

Texas, April 1-16 – 2007

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Franklin's Gull and Laughing Gull, South Padre Island, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

Introduction

After having read Kenn Kaufmann's "Kingbird Highway" and talked to friends about birding in Texas it was with great expectations we planned this two week trip in April. To be able to get the most out of the warbler migration you probably need to go maybe one or two weeks later. But on the other hand, if you go a little bit earlier in the season you'll have the chance of finding some species which still haven't left their wintering grounds. Due to work and other issues this was the only time available for us, so we had to coop with it. We hoped for Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted and Cerulean Warbler, and expected to see Whooping Cranes. We tried to plan our itinerary so that we had the chance of seeing most of the Rio Grande Valley specialties and Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo on the Edward's plateau. What we hoped for the most was off course some fall-outs, but then as always, you'll need to be lucky with the weather. We actually had one incredible memorable day at South Padre Island with tons of birds. We'll also remember to insane raptor migration over Bentsen with maybe 20000 Broad-winged Hawks kettle their way north, and the sandpiper-packed beach at Bolivar Flats. So many impressions in so little time, Texas is a major birding destination and we'll love to visit again soon.

Logistics

The return ticket from Stockholm to Houston with KLM via Amsterdam was around 6000 SEK (850 USD). The car (midsize) was rented from Alamo, the car worked perfectly and the service was ok. We had booked the tour for the Whooping Cranes in advance. We didn't book any hotels our other activities in advance.

Literature

A Birder's Guide to the Texas Coast (ABA), Holt 1993
A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley (ABA), Lockwood, McKinney, Paton & Zimmer 1999
Field Guide to the Birds of Western North America, Sibley 2003
Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America, Sibley 2003
Road Guide Texas 1:1.200.000, Hallwag International

Itinerary at a glance

- 1.4: Katy farmlands
- 2.4: Goose Island, Aransas Bay (Pre-booked tour with Capt. Tommy Moore), Moore's Pond, Port Bay Club Rd, S of Kingsville

- 3.4: Laguna Atascosa NWR, South Padre Island, Old Port Isabel Rd
- 4.4: Botteri's Sparrow habitat E of Brownsville, Brownsville landfill and airport, Sabal Palms, McAllen Sewage Works, Santa Ana NWR
- 5.4: Brownsville landfill and airport, Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen State Park
- 6.4: Bentsen State Park, Salineño, Chapeño
- 7.4: South Padre Island
- 8.4: South Padre Island
- 9.4: Salineño, Road to Falcon State Park, San Ygnacio, Drive to Concan, Neal's Lodge
- 10.4: Neal's Lodge, Bat cave
- 11.4: Kerr WMA, Lost Maples SNA, Attwater NWR
- 12.4: Attwater NWR, Bolivar Flats and Rollover Pass, Smith Oaks
- 13.4: High Island, Sabine Woods, Willow Pond
- 14.4: Willow Pond, Sabine Woods, Anahuac NWR, High Island, Beach at 124/87 intersection Rollover Pass and Bolivar Flats
- 15.4: Attwater NWR, Katy farmlands, High Island, Anahuac NWR
- 16.4: Anahuac NWR, White Memorial Park

Itinerary

April 1st

Arrived George Bush Intercontinental Airport, Houston at 2 pm. Took a shuttle bus to the car rental office and picked up our pre-booked intermediate car at Alamo. Things ran quite smoothly, except the never-ending cue to immigration checking. Decided to do some birding during the evening before going south towards Rockport. Went to Katy farmlands, W of Houston, on Longenbaugh Rd we found one nice flooded field with lots of ducks (including a nice male Cinnamon Teal) and a hunting Bald Eagle, and some drier fields which produced some 80+ American Golden-Plovers and Pectoral Sandpipers. The evening was spent around Warren Lake, some Brewer's Blackbirds on a field was a good find. The lake itself held some Ruddy Ducks and Eared Grebes. A flock of Cedar Waxwings landed in a tree. At dusk we had a Great Horned Owl hunting near the salt mine on Jack Rd. Drove south on road 59 and stayed in a motel in Wharton (35 USD/double).

April 2nd

Early start from Wharton to drive down to Rockport. Started at Goose Island and had a singing Marsh Wren, a Seaside Sparrow and a fly-by Peregrine as well as four Great Northern Divers off shore. The boat trip gives you access to some remote islands and coastal marshes which hold more or less the entire world population of Whooping Cranes. The cranes leave these wintering grounds in beginning of April, but a few individuals may stay until the middle or late in April. During the trip we saw no less than 17 Whooping Cranes, including really up-close sightings, in the same area many singing Seaside Sparrows. A flock of 150 Ruddy Ducks, a few Lesser Scaups, two female Buffleheads, and three female Common Goldeneyes. A Wilson's Phalarope was found on one small island together with some other shorebirds and two Horned Larks. After returning from the boat-trip we birded around Rockport and Copano Bay. A Palm Warbler was found on Port Bay Club Rd. Four males Redheads at Copano Bay, the first Harris's and White-tailed Hawks appeared. A few flocks of American Golden-Plovers were found on dry fields. Driving south we finally reached the areas south of Kingsville. In the fine evening weather we spent the last birding hour at Pipit's corner mentioned in Holt. We unsuccessfully tried for Sprague's Pipit but on the other hand found the bird of trip, and it was only the first whole birding day! In a small pond just next to pipit's corner we found a female Masked Duck! It hid well in deep vegetation in the pond and we didn't manage to get any photos of it. The next morning we posted the sighting on the Texas Birdlist mailing group and during the following days a lot of birders were able to enjoy this increasingly difficult Mexican bird. And subsequently during the rest of our staying, we soon became famous as "the Swedes who found the Masked Duck!" which was rather fun and honorable. Motel in Raymondville (45 USD/double)

