



Field Guides Tour Report

Texas Coast Migration Spectacle I 2017

Apr 15, 2017 to Apr 21, 2017

John Coons & Micah Riegner

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, [please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.](#)



There are masses of birds along the Upper Texas Coast! Scanning through concentrations of shorebirds, gulls, terns, and pelicans can make for an exciting birding stop. For a little fun, try identifying everything in this image by guide Micah Riegner.

We had a fantastic week of birding the Texas Coast with John Coons, a veteran of many migration spectacles. It was my first official Field Guides tour, and my first experience of spring migration east of the Rockies. From the Kentucky Warbler near the Trinity River, to the flocks of Scarlet Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at High Island, to the Bachman's Sparrow in the Piney Woods -- all were great memories I'll never forget.

Day One was packed with birds. We blasted out to the Jones State Forest at first light to see Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Brown-headed Nuthatch, both of which showed themselves nicely. The woodpecker is one the rarest North American breeding birds, so it was quite a treat to see it at our first stop. We continued east toward the town of Silsbee, stopping at a lush patch of bottomland forest where Prothonotary, Swainson's, and Kentucky warblers put on a show. These birds had already set up their breeding territories in the swampy deciduous forest. After lunch we poked around the Piney Woods to see Prairie, Hooded, and Yellow-throated warblers while dodging rain and some lightning. After a night in Silsbee, we swung up past Jasper to look for Bachman's Sparrow in its natural habitat and had prolonged scope views of one singing way up on an exposed perch in a Loblolly Pine.

Our stay at High Island was very productive. Mornings were spent scanning rice fields for shorebirds and visiting Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, while afternoons were spent searching migrant warblers at High Island. Despite the persistent rain on our visit to Anahuac, we were able to see Clapper and King rails, Purple Gallinules, many Least and a few American bitterns from the vehicle. On our visit to the Bolivar Peninsula we saw both Nelson's and Seaside sparrows in the saltmarsh grass, and hundreds of terns, gulls, and shorebirds out at Bolivar Flats, including Red Knots in their brick-red breeding plumage and an out-of-place Long-tailed Duck.

Stormy weather on our second afternoon in the woods brought down a delightful number of warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and buntings. At one moment we had to decide between looking at male Blackburnian, Cerulean, or Bay-breasted warblers among dozens of Tennessee Warblers that were flitting about in the oaks. Other highlights from that fallout included a Worm-eating Warbler, which was characteristically probing dead leaves, and a Blackpoll Warbler, which had just arrived from its non-stop flight from South America where it spent the winter among antwrens, woodcreepers, and foliage-gleaners.

All in all, the trip went smoothly thanks to the expertise of John, who entertained us with many dinnertime stories. Oh, and we cannot forget our friend Laura, who provided us with a steady stream of High Island warbler news and helped us get on that male Blue-winged on our last afternoon as well as the local culture of the Upper Texas Coast.

John and I had a great time birding with y'all, and we hope to see you again on another tour some day!

--Micah

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 handful in the rice fields near the coast.

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – There were several on the small island at Anahuac then we had a few more here and there.

WOOD DUCK (*Aix sponsa*) – Two flew through the woods at Jones State Forest on our first morning.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – Diana spotted this one in the pond near the coast they are not common here at this time of year.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*)

MOTTLED DUCK (*Anas fulvigula*) – We had a few good views of pairs of this southeast US specialty.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*)

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – We saw one in the marsh at Tyrrell Park.

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*) – There were at least two individuals with the flock of Lesser Scaup at Bolivar Flats.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – There was a group of about 20 in the surf at Bolivar Flats.

LONG-TAILED DUCK (*Clangula hyemalis*) – A single bird was in the shipping channel near Bolivar Flats. This birds seemed to still be molting out of winter female plumage. A quite rare bird here.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*) – A few wintering birds were still hanging around.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

NORTHERN BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) – Two birds dashed off the roadside and into the brush on our last morning while heading to the airport. Efforts by Micah to flush them didn't work. This has been a very difficult species since Hurricane Ike in 2010.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Ciconiidae (Storks)

WOOD STORK (*Mycteria americana*) – Very surprisingly, we had a group of 16 individuals fly right over us while we were birding south of Silsbee. This is quite early for this species to be here.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Micah spotted one near the coast. This species is far outnumbered today by the previous species.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) – We saw a fair number on a couple of the dredge islands in Galveston Bay.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Quite common.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – We saw two individuals at Anahuac, always a great species as it is so camouflaged.

LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – We did very well with Least Bitterns. Our first was hiding in the vegetation at Cattail Marsh but we saw about ten individuals the next day at Anahuac.

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – We had great views of many at the rookery at Smith Woods including some with chicks.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – We saw a few in full breeding plumage at the rookery that had bright orange feet and a bright red spot on the lores. The field guides don't show these colors as the birds only have them for a few days or a week.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – Most of our sightings were in fresh water areas.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*)

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*) – We had good views of a couple including a white morph individual along the coast. One was doing a bit of dancing as it hunted for fish.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – The soft part colors were incredibly bright on a few of the birds at the rookery with purple, red, orange and yellow on their bills.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – We had a great view of this handsome heron at Tyrrell Park near Beaumont where it would have been hunting for crawfish.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) – We saw many in the rice fields.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – Again, we had great looks at the rookery at Smith Woods of many birds on nests. We did not see any young in the nests but it is a real treat to see these birds in full breeding colors so close.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Quite common throughout. These were rarely found on the Bolivar Peninsula before Hurricane Ike hit in 2010.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – We saw a few on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*)

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*) – A quite rare bird around High Island, it was a big surprise to see one soaring right over us as we birded in the woods.

MISSISSIPPI KITE (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) – We had a couple of birds from the motel parking lot in Silsbee on our first afternoon.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*) – There were still a couple hanging around from the winter at Anahuac.

BALD EAGLE (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – An immature bird was seen over the Big Thicket.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*) – Micah spotted one on the power line that we went back to get a good look at.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*)

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – We had nice views of a few soaring about in the rice fields.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

BLACK RAIL (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) – We heard one calling in the dense marsh vegetation along the road into Bolivar Flats. [✱]

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans*) – We enjoyed great looks at about three individuals at Anahuac then a couple more in the rice fields. And, we saw them just after watching Clapper Rails for a good comparison.

CLAPPER RAIL (GULF COAST) (*Rallus crepitans saturatus*) – Nice looks at this more saltwater species.

VIRGINIA RAIL (*Rallus limicola*)

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – Also seen well in a few spots near the coast.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinicus*) – At Anahuac NWR we saw a few well around Shoveler Pond.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – We did not see any huge flocks but we had several nice looks.

AMERICAN AVOCET (*Recurvirostra americana*) – A big group was at Rollover Pass then even more at Bolivar Flats.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Rather common along the beaches, we saw a few in nice breeding plumage.

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*) – Not nearly as common as the above species, we saw a few in rice fields.

SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus*) – Just as we got on one with some Piping Plovers at Bolivar Flats they were flushed by the shorebird censusers and we could not relocate it.

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – This local shorebirds showed well on the Peninsula.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – We saw a lot of these on the beaches and in the rice fields.

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*) – A threatened bird in Texas, we had a handful in the sand at Bolivar Flats.

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (*Bartamia longicauda*) – We spotted a group in a grassy field at one of our first rice field area stops, then had a few more over the next couple of days.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*) – After seeing a couple here and there early we had some fields with many individuals.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) – There was a nice look at a single bird in the grassy lawn of the park in Crystal Beach.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT (*Limosa haemastica*) – We were lucky on our last day when we were checking the wet field to have a group fly in and land. A couple of them were in nice breeding plumage. This is one of my favorite shorebirds.

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*) – All of our sightings were in saltwater areas on the Peninsula.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

RED KNOT (*Calidris canutus*) – There were two birds in nice color with the other shorebirds on the beach at Bolivar Flats. This is one of the more uncommon shorebirds that regularly migrates through.

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*)

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*) – Lots of these were on the beach.

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – Some fields had many individuals with bright colors and black bellies on some of them.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Calidris bairdii*)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – This was the most common small peep we encountered.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER (*Calidris fuscicollis*) – We had close views of this intricately marked shorebird in a rice field near Anahuac.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*)

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER (*Calidris pusilla*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – There were about 30 individuals huddled together on the beach at Bolivar Flats.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus griseus*) – We saw a few well, especially along the coast.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – This is the more common of the dowitchers in the rice fields where we saw a LOT of them.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) – We saw a few of these where the females are more colorful than the males.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*)

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – We saw a couple in roadside ditches around Anahuac.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Not many were seen, they seemed to be late in arriving this year.

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*) – Good numbers of migrants and residents were seen.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Quite common in a variety of wet habitats.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – By far the most common gull we encountered by 100 times.

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) – Our friend, Chris and his group, got us on to one in a large flock of Laughing Gulls at Bolivar Flats.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

HERRING GULL (AMERICAN) (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) – A few were scattered about on the beaches along the coast.

LEAST TERN (*Sternula antillarum*) – These tiny terns were seen very well at close range at Bolivar Flats.

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – We had our first ones in some rice fields. This is a species that is nearly always seen over freshwater ponds and marshes.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

BLACK TERN (*Chlidonias niger*) – Formerly a quite an uncommon species around here, we had several individuals with good views at Rollover Pass.

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*)

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Some of the gatherings had a hundred or more birds.

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – One of the handsomest of the terns we had good scope views at Rollover Pass and Bolivar Flats.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*) – There was quite a large flock at Rollover Pass. These are entertaining to watch feed as they fly low over the calm water and drop their bill into the surface.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

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

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – We saw one bird on a power line in High Island where they are not all that common.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*)

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus americanus*) – We had a handful of individuals in the woods at High Island.

Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*) – We enjoyed nice looks at a flying bird one night.

Strigidae (Owls)

BARRED OWL (*Strix varia*) – We had a great experience with seeing this marvelous species in the Big Thicket. We were just about to give up when one flew in then started to call, one of the best sounds in nature.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*) – Our first was on a day perch at Smith Woods.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – We heard a distant singing bird during our Barred Owl search in the Big Thicket. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – Several males and females were seen well.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) – Micah found two at our pit stop in the Piney Woods as they perched on a dead tree behind the convenience store.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – One individual was still at Smith Woods from the winter.

DOWNY WOODPECKER (*Picoides pubescens*)

RED-CKOADED WOODPECKER (*Picoides borealis*) – We had good scope views of this very special woodpecker of the southeast US on our first morning at Jones State Forest.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus pileatus*) – After a fly-by or two we had a wonderful look at this great bird on our way back to the airport on our final day.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Jill spotted our first one and we ended up seeing a few more during the week.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Micah spotted one after it got a large group of dowitchers up in the area in a rice field. It ended up flying right over us.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus virens*) – Surprisingly, only a few were seen.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – We saw a couple on our first day and then none as migrants at High Island.

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – Quite numerous on at least one afternoon when they seemed to be dropping in from the sky during a fallout.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Perhaps the handsomest flycatcher in North America, we saw several in the pasture lands and rice fields.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Our first were right behind the motel in Silsbee on our first afternoon of birding.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*) – A common voice of the thickets and at High Island, we saw a few quite well by the end of the trip.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*Vireo flavifrons*)

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – Seen on several days as local breeders but only as migrants at High Island.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLUE JAY (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – Seen daily but not in big numbers.

AMERICAN CROW (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – Rather common in the Piney Woods area.

FISH CROW (*Corvus ossifragus*) – This species has spread its range in recent years and we heard and saw a couple in Silsbee.

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*) – We saw one singing in its aerial display over the beach at Bolivar Flats. It took us awhile to locate the call then realized it was right above us.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*) – These have done well in recent years. Our first were at the restaurant in Kountze then we had more around boxes and over the woods at High Island each day.

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Micah spotted one flying about in the rice fields.

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Quite common, some had nests under the roof at the motel in High Island.

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – A few of the bridges had good-sized colonies and we saw heads poking out of those nests at Anahuac.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

CAROLINA CHICKADEE (*Poecile carolinensis*)

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – Our only ones were the first day in the Piney Woods.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH (*Sitta pusilla*) – After seeing a few high in the trees we had a couple of quite nice looks at this southeastern US specialty.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) – We got rained out of our best morning for seeing them and never had a good one but we heard many and had a couple of brief looks.

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) – One showed quite well for us on our last full day.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – A very common song from the woods we had a couple of encounters with a species that never wants to show when you are looking for it.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – We saw one on our last afternoon in Smith Woods. Where had it been all week?

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Sialia sialis*) – We saw a few in the area around Sam Rayburn Lake when we went north.

VEERY (*Catharus fuscescens*) – I believe we only had one individual.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*Catharus ustulatus*) – A few showed up as migrants by the end of the week. We heard a few giving their soft partial song which they do in the southern part of their migration range.

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*) – We had good looks at this very handsome thrush in the woods at High Island.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Quite common.

BROWN THRASHER (*Toxostoma rufum*) – Micah found one behind the hotel in Silsbee. Surprisingly, we did not see any on the coast.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – There were good-sized flocks over the Big Thicket and again in the fruit trees at High Island.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – We had pretty good views of one walking on the ground at Smith Woods just after we heard it sing.

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – We had a couple of individuals in Smith Woods on successive days.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Amazingly, we did not get a good look at this usually rather conspicuous species. He heard a couple chipping from the other side of the pond and some of us got a brief view at one point.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora cyanoptera*) – Laura led us to the site and we had a nice look on our final full day at Smith Woods.

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – We saw several in both woods at High Island during the week.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*) – On our first morning in the field we had a great look at a singing bird in the Big Thicket. We also had a few as migrants at High Island where it was getting late for them to be around in numbers. This species really lights up the understory.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) – We enjoyed great views of one in the bottomland forest of the Big Thicket. It was singing away for us from an exposed limb. Yip! Yip! Yip! We also had another in Smith Woods as a migrant a couple of days later.

TENNESSEE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – After none the first day in the woods at High Island we saw a handful as they were building up to big numbers.

KENTUCKY WARBLER (*Geothlypis formosa*) – Another species that is great to hear singing on the breeding grounds. We had good views of one in the Big Thicket. Later we had one or two at High Island where they are harder to see in the dense understory.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – We saw a few here and there. These were likely breeding in the sites where we saw them.

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – Our first few were in the Big Thicket then we saw a few each day at High Island. Another dazzler when seen well.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – We saw a couple of males showing their black and orange.

CERULEAN WARBLER (*Setophaga cerulea*) – One of the more sought-after warblers at High Island we had nice looks at two individuals on our first day at High Island. Both were exquisite males.

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – We heard one singing in the tall trees along the Trinity River on our first day and got a good view of a nice male. We then saw another couple migrants at High Island.

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER (*Setophaga castanea*) – It was so great to see this colorful species at High Island. Normally the majority of individuals passes through later in the month but we had good views of at least two birds one day then again the next day.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER (*Setophaga fusca*) – Perhaps the brightest color of all the warblers we had nice looks at this crowd pleaser at Smith Woods.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – We saw a few during our week.

BLACKPOLL WARBLER (*Setophaga striata*) – Another species that is usually more common later in the month, we saw them on three consecutive days at High Island.

PINE WARBLER (*Setophaga pinus*) – This species is quite common in the tall pines of the Big Thicket and Piney Woods. We saw them at Jones State Forest on our first day and again later in the day. This species winters in this area as well and is not a species to expect as a migrant on the coast.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*) – We had done a lot of looking for this local breeder in the Big Thicket when Simone spotted it in a nearby pine and we ended up getting a great view.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – We had fabulous views of a singing bird in the top of a small pine. This species nests in regenerating pines that are about six to twelve feet high.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*) – We saw about five individuals at Smith Woods on one of our days.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens*) – Normally a tough species to see well, we had a scope view of a singing bird in the top of a small pine tree.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

BACHMAN'S SPARROW (*Peucaea aestivalis*) – This iconic bird of the southeast pine forests was well worth the long drive. We had wonderful scope views of a singing bird perched for several minutes only a short ways off.

NELSON'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus nelsoni*) – A wintering species that often hangs around until late April we found a couple in a salt marsh on the Bolivar Peninsula.

SEASIDE SPARROW (*Ammodramus maritimus*) – In the light rain, we found one feeding along the roadside at Anahuac NWR. Then we had some scope views of singing birds in a few other locales with saltmarsh.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia albicollis*)

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – We saw a good number along the road edges at Anahuac.

EASTERN TOWHEE (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) – One was calling amongst the regenerating pines in the Big Thicket. [*]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – On several of our days we had good flights of many individuals at High Island. Often we saw them perched right next to the next species.

SCARLET TANAGER (*Piranga olivacea*) – This dazzler was present in big numbers on about three of our days at High Island.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – There were several feeding in the fruiting mulberry trees at High Island.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – We had a nice look at one perched on a power line in the Big Thicket.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Several colorful males were seen well.

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) – A quite colorful male was at the water feature across the street from Boy Scout Woods.

DICKCISSEL (*Spiza americana*) – We saw a few early arrivals along the fence lines in the rice fields. Their distinct song really gives them away.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*)

COMMON GRACKLE (*Quiscalus quiscula*)

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) – There were nice studies of several in the coastal prairies around High Island. We had a good comparison with this dark-eyed species to the yellow-eyed Great-tailed Grackles.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – We found a male and two females at a feeder in High Island where this is a quite uncommon species.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*) – On our first couple of days there were very large numbers of these migrating through High Island by the last two days the numbers had dwindled.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*) – Also, seen in good numbers o a few days. They were feeding on mulberries with the tanagers and grosbeaks.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH (*Spinus tristis*) – We saw a small group fly by in the Piney Woods.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) [H]

MAMMALS

SWAMP RABBIT (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) – These were readily seen in the woods at High Island.

EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*) – We only saw these around Tyrrell Park.

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*) – We had pretty good views of one surfacing in the shipping channel at Port Bolivar.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – We saw one at Jones State Forest and another in the Big Thicket.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 202 bird taxa and 5 mammal taxa