Jan Pierson and Maggie Burnett. At Anahuac we were treated to multiple Least Bitterns, American Bittern, King and Clapper rails, White-rumped and Stilt sandpipers, breeding plumaged Wilson's Phalaropes, Hudsonian Godwits, Dickcissels, and Seaside Sparrows. On the Bolivar Peninsula we hit the shorebird hotspots and saw American Oystercatchers, stilts and avocets, Whimbrels, Upland Sandpipers, Wilson's and Piping plovers, and Red Knots among others, with a Nelson's Sparrow stealing the show for a while. Each afternoon we birded the woods at High Island and while a fair number of migrants were passing through, it was quite slow for the warblers, which are always the stars of the show.

There were Summer and Scarlet tanagers, Orchard and Baltimore orioles, a handful of thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and a great perched Black-billed Cuckoo. Warblers were hard to come by except for a flurry we had Wednesday afternoon that yielded a few gorgeous Blackburnians, a male Cerulean, Chestnut-sided, Yellow, Black-throated Green, and several Tennessee warblers. That same afternoon we got good looks at a Yellow-green Vireo that had been making rare appearances for several days at Smith Woods. This is a very rare bird in the US and especially in this part of Texas. We also made a trip to Sabine Woods where we saw a Tropical Mockingbird that had been found the previous week. Its origin is still unknown and we saw it fly to a nest where it was keeping company with a Northern Mockingbird. The Smith Woods nesting rookery of Snowy and Great egrets, cormorants, Tricolored Herons, and Roseate Spoonbills was fascinating to watch from such a close range.

We kept birding right to the end with a field full of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a perched Anhinga, Bald Eagle, and Mississippi Kite on our way to the airport. We got to experience a touch of east Texas hospitality, sample the local cuisine, see a few alligators and a bunch of birds. It doesn't get much better. Hope to see all of you again soon.

--John

For more information about this tour, including future departures, visit our website at www.fieldguides.com. And to see this same triplist online, go to <http://www.fieldguides.com/triplists/mig12bLIST.pdf> and you will find the list in its entirety.

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – We saw a few in flight after seeing those with the domestic waterfowl near Sabine Pass.

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – Good numbers of these were seen in the rice fields and at Anahuac.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

MOTTLED DUCK (*Anas fulvigula*)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Two individuals were seen just off the coast. These are late remaining wintering birds.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – A few late birds were hanging around including one we saw with a fish that we all thought was too big for it. But, it swallowed it right down.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*) – We spotted one perched in a tree at Lake Charlotte on our last morning.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – Surprisingly, we only saw one lone bird during the week.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Quite common along the coast.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – A nice view of one standing in the marsh at Anahuac.

LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – Great looks at this tiny heron. David figured we saw about twelve overall at Anahuac.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Some of those at the rookery were in fine plumage, who could resist that.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – The soft parts, the legs and bill, were extremely brightly colored in some individuals.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*)

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – Good looks at some with bright plumes.

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*) – We had nice looks at a few dancing in the tidal areas at Rollover Pass.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – We ended up seeing several of these handsome herons.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*)

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – Seeing those colorful individuals at the rookery was a real thrill.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – About three individuals were encountered along the Bolivar Peninsula.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – After seeing a handful of migrants soaring overhead in the Piney Woods we were treated to a great scope view of a perched bird on our last morning.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Our first was seen in the Piney Woods high above the Trinity River, then we saw a perched individual way across Lake Charlotte.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*)

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – This is almost surely, instead of Red-shouldered Hawk, the smaller raptor that was seen by some at High Island. These migrate through in small numbers while Red-shouldered Hawks don't get down to the coastal prairie areas much.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*) – We had a perched individual in the Big Thicket.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*)

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – We saw a few soaring about.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Being right at the edge of this bird's range, they are quite uncommon. We were fortunate to see two in the rice fields north of Winnie and then two on the Bolivar Peninsula.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – We enjoyed great perched views of this species, an immature, in Sabine Woods.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

CLAPPER RAIL (*Rallus longirostris*) – Nice close looks at a handful of individuals.

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans*) – We had great looks at a rufous cheeked individual at Anahuac soon after seeing a Clapper Rail.

SORA (*Porzana carolina*)

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinica*) – There was one hanging out on a patch of vegetation while we were looking over the herons and egrets at the rookery.