April 3rd

Started the day at Laguna Atascosa, at a small pond 4 km west of the park we had lots of wildfowl including a late Snow Goose and hundreds of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. Around the Headquarters we had some nice views of some Green Jays including one miscoloured blue bird, one of only two Buff-bellied Hummingbirds of the trip, some Long-billed Thrashers and a single Altamira Oriole. We were shown a nest of Eastern Screech-Owl and both adult birds were seen. On the laguna itself there were still some ducks around including: one male Redhead, 100 Lesser Scaups, 150 Ruddy Ducks, 1000s of Coots. We drove the Bayside Drive without anything extraordinary (no Aplomado Falcons). From Laguna Atascosa we went on to South Padre Island, on the boardwalks at the Convention Centre we had a Sora showing well and our first adult Franklin's Gull. The evening was spent at the Old Port Isabel Road where we searched in vain for Botteri's Sparrow. We did see quite a few Cassin's Sparrows, and a Sedge Wren though. Maybe early April is too early in the season for Botteri's

Sparrow, we didn't see it at the site close to Brownsville either. Night at Hotel Cameron, Brownsville (47 USD/double).

April 4th

At dawn we were at Brownsville Landfill, the famous site for the Tamaulipas Crow, but didn't succeed seeing one. Thousands and thousands of Laughing Gulls were seen including a few Franklin's Gulls. At Brownsville Airport we did another try for the Crow but didn't connect here either. At Utah Street we had a brief Hooded Oriole. En route Sabal Palms we had a banded Aplomado Falcon sitting by the road. Sabal Palms is a very nice habitat just at the Rio Grande River. Very nice boardwalks, earlier in March a Grey-crowned Yellowthroat was seen here. We saw Least Grebe, Green Kingfisher, Wilson's Warbler and Black-throated Green Warbler. During midday we went upriver first to the Sewage works at McAllen which was disappointingly birdless (this site actually seems like a has-been place, only one tiny dam held some waders, it's hardly worth a visit). The rest of the afternoon until evening was spent in the fantastic lookout tower at Santa Ana. Amongst the first Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks we had around 100 incredibly beautiful Mississippi Kites in a couple of north-moving flocks. At dusk a Clay-colored Thrush sang and both Common and Lesser Nighthawks flew around the tower. No Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet was seen or heard. A birder we met at Santa Ana said he'd seen two Tamaulipas Crows at the landfill in Brownsville so we decided to make another try tomorrow morning. Night at Hotel Cameron, Brownsville (47 USD/double).



Broad-winged Hawks and Turkey Vultures, Bentsen State Park, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

April 5th

On the way to the landfill at where Boca Chica Blvd crosses Central Ave we had 7 Red-crowned Parrots. We searched the landfill quite thoroughly but once again didn't see any Tamaulipas Crows. Some adjacent dams held large amounts of Dowitchers maybe 300, including 30 Stilt Sandpipers, 9 Pectoral Sandpipers, 150 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. Not hoping for much we made a last stop at the NOAA Weather Station at Brownsville Airport, and when we were folding back our tripods ready to take off, miraculously a pair Tamaulipas Crows flew by at close range! Later on we heard of a pair crows nesting close to the road to Sabal Palms. From Brownsville we headed for Santa Ana once more to try to get some raptors. Where Boca Chica Blvd crosses Central Blvd we had a flock of 10 Green Parakeets. At Santa Ana most of the migrating raptors had flew past for the day, we met a man who had seen many 10,000s Broad-winged Hawks, with the largest flock reaching from horizon to horizon. We looked for passerines and found our first male Scarlet Tanager, a Buff-bellied Hummingbird and our first Black-and-white Warbler. We left Santa Ana and continued west to Bentsen, along the way we had our first Western Kingbird. At the Park HQ we found out that we were just in time for the last tram into the park (4.30 pm). We quickly packed our stuff and embarked the tram. We were dropped off at the camping ground and put up our tent subsequently before going on a walking evening tour down to the Rio Grande River Observation Deck which was quite a disappointment with only one Green Kingfisher, birding was generally very slow. At sunset we were back at the Park HQ for a night hike which should depart from here. We

soon found out that the tour was fully booked and didn't seem so interesting anyway since you apparently drive in a caravan and I guess only people in the first van get to see everything. So we walked back towards the tent, we had our first Paurauges in the light of our flashlight sitting on the tarmac. After going about 500 m on Hackberry Road we heard a Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and at Paixtle Circle Rest Area we had at least 2 Elf Owls calling. From our tent we heard more Paurauges calling, and early the next morning we also heard a Chuck-will's-Widow from the tent. Tent in Bentsen (8 USD/pp).

April 6th

Woke up to the call of Paurauges. We took off early heading for the Acacia Loop where we soon heard a Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet calling, we soon found the bird and had great scope-views. At La Coma Circle we had a Brown-crested Flycatcher, and at Kingfisher Lookout two Ringed Kingfishers. We soon went to the Hawk Tower to do some raptor watching hoping for a Hook-billed Kite. The day was partly cloudy and between the clouds a good stream of migrating raptors flew north. During a couple of hours we had fantastic amounts of Broad-winged Hawks, maybe 20,000 (!) passed the Hawk Tower from where we also could see a perched Grey Hawk next to its nest. Other birds of prey were Swainson's Hawk 25, Mississippi Kite 1, White-tailed Kite 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 5, Cooper's Hawk 1, and loads of Turkey Vultures. We tried briefly Salineño for an hour, rewarded with a Brown-crested Flycatcher on the Mexican side, a Ringed Kingfisher and a Spotted Sandpiper. We took Salineño dump road towards Chapeño which gave a few new species. Our only Greater Roadrunner on the trip, some sparrows including Clay-coloured and White-crowned, one Ash-throated Flycatcher, two Pyrrhuloxias, and 5 Curve-billed Thrashers. At Chapeño we didn't find anything looking like feeders, this place is currently the only place where frequent reports of Brown Jays came in, since the people feeding at Salineño is only doing so during the winter season. We had a Green Kingfisher at the River lookout and probably some not so legal activity since two guys running a boat back and forth across the river were very eager to hide their faces each time they passed us standing with our scopes probably looking like cameras... At one time just as the boat went behind a bend a Border Patrol Officer drove past. At last light we stood at the lookout in Roma where a Black Phoebe sat on a fence. Night at Rancho Motel in Roma (40 USD/double). Watching the Weather channel at the Motel, we were at first puzzled about what to do the next day. We had the last day intensely been following the latest updates on the forecast since a large low pressure was about to come down from north with heavy northern winds, rain and cold temperatures. The situation looked really interesting for a fall-out on the coast and finally we decided to change our primary itinerary to spend the following two days on South Padre Island and then going back upriver to Falcon and the Edward's Plateau. This proved to be a wise decision.



Baird's Sandpiper, South Padre Island, April 8th 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

April 7th

We woke up early and drove predawn from Roma to South Padre Island. The sky was fully cloudy but there was no rain, the wind was from north during the day. The strategy for the day was to visit all the small patches of trees across SPI. We started at the convention center where we saw Swainson's Thrush and Brown Thrasher. We

then drove between Sheephead St, Atol St, Oleander St, Retama St, Campiche St, and Morningside St. The birding was really enjoyable since there were new birds at every stop. During the day we observed 19 species of warblers including Blue-winged Warbler 5, Black-throated Green Warbler 1, Yellow-throated Warbler 1, Prothonotary Warbler 6, both Waterthrushes, Kentucky Warbler 4, Wilson's Warbler 1 and Worm-eating Warbler 4. The best warbler of the day was a Golden-winged Warbler at Atol St which we missed by a minute. Other good birds was Wood Thrush at Atol St, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Sheephead and a Grasshopper Sparrow at Oleander St. Two Blue Grosbeaks at Sheephead St and two Great Kiskadees. At the Convention Center we had four Soras and one Marbled Godwit. During the day, the birders we met were increasingly enthusiastic about the forecast and told us that tomorrow should be really good, since rain was supposed to start falling during the night, and the wind would supposedly still come from the north. Night at Hotel Cameron in Brownsville (47 USD/double).

April 8th

A day to be remembered. As we drove across the bridge from Port Isabel to South Padre Island the rain was pouring down. It was almost raining too much and the light was still bad so we decided to drive to the southern tip of the island, namely Isla Blanca Park. It was strong wind, and lots of terns, gulls and shorebirds along the coastline. It was rather cold outside, and we didn't move outside our vehicle more than necessary. Even though there were lots of birds, we still had no idea of what to come. Actually at this point we still thought, the previous day had been hard-beaten. We drove up north to the Convention Center and found nothing new since yesterday. It seemed like even fewer birds around, especially the warblers seemed to have gone. Feeling a little disappointed we still had a Solitary Sandpiper flying past which was new and a few Swainson's Thrushes on the ground. The wind was still hard from the north when we tried a new tactic which proved to be excellent. We started to bird from our car, driving very slowly up and down each and every street going off from Laguna Boulevard. To be honest, it was fewer warblers today than yesterday but it was more than well compensated for, realizing the incredible numbers of sparrows seen. There were large flocks of Savannah, Lark and Clay-colored Sparrows on every lawn there was. We had Yellow-billed Cuckoos sitting wet on a driveway next to a equally wet Cattle Egret. Indigo Buntings and Orchard Orioles everywhere. It was just incredible. As the day passed we got soaking wet but our daylist just kept on improving. Upland Sandpipers stood every here and there. We also started to scrutinize flocks of gulls and shorebirds which were especially at Laguna Madre and south of that. We soon found our first Baird's Sandpiper and loads of terns including 40 Black Terns and 15 Common Terns. Thousands and thousands of Laughing Gulls including decent numbers of rosy-breasted Franklin's Gulls. Two Buff-breasted Sandpipers, 5 American Golden Plovers and quite a few peeps. We were told about a male Varied Bunting at the Convention Center and quickly went there getting close-up views of a nice-looking male, on the way we were surprised to find a soaking wet Swallow-tailed Kite slowly trying to fly north. We continued our way slowly driving up and down the smaller streets, finding Vesper Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks and a single male Painted Bunting among the large flocks of sparrows. After a quick lunch at Taco Bell we continued searching the gardens along the streets mentioned previously. The rain was still pouring when we decided to make a short visit to Barbara at Ling St. This famous old lady has dedicated her garden and house for visiting birdwatchers. We were told "you don't even need to knock the door, just step inside". This warm lady and her cute dog greeted us. From her living room we could stand looking at her marvelous garden containing Wood Thrush and lots of Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, a few Nashville Warblers and a Louisiana Waterthrush. She had her walls completely covered with nice photographs of typical as well as really rare birds which all had been taken from her garden. We took farewell and went once again to Isla Blanca RV Park. This turned out to be a fantastic experience. If we had seen lots of birds throughout the day, that was nothing compared to Isla Blanca. There were birds basically everywhere. A Baird's Sandpiper next to a Vesper Sparrow on a parking lot, hundreds of Indigo Buntings and Orchard Orioles, hundreds of Clay-colored and Lark Sparrows, it was an amazing experience. A Swainson's Thrush took hide under a RV, a late American Pipit stood just by the car. We found another male Varied Bunting, though disappearing rather fast. In a small patch of forest we had Kentucky and Worm-eating Warblers. At a deserted restaurant there was a flock of at least 1000 Purple Martins resting on ground, in the flock we found a single Cliff Swallow. At the very tip of Isla Blanca, close to the pier there was a large flock of terns and gulls and Sanderlings. In a small pool we found a Solitary Sandpiper. Suddenly a flock of very wet Least Bitterns came in from sea and quickly went down in a small grass area! A few hummingbirds came in from the roaring white sea, it's amazing how they can survive. At the end of the day we were probably as wet as the birds, with many incredible memories in mind, we still feel uneasy about how many birds that must have died during the weekend in the rough weather. After sunset we drove back upriver to Roma and stayed at Motel Rancho (40 USD/double).



Rainy conditions at South Padre Island, April 8th 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

April 9th

Although the wind had decreased it was still a bit foggy and not as warm as the previous days in the valley. We started once again at Salineño where we were really fortunate. At the break of dawn we had two Common Nighthawks catching flies above the water soon joined by hundreds of swallows. Along the river we saw both Green and Ringed Kingfisher, after an hour we had the first sought-after Muscovy Duck, another one passed just after. A Spotted Sandpiper stood at the river bank and a male Cinnamon Teal flew upriver. We met a group of Canadian birdwatchers and together with them we walked slowly south along the river and soon heard a Audobon's Oriole calling and the moment after we had a male in top of a tree. We also saw one Altamira Oriole and two Green Jays. Since we hadn't heard anything new about any Brown Jays we drove north first via Salineño dump road which produced pretty much the same things as last time, including the Greater Roadrunner, before we continued to Falcon State Park. After passing Falcon Heights we approached the state park but before we actually reached the park we had some amazing roadside birding. It all started with a Yellow-headed Blackbird on a pole next to the road. After taking some pictures of it, we went on just a few hundred meters before we found a Say's Phoebe on another fence pole. Stopping and trying to get some pictures of it, unbelievably a flock of 20 Lark Buntings flew across a field on the opposite side of the road. We quickly pulled up our scopes to have some brilliant views. A few of the birds were almost into summer plumage. Then things just kept on getting better. A lot of sparrows were around including many Vesper, Clay-colored, Chipping and Lark Sparrows. A distant Brewer's Sparrow was unexpected. A brilliant male Vermilion Flycatcher soon appeared. We slowly drove further and before the entrance to the park we had still more goodies. The first Cactus Wren of the trip, and a flock of Audobon's Warblers. We decided to turn around and continue upriver toward San Ygnacio. Making a short stop for a roadside Black-throated Sparrow. We pulled over at a small patch of forest and found a Black-tailed Gnatcatcher and a Swallow-tailed Kite overhead. One of the target species we'd missed was Red-billed Pigeon but that was about to change as we drove north. A few miles before San Ygnacio we had three Red-billed Pigeons flying across the road. Stopping to get some scope-views we were amazed to find at least 35 Red-billed Pigeons in a flock! Very happy we reached San Ygnacio and after an hours searching we had a second-year male White-collared Seedeater singing from a dead tree. After a long drive we finally got to Concan county and Neal's Lodge. Along the road we saw a male Wild Turkey, a few Hooded Orioles and some Red-tailed Hawks. Before sunset we added a few more species to our list including House Finch, Yellow-breasted Chat, Lesser Goldfinch and another cracking male Vermilion Flycatcher. The night was spent at Neal's Lodge (80 USD/double).

April 10th

All day around Neal's Lodge. We birded practically the whole compound including Pecan Grove, the Cattle Guard Trail along Frio River and the hill behind Cabin 61. Late afternoon on our way down the hill behind cabin 61 we eventually found at least three incredible Golden-cheeked Warblers. Around Pecan Grove best birds were: Field Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Black-throated Green Warbler, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Carolina Chickadee.

Around Cattle Guard two singing Bell's Vireos caught our attention, also a singing Black-throated Sparrow here. At the feeders we found House Finch, American Goldfinch, Yellow-breasted Chat and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. At dusk we headed for the bat cave show, which is situated a few miles from Neal's Lodge, it's on private grounds and you need a guide to get into the area. Guiding tours leaves every other evening from Neal's lodge, we hadn't booked in advance and were lucky that there in fact was a trip. We got to the cave after at least one hour waiting in frustration (seeing clouds of bats distantly leaving the cave) at the gate to the grounds. When we reached the cave a solid stream of bats were still leaving. Both Red-tailed Hawks and a Merlin caught themselves an evening snack. The wren trio was soon completed including Cactus, Rock and Canyon Wrens. As the sun set a Great Horned Owl called very distantly and then flew past us, also a Lesser Nighthawk made a swift fly-by. A group from VENT did some playback on Common Poorwill and soon two birds answered the call. Night at Neal's Lodge (80 USD/double).



Yellow-headed Blackbird, Falcon State Park, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

April 11th

Early departure from Neal's Lodge. We headed for Kerr Wildlife Management Area. Originally we had planned to start the day at Lost Maples, but since yesterday's success with the major target the Golden-cheeked Warbler we decided to drive directly to Kerr to maximize our chances with the Black-capped Vireo. At the HQ there was a box with pretty detailed information of where to see the BC Vireo. We stopped at the first place that seemed good. And soon we had at least two birds calling, one of them showing off very well. We soon left Kerr and continued to Lost Maples. A good one to two hours drive. We didn't reach Lost Maples until midday, which meant low bird activity. We still tried the main trail up the river. And connected with two Golden-cheeked Warblers along the way and hearing maybe five more. Two Red-shouldered Hawks soared, a Rufous-crowned Sparrow sang and we saw another Black Phoebe. The activity was still low when we left the hills behind and started driving back towards Houston. Along US10 we had a flock of 10+ Franklin's Gulls overhead. We reached Attwater just before dusk but still found 35 Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Upland Sandpipers and a few American Golden Plovers on a barren field just across the turnoff to the reserve. Night at Sportsmen Motel in Eagle Lake (42 USD/double).

April 12th

We started at Attwater driving the public road around the refuge. Two nice American Bitterns were seen, also a pair of Cinnamon Teals. This site holds great amounts of geese during winter season but all of those had left off course. It was pretty hard to get any good views of the remaining open-water areas. We had a few Marsh Wrens and Grasshopper Sparrows calling. We met a very friendly park ranger who told us about the upcoming Attwater Prairie Chicken Festival during next weekend. We looked into our itinerary and soon realized that we might had the opportunity to come back to see the chicken. We drove south of Houston to Galveston and took the free ferry to Bolivar where 100 American White Pelicans stood on a pier. At Bolivar Flats it was high water and incredible numbers of American Avocets were on the reserve. We approximated the numbers to maybe 10000 Avocets. A

lot of other shorebirds were present including Marbled Godwit 20, Long-billed Curlew 6, Semipalmated Sandpiper 2, Western Sandpiper 100, Least Sandpiper 20, Piping Plover 3, Snowy Plover 4, Wilson's Plover 8, Pectoral Sandpiper 4. We also found a second-year Bonaparte's Gull and three Horned Larks. At Rollover pass we found another 3 Bonaparte's Gulls. The last hours we slowly walked around Smith Oaks at High Island. A good selection of migrants were present, we found a few Thrushes, including one Hermit. Among the warblers we briefly saw one Swainson's, 5 Kentucky Warblers, 2 Ovenbirds, 2 Worm-eating Warblers, one Blue-winged. It was nice to get familiar to the common migrating species and to High Island birding. We slept in our tent at High Island RV Park (10 USD).

April 13th

At dawn we stood at the gates to Boy Scout and soon found a perched Common Nighthawk on a branch just above our car. We found a few warblers including Worm-eating, American Redstart and Blue-winged. Today it was windy conditions mainly southeastern winds and cloudy, it was a hard time finding shelter from the wind, which also meant a hard time finding warblers. At Smith Oaks we got some really nice ticks including both Cerulean Warbler and a smashing Chestnut-sided Warbler. We made one short stop more at Boy Scout before we headed east toward Sabine Pass. And we were well rewarded with maybe the most sought-after warbler, a Blackburnian Warbler! Later in the afternoon we finally reached Sabine Woods, a quite large patch of forest close to the coast. Best birds were one Acadian Flycatcher, one Eastern Towhee and one Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The best place all along the upper east coast for migrating passerines must be the very small patch further west from Sabine Woods called Willow Pond. It's a very small forest, just at the beach, with low trees and a great boardwalk that takes you through the forest. American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, three Swamp Sparrows, Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks and best of all a very confiding Blackburnian Warbler. Night at a motel in Beaumont (63 USD/double).

April 14th

Today the weather forecast looked even more promising, the wind had decreased and turned to north and it was still cloudy with scattered rain. We started where we ended yesterday at Willow Pond. There were a great selection of birds throughout the morning, and we saw new birds all the time, both Yellow-throated and Warbling Vireos, Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat and the first Yellow Warbler of the trip a nice male. The most unexpected finding was a Brown Creeper. As we left Willow Pond a Solitary Sandpiper flew over our heads. We then went to Sabine Woods which produced another Yellow Warbler, two Yellow-throated Warblers, a sparkling male Painted Bunting and a Blue-winged Warbler. A possible Olive-sided Flycatcher quickly disappeared before we had a chance to identify him. We went west again back to High Island with a short stop at Anahuac showing Snow Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose, Least Bittern, White-tailed Kite, Purple Gallinule, another fly-by Solitary Sandpiper. At Skillern Tract we tried for waders at some paddyfields, a few hundred Dowitchers but nothing else, at East Bay Bayou a Swallow-tailed Kite slowly flew north. At Boy Scout we read about a Black Scoter off the beach just south of High Island, we went there in the evening and soon found a good candidate. We went closer and the bird swam toward shore although still quite distant. After watching it for a while we felt confident about it. A male Lesser Scaup flew west and also some flocks of Blue-winged Teals. At a distant I scoped a small bird flying towards shore just above the water, after maybe a minute it was closer and soon I realized it was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird coming in from sea, an amazing experience. On the beach there were four Baird's Sandpipers and a Franklin's Gull. At Rollover Pass we made a short stop for 4 second-year Bonaparte's Gulls before driving to Bolivar Flats. Since it was low tide, there were large areas of mudflats uncovered and thousands of waders present. At least 50 Marbled Godwits were seen and also four Red Knots. Night at a motel close to Sealy, W of Houston.

April 15th

At dawn we were back at Attwater, this time for the Prairie Chicken Festival. Maybe 20 people had showed up as early as we did. We entered the first jeep and when we arrived to the site two Rangers stood at a platform with their scopes set on a booming Greater Prairie Chicken. We watched the distant bird for maybe half an hour enjoying the strange behavior. Blowing up the pouches on the neck and stamping the ground. As the air from the pouches went out a strange booming sound was heard. We decided to walk back all the way to the Park HQ, we asked the Rangers for permission at it was ok as long as we kept on the path. A White-tailed Hawk sat on a fence pole. Halfway across the Wintermann Prairie we luckily flushed a Sprague's Pipit, we observed the bird taking off showing its white outer tail-feathers and typical pipit-like flight before dropping to the ground way out on the grasslands. On the way back to Anahuac for the afternoon rail walk we passed Katy Farmlands, at a flooded field we estimated the amounts of Long-billed Dowitchers to maybe 1200. In that flock there were also three full summer-plumaged Wilson's Phalaropes and 100 Pectoral Sandpipers, at another field there was 50 American Golden Plovers and a Peregrine Falcon. Back at Anahuac we were just in time for the famous Rail Walk. We

were maybe 30 people gathered, we lent boots, which was essential, and soon drove off to the Yellow Rail Prairie. We formed a line holding a rope in between us and walked in a fast pace across the grasslands. After only ten minutes our first Yellow Rail for the day was flushed twice and almost everybody got a good view. On the way back we flushed another Yellow Rail and one Sora, a few unidentified sparrows also took off. At least two of them were claimed as Le Conte's Sparrow. But we never saw them on ground and we thought them to be very hard to separate from Grasshopper Sparrows in flight only. Two Sedge Wrens were seen. Back at the HQ we made the terrible choice to go to The Willows to check for warblers instead of scanning the fields. At the The Willows we didn't see anything of interest, back at the field we met a few birders who casually mentioned that they had a Hudsonian Godwit out on the fields. We panicked, grabbed our scopes and quickly went to the place. There were literally thousands of waders present including many ibises and herons, maybe 100 Whimbrels, before a male Northern Harrier suddenly scared every birds to flight, and no Hudsonian Godwit could be found. During the search two very brief Dickcissels sat in a tree. Just before it got pitch dark we found a Barn Owl hunting. Originally we had planned to go to WG Jones Forest for the last morning, but since we had seen all species there, in Florida previously, we decided to stay and make another try for the Godwit the following morning. Night at Motel Winnie Inn (70 USD/double).



Long-billed Dowitchers, Katy Farmlands, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

April 16th

Our last birding day. Started at the field from yesterday but no Godwit could be found today either, three White-rumped Sandpipers were a nice surprise though. We went Cross Road and then West Line Road all the way to the East Bay. Here we had two Great Northern Divers, 8 Eared Grebes, a Seaside Sparrow and a Sedge Wren. Our last birding stop before we went to George Bush Intercontinental Airport was White Memorial Park where one hours birding produced a pair of Red-headed Woodpecker, a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers, some Tufted Titmice, and a Blue-winged Warbler. With the woodpeckers we could sum up to fantastic 313 species.

List of species observed in Texas, April 1-16 2007

Following the taxonomy and order in Sibley, with a few adjustments for splits (e.g. Green-winged Teal is called *Anas carolinensis* and not *Anas crecca*).

1. **Common Loon** *Gavia immer*
4 Goose Island 2.4, 2 Aransas Bay 2.4, 2 Anahuac 16.4.
2. **Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*
3. **Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus*
3 Sabal Palms 4.4.
4. **Eared Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*
2 Warren Lake, Katy 1.4, 5 Aransas Bay 2.4, 10 L Atascosa 3.4, 8 Anahuac 16.4.
5. **American White Pelican** *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

- 4 Kaufer-Hubert 2.4, 100 Port Bolivar 12.4 & Bolivar Flats 14.4.
6. **Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*
 7. **Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus*
1 subad Bolivar Flats 12.4.
 8. **Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga*
 9. **Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*
 10. **Neotropical Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*
Common.
 11. **American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus*
3 Attwater 12.4.
 12. **Least Bittern** *Ixobrychus exilis*
8 South Padre Island 8.4, 1 Anahuac 14.4.
 13. **Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*
 14. **Great Egret** *Ardea alba*
 15. **Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*
 16. **Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens*
 17. **Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*
 18. **Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor*
 19. **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*
 20. **Green Heron** *Butorides virescens*
 21. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*
 22. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea*
 23. **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*
1 Anahuac 16.4.
 24. **White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi*
 25. **White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus*
 26. **Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja*
 27. **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*
1 Anahuac 14-16.4.
 28. **Snow Goose** *Chen caerulescens*
1 L Atascosa 3.4, 3 (2 white phase and 1 blue phase) Anahuac 14-16.4.
 29. **Fulvous Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna bicolor*
 30. **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis*
 31. **Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata*
2-3 Salineño 9.4.
 32. **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*
 33. **Mottled Duck** *Anas fulvigula*
 34. **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*
 35. **Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*
1 pair SE Kingsville 2.4.
 36. **American Wigeon** *Anas americana*
 37. **Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*
 38. **Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors*
 39. **Cinnamon Teal** *Anas cyanoptera*
1 m Katy farmlands 1.4, 1 m Salineño 9.4, 1 pair Attwater 12.4.
 40. **Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis*
 41. **Redhead** *Aythya americana*
4 m Copano Bay 2.4, 1 m L Atascosa 3.4, 2 m South Padre Island 8.4.
 42. **Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*
1 m Aransas Bay 2.4, 5 Kaufer-Hubert 2.4, 100 L Atascosa 3.4, 1 m Anahuac 14.4, 1 m Beach 124/87 14.4.
 43. **Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*
1 f Pipit's corner, S Kingsville 2.4.
 44. **American Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana*
1 Beach 124/87 14.4.
 45. **Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*
3 f Aransas Bay 2.4.
 46. **Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola*
2 f Aransas Bay 2.4.
 47. **Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

48. **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*
Highest count: 150 Aransas Bay 2.4.
49. **Masked Duck** *Nomonyx dominicus*
1 f Pipit's corner, S Kingsville 2.4.
50. **Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*
51. **Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*
52. **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
53. **White-tailed Kite** *Elanus leucurus*
Seen in small numbers.



Whooping Crane, Aransas Bay, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

54. **Swallow-tailed Kite** *Elanoides forficatus*
1 South Padre Island 8.4, 1 Road to Falcon 9.4, 1 East Bay Bayou 14.4.
55. **Mississippi Kite** *Ictinia mississippiensis*
100 Santa Ana 4.4, 1 Bentsen 6.4.
56. **Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*
Seen almost daily.
57. **Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*
Seen almost daily.
58. **Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*
Seen almost daily.
59. **Harris's Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*
Seen daily in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
60. **Red-shouldered Hawk** *Buteo lineatus*
1 Moore's Pond 2.4, 2 Lost Maples 11.4.
61. **Gray Hawk** *Asturina nitida*
1 Bentsen 6.4.
62. **Broad-winged Hawk** *Buteo platypterus*
Seen daily, highest counts around 20,000 at Bentsen 6.4.
63. **Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*
Seen in small numbers, especially at Neal's Lodge.
64. **White-tailed Hawk** *Buteo albicaudatus*
Seen in small numbers.
65. **Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni*
Highest count: 30 Santa Ana 4.4, 25 Bentsen 6.4.
66. **Bald Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
1 ad Katy farmlands 1.4.

67. **Crested Caracara** *Caracara cheriway*
68. **Apomado Falcon** *Falco femoralis*
1 between Brownsville and Sabal Palms 4.4.
69. **American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*
70. **Merlin** *Falco columbarius*
71. **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*
Seen at c. 10 occasions.
72. **Plain Chachalaca** *Ortalis vetula*
Seen in Lower Rio Grande Valley.
73. **Wild Turkey** *Meleagris gallopavo*
1 m e.r. Concan 9.4, 1 f e.r. Kerr 11.4.
74. **Greater Prairie-Chicken** *Tympanuchus cupido*
1 m Attwater 15.4.
75. **Northern Bobwhite** *Colinus virginianus*
76. **Sora** *Porzana Carolina*
1 SPI 3.4, 4 SPI 7.4, 1 Anahuac 15.4.
77. **Yellow Rail** *Coturnicops noveboracensis*
2 Anahuac 15.4.
78. **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*
79. **Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica*
1 Anahuac 14.4.
80. **American Coot** *Fulica americana*
81. **Whooping Crane** *Grus americana*
19 Aransas Bay 2.4.
82. **Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*
83. **American Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*
Seen at barren fields along the Texas coast.
84. **Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*
85. **Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus*
86. **Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus*
3 Bolivar Flats 12.4.
87. **Snowy Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*
4 Bolivar Flats 12 & 14.4
88. **Wilson's Plover** *Charadrius wilsonia*



Killdeer, Rockport, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

89. **American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus*
90. **Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus*
91. **American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*
Highest count: at least 10000 Bolivar Flats 12.4.
92. **Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*
93. **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*
94. **Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria*
1 Laguna Madre, SPI 8.4, 1 Isla Blanca, SPI 8.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 1 Anahuac 14.4.
95. **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia*
96. **Willet** *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*
97. **Marbled Godwit** *Limosa fedoa*
Highest count: 50 Bolivar Flats 14.4.
98. **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*
99. **Long-billed Curlew** *Numenius americanus*
100. **Upland Sandpiper** *Bartramia longicauda*
101. **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis*
2 SPI 8.4, 35 Attwater 11.4.
102. **Ruddy Turnstone** *Areneria interpres*
103. **Sanderling** *Calidris alba*
104. **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus*
4 Bolivar Flats 14.4.
105. **Dunlin** *Calidris alpine*
106. **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*
Highest count: 100 Katy Farmlands 12.4.
107. **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*
3 Anahuac 16.4.
108. **Baird's Sandpiper** *Calidris bairdii*
15 SPI 8.4, 4 Beach 124/87 14.4.
109. **Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*
110. **Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri*
111. **Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*
112. **Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus*
30 Brownsville landfill 5.4.
113. **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*
114. **Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus*
115. **Wilson's Snipe** *Gallinago delicata*
116. **Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*
1 Aransas Bay 2.4, 3 Katy farmlands 12.4.
117. **Bonaparte's Gull** *Larus philadelphia*
1 2y Bolivar Flats 12.4, 2 ad + 1 2y Rollover Pass 12.4, 4 2y Rollover Pass 14.4.
118. **Laughing Gull** *Larus atricilla*
119. **Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan*
1 SPI 3.4, 6 Brownsville Landfill 4-5.4, 60 SPI 8.4, 10 along US10 11.4, 1 Bolivar Flats 12.4, 1 Beach 124/87 14.4.
120. **Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*
121. **American Herring Gull** *Larus smithsonianus*
122. **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*
40 SPI 8.4.
123. **Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*
124. **Gull-billed Tern** *Sterna nilotica*
125. **Royal Tern** *Sterna maxima*
126. **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*
127. **Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*
15 SPI 8.4.
128. **Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri*
129. **Least Tern** *Sterna antillarum*
130. **Black Skimmer** *Rynchops niger*
131. **Rock Dove** *Columba livia* (domest.)
132. **Red-billed Pigeon** *Columba flavirostris*
35 in one flock! e.r. San Ygnacio 9.4.

- 133. **White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica*
- 134. **Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*
- 135. **Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*
- 136. **Common Ground-Dove** *Columbina passerina*
- 137. **Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*
- 138. **White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi*
Seen in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
- 139. **Red-crowned Parrot** *Amazona viridigenalis*
7 Brownsville 5.4.
- 140. **Green Parakeet** *Aratinga holochlora*
10 Brownsville 5.4.
- 141. **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** *Coccyzus americanus*
8 SPI 8.4, many seen around High Island.
- 142. **Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*
1 Salineño dump road 6 & 9.4.
- 143. **Barn Owl** *Tyto alba*
1 seen Anahuac 15.4.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Rockport, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

- 144. **Eastern Screech-Owl** *Otus asio*
2 seen L Atascosa 3.4, 3 heard Bentsen 5.4.
- 145. **Great Horned Owl** *Bubo virginianus*
1 Katy farmlands 1.4, 1 juv Santa Ana 4.4, 1 Bat cave 10.4, 1 High Island 12.4.
- 146. **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium brasilianum*
1-2 heard Bentsen 5.4.
- 147. **Elf Owl** *Micrathene whitneyi*
2-3 heard Bentsen 5.4.
- 148. **Lesser Nighthawk** *Chordeiles acutipennis*
3 Santa Ana 4.4, 1 Bat cave 10.4.
- 149. **Common Nighthawk** *Chordeiles minor*
3 Santa Ana 4.4, 2 Bentsen 5.4, 1 Boy Scout's Wood 13.4, 1 Eugene Smith 13.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4.
- 150. **Chuck-will's-widow** *Caprimulgus carolinensis*
1 heard Bentsen 5.4.
- 151. **Common Pauraque** *Nyctidromus albigollis*
2 seen + 5 heard Bentsen 5.4.
- 152. **Common Poorwill** *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*
2 heard Bat cave 10.4.

153. **Chimney Swift** *Chaetura pelagica*
154. **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** *Archilochus colubris*
155. **Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri*
Easy at feeders around Neal's Lodge.
156. **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** *Amazilia yucatanensis*
1 L Atascosa 3.4, 1 Santa Ana 5.4.
157. **Belted Kingfisher** *Ceryle alcyon*
158. **Ringed Kingfisher** *Ceryle torquata*
1 e.r. Santa Ana 4.4, 2 Bentsen 6.4, 1 Salineño 6.4, 1 Salineño 9.4.
159. **Green Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle americana*
1 Sabal Palms 4.4, 1 Bentsen (Rio Grande) 5.4, 1 Chapeño 6.4, 1 Salineño 9.4.
160. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus varius*
A few migrants were seen at SPI and High Island.
161. **Red-headed Woodpecker** *Melanerpes erythrocephalus*
2 White Memorial Park 16.4.
162. **Red-bellