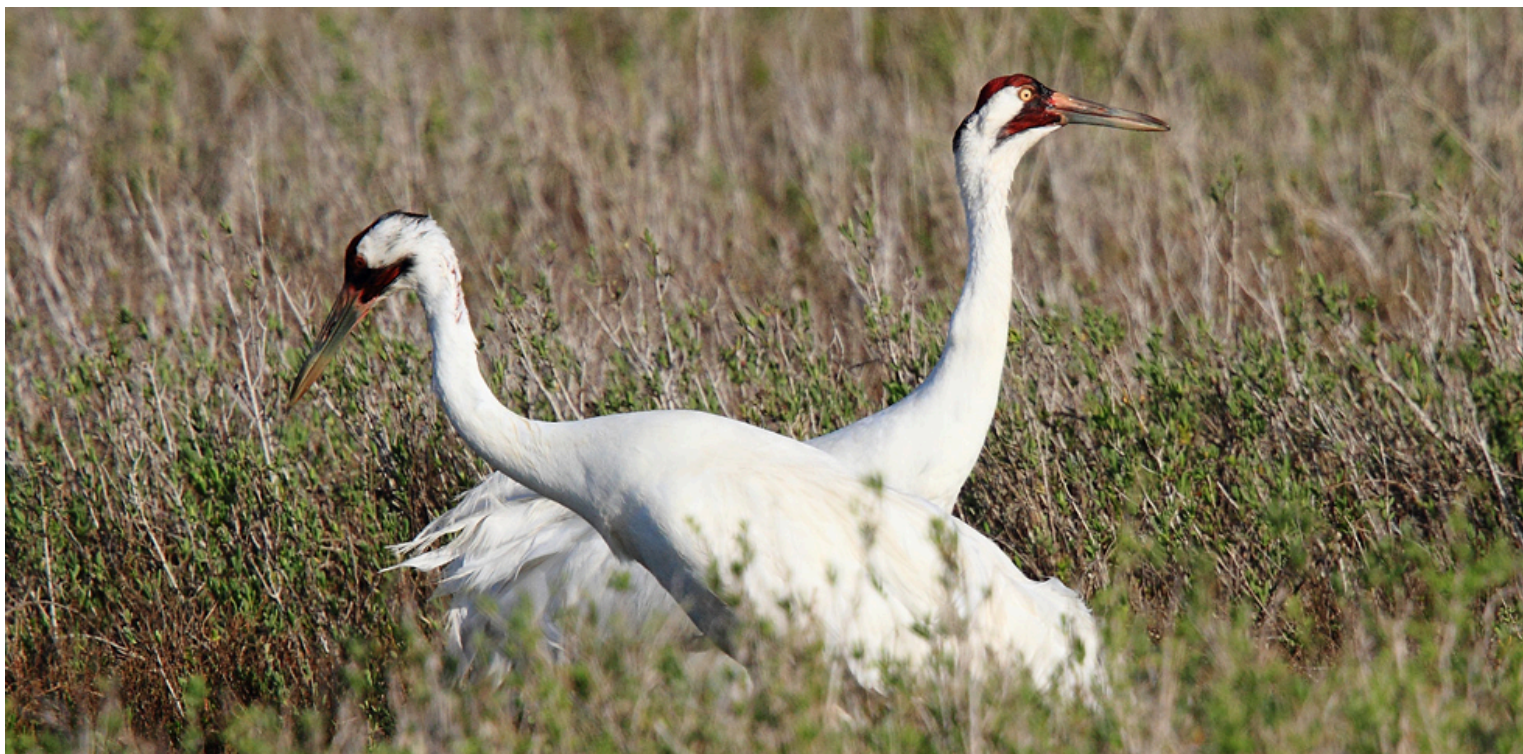


SPRING IN SOUTH TEXAS 2013

Mar 23, 2013 to Mar 30, 2013
Chris Benesh

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



Wonderful Whooping Cranes, part of the Spring in South Texas experience (Photo by participant Jakapat Vanichanan)

We had another wonderful Spring in South Texas tour this year. It was highlighted by some fantastic Whooping Cranes at Aransas NWR, a good hawk migration inland, and good migration of passerines along the coast. And there was a light sprinkling of rarities such as the great Crimson-collared Grosbeak we saw at Sabal Palms. We also had a good dose of dragons and damsels and a scattering of butterflies along the way. Other critters caught our attention along the way, such as the dramatic alligator behavior we witnessed at Estero Llano Grande.

Thanks to all of you for coming along and making the trip such a great success. I hope to bird with you all again. Until then, best wishes.

-- Chris

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*)

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – Nice studies of this species at ELG (Estero Llano Grande) and at Santa Ana.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*)

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*)

MALLARD (MEXICAN) (*Anas platyrhynchos diazi*)

MOTTLED DUCK (*Anas fulvigula*)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – Quite a show watching all of the teal feeding frenetically.

CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas cyanoptera*)
NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*)
NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*)
GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)
REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*)
RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*)
LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*)
BUFFLEHEAD (*Bucephala albeola*)
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*)
RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

PLAIN CHACHALACA (*Oreortyx pictus*) – One of the iconic sounds of spring in south Texas are the raucous calls of this species.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

NORTHERN BOBWHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) [*]

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

Gaviidae (Loons)

COMMON LOON (*Gavia immer*)

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – Fine views at ELG and Santa Ana.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*)

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*)

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*)

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

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*)

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*)

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*)

NORTHERN HARRIER (AMERICAN) (*Circus cyaneus hudsonius*)

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*)

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

WHITE-TAILED HAWK (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*)

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – We were fortunate to time our visit to the spring migration of this species and saw flights of over 1000 birds on two consecutive days.

GRAY HAWK (*Buteo plagiatus*) – Note the change in the scientific name owing to a recent split.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Most memorable was the morning flight across the highway near Kingsville of some 80 birds.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) [*]

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*)

Gruidae (Cranes)

WHOOPIING CRANE (*Grus americana*) – One of the fantastic treats of this tour is getting to see this rare species so well on Aransas Bay.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis dominica*)

SNOWY PLOVER (*Charadrius nivosus*)

WILSON'S PLOVER (*Charadrius wilsonia*)

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

PIPING PLOVER (*Charadrius melodus*)

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*)

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*)

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

WILLET (*Tringa semipalmata*)

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (*Bartramia longicauda*) [*]

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*)

MARbled GODWIT (*Limosa fedoa*)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*)

SANDERLING (*Calidris alba*)

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*)

PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Calidris melanotos*)

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*)

STILT SANDPIPER (*Calidris himantopus*)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago delicata*)

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*)

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

LEAST TERN (*Sternula antillarum*)

GULL-BILLED TERN (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*)

FORSTER'S TERN (*Sterna forsteri*)

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*)

SANDWICH TERN (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rynchops niger*)

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

RED-BILLED PIGEON (*Patagioenas flavirostris*) – Great views of a couple of birds at Falcon County Park. One of the more highly sought after valley birds.

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

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*)

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*)

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*)

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*)

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*)

Strigidae (Owls)

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL (MCCALL'S) (*Megascops asio mcallii*) – Nice views of a bird roosting in a nest box at ELG.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON PAURAQUE (*Nyctidromus albigollis*) – Fantastic views of snoozing birds at ELG.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Antrostomus carolinensis*) – Eventually we got good looks at this big brown nightjar in Corpus Christi.

Apodidae (Swifts)

CHIMNEY SWIFT (*Chaetura pelagica*)

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*)

BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus alexandri*)

BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia yucatanensis*)

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*)

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes aurifrons*)

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*)

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – This species sure is plentiful in south Texas. A delight!

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – George spotted a perched Merlin in some trees across the highway from our Zapata hotel.

APLOMADO FALCON (*Falco femoralis*) – After some searching, we connected with this species.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*)

Psittacidae (Parrots)

GREEN PARAKEET (*Aratinga holochlora*) – A small number of these were at Ft. Brown and Oliviera Park in Brownsville.

RED-CROWNED PARROT (*Amazona viridigenalis*) – Some nice views of this species in Brownsville. We also saw a few other not yet countable parrots including Yellow-headed, Lilac-crowned, and a bunch of White-fronted.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – We connected with some at Santa Ana NWR.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*)

EASTERN PHOEBE (*Sayornis phoebe*)

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus crinitus*)

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)

COUCH'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus couchii*)

EASTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – Surely one of the most spectacular flycatchers out there.

Laniidae (Shrikes)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

Vireonidae (Vireos)

WHITE-EYED VIREO (*Vireo griseus*)

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*)

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

GREEN JAY (*Cyanocorax yncas*) – Talk about an iconic bird, this one has it all going for it. Lots of looks and personality.

CHIHUAHUAN RAVEN (*Corvus cryptoleucus*)

Alaudidae (Larks)

HORNED LARK (*Eremophila alpestris*)

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)

PURPLE MARTIN (*Progne subis*)

TREE SWALLOW (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

CLIFF SWALLOW (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

CAVE SWALLOW (TEXAS) (*Petrochelidon fulva pallida*)

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

BLACK-CRESTED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus atricristatus*)

Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

VERDIN (*Auriparus flaviceps*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*)

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) [*]

MARSH WREN (*Cistothorus palustris*) [*]

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*)

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

Poliophtidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila melanura*)

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*)

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*) – We ended up seeing several of these on the trip.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

GRAY CATBIRD (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – Five at Paradise Pond was a good concentration.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – The state bird of Texas.

LONG-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma longirostre*)

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*)

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*)

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Protonotaria citrea*)

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*)

NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*)

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*)

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*)

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*)

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE) (*Setophaga coronata coronata*)

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*)

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER (*Setophaga dominica*)

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER (*Setophaga virens*)

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*)

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

WHITE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila torqueola*) – Another of the really sought after species. We connected with this one in Laredo.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

OLIVE SPARROW (*Arremonops rufivirgatus*)

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*)

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*)

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*)

BLACK-THROATED SPARROW (*Amphispiza bilineata*) – This one is so good looking it prompted someone to say "that's a sparrow?"

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

SEASIDE SPARROW (*Ammodramus maritimus*)

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolnii*)

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

CRIMSON-COLLARED GROSBEAK (*Rhodothraupis celaeno*) – Great looks at this young bird at Sabal Palms. It was great to hear its piercing call too.

NORTHERN CARDINAL (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

PYRRHULOXIA (*Cardinalis sinuatus*)

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*)

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*)

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*)

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*) – Seen at the southern limit of their range in the US.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*)

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*)

ORCHARD ORIOLE (*Icterus spurius*)

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*)

ALTAMIRA ORIOLE (*Icterus gularis*)

AUDUBON'S ORIOLE (*Icterus graduacauda*) – Good views in Laredo.

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

HOUSE FINCH (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) **[1]**

MAMMALS

EASTERN COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

DESERT COTTONTAIL (*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger*)

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*)

COLLARED PECCARY (*Tayassu tajacu*)

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 207 bird taxa and 6 mammal taxa