This perched Chuck-will's-widow provided a warm welcome on our arrival to High Island. (Photo by tour participant Rich Frank)

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – We saw all flavors of dress, from full winter to full breeding plumage.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) – We had two individuals in a flooded rice field on our last morning.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – There were a good number of these scattered around on the beaches of the Bolivar Peninsula.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*) – We saw a few of these threatened birds on the beaches.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*) – Many of those we saw were local breeding birds with some migrants still around as well.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (*Bartramia longicauda*) – We ended up seeing nine individuals in a grassy field on the Bolivar Peninsula. These birds have come a long way from southern South America to get here.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*)

HUDSONIAN GODWIT (*Limosa haemastica*) – After seeing one in the distance we got around to the back of the pond and ended up seeing two that David saw fly in. One of my favorite shorebirds.

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – This is one of the most sharply marked shorebirds anywhere.

RED KNOT (*Calidris canutus*) – It was getting late in the year for this species but we found two along the beach at Bolivar Flats.

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – A fair number of these were in the uncommonly seen breeding plumage. These were a rich brown color on the upperparts instead of the overall gray that we are used to seeing.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER (*Calidris fuscicollis*) – A handful of these were at Anahuac NWR.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*)

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*) – A very pretty bird in breeding plumage.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER (*Tryngites subruficollis*) – On our last morning we found about 200 individuals in a rice field near Winnie. One of the largest groups I have seen.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*)

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – There were a few of these at Anahuac NWR and a couple were very brightly marked females.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

HERRING GULL (AMERICAN) (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*)

LEAST TERN (*Sternula antillarum*) – This species was in abundance this year.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – A couple were seen with the more common Royal Terns.

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*) – A rather uncommon bird on the Texas Coast we saw a few on the sandbars at Rollover Pass.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*)

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*) – This is the common local breeding tern.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*)

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – A very handsome tern.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) [I]

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – We heard a few around High Island then saw one at the RV Park and another at Sabine Woods.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – These have moved into the High Island area in the last 10-15 years.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*) – We only had a couple of individuals flying through the trees in the Piney Woods then we heard one or two at High Island.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) – We enjoyed a prolonged scope study of this rather uncommon species while we were watching the heron and egret rookery at Smith Woods.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – It was a great experience to see a couple of individuals flying overhead.

Strigidae (Owls)

BARRED OWL (*Strix varia*) – One of the highlights of the trip was having this denizen of cypress bayous fly in right above us.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*) – David kept count and recorded 12 individuals that we spotted on perches at Anahuac.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) – Just after we arrived at High Island, we had great looks at an individual that had been on a perch at Boy Scout Woods all day. It was great to study this bird during the day.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – One of the most handsome woodpeckers in the world, we had nice studies at Jones State Forest then two more seen at stops in the Piney Woods including one getting acorns out of an ornamental oak in the parking lot of a convenience store in Conroe.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – A late individual was still hanging around High Island.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*)

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER (*Picoides borealis*) – We had great looks at this rare species at Jones State Forest on our first morning. A pair seemed to be hanging around a nest hole in a pine.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) [*]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*)

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virescens*) – We managed to get one in the scope in the Big Thicket area.

LEAST FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax minimus*) – Kaz spotted this *Empidonax* at Smith Woods.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – We saw a fair number of these both in the Big Thicket and migrants along the coast.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – We found one at Smith Woods. This is an uncommon but regular migrant this far east in Texas.

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – Quite common.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Nice looks at this fancy flycatcher.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – This was a good year for this species. Our first was a family group near our motel in Silsbee.

Vireonidae (Vireos)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*)

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*) – A few were seen including at least one on the breeding ground near the Trinity River.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*)

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*)

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO (*Vireo flavoviridis*) – This very rare species for North America was first seen the previous week then went unseen for several days. We got word that it had reappeared and got there early and eventually got nice looks at this individual that was being a true skulker.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*)

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*) – Those on our last morning at Lake Charlotte really came in close to investigate the screech-owl imitation.

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*)

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH (*Sitta pusilla*) – Nice looks including one in the scope at Jones State Forest. Another southeast US specialty.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*)

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) – Good views at the one poking out of the small shrub at Anahuac.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) [*]

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – This species seems to be doing well in the area.

VEERY (*Catharus fuscescens*) – We got pretty good views of all the thrushes at High Island. Our first Veery was perched on a branch for a couple of minutes.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH (*Catharus minimus*) – Nice looks at the one hopping about in the open under the large oaks on a side street at High Island.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*) – A couple of these were seen well at the water drip at Boy Scout Woods.

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – I think this is one of the prettiest thrushes.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – This was one of the most conspicuous birds in the woods at High Island.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*) – We got excellent views of this bird Central American bird at Sabine Woods. It had been discovered the previous Friday and generated excitement as it was the first time this species had been seen in North America. A couple of days after its discovery it seemed to have taken up residence with a Northern Mockingbird and close photos revealed that the tail tips showed much wear which is consistent with birds that have been kept in cages. The jury is still out on the origin of this bird and it is likely no one will ever know for sure but it was quite interesting to see. We actually saw it sitting on a nest in a densely vegetated part of a tree.

BROWN THRASHER (*Toxostoma rufum*) – We saw several of these Red Mockingbirds during the week.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – Some of us got on one at Hooks Woods.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – We saw one at the pond at Boy Scout Woods on our arrival day.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – I think Maggie may have been the only one to have laid eyes on this bird while most of us were trying to see the Yellow-green Vireo.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – We saw a handful of these migrants.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) – Great looks at a couple of individuals in the Big Thicket then we found a migrant or two as well. This brightly colored species can really light up the dark bottomland forest.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*) – We had a great experience with this uncommonly seen species twice. Our first was in the Big Thicket where a nice woman said we could look for the calling bird if we could put up with the goat stink. We ended up seeing this one quite well then we found another at our lunch spot closer to the coast where it sat in the understory for quite (even for a scope view) a while.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – There were a fair number of these the last couple of days at the migrant areas.

KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Geothlypis formosa*) – Nice looks at a singing bird near the Trinity River on our first morning.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – Great looks at this handsomely marked warbler in the Big Thicket where it was a rather common voice in the woods.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – We saw one on our last afternoon at Smith Woods.

CERULEAN WARBLER (*Setophaga cerulea*) – Nice looks at an exquisite male at Smith Woods during a brief flurry one afternoon. This is always one of the more sought-after warblers in the spring at High Island.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – Great looks at a close singing individual near the Trinity River as we headed east through the Big Thicket.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (*Setophaga fusca*) – There were about three of these dazzlers with the flurry of activity at Smith Woods. I think this is the most beautiful of the warblers.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – We only found one during our week.

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – A common voice in the tree tops of tall pines we saw a few high up on our first day then found another pair much lower, in smaller trees, in the Big Thicket.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (*Setophaga coronata*) – We saw a group of three in dull plumage at Smith Woods that were still hanging around. This species winters here and in northern Mexico and is one of the first warblers to migrate through so those that are late always seem to be these dull individuals that certainly have little chance of breeding this year.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*) – Great looks in the scope of a territorial individual in the Big Thicket then another was seen at our lunch spot neat Taylor Bayou.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – Crippling views of this gorgeous warbler in the Big Thicket. It stayed perched long enough to even get it in the scope.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) – Our first was a singing bird that came in while we were birding in the Big Thicket. We had it again as migrants at High Island.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – Surprisingly, we ended up seeing this skulker quite well on a few occasions.

Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows and Allies)

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

NELSON'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) – Great views of a close one in a marsh on the Bolivar Peninsula.

SEASIDE SPARROW (*Ammodramus maritimus*) – A handful of these were seen quite well in the coastal prairie.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) [*]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – We saw a good number of these during our time along the Coast. We did encounter a few blotchy first year males that are mixed red and yellow.

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*) – Fair numbers of these were also seen at High Island. We saw a Christmas tree with about four decorating it.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*)

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Fair numbers were seen. The intensity of the blue varied with individuals and direction of light.

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) – Our best view was the scope look in the Big Thicket at a singing male.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) – Nice looks on our way to Anahuac then again at a side road on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*)

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) – We had a nice comparison of this and the following species where the much more rounded crown and dark eye could be seen.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – A single (hopefully) male was hanging around the feeder at the RV park in High Island. This is an uncommon but rather regular occurrence here.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – A good number of these turned up later in the week and we saw a fair number at Anahuac where they breed.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [I]

MAMMALS

SWAMP RABBIT (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) – These were conspicuous and tame at the two wood lots at High Island.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*)

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – At least one was seen by some of us from the Galveston ferry during our unproductive pelagic trip.

NORTHERN RACCOON (*Procyon lotor*)

INDIAN ELEPHANT (*Elephas maximus*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 191 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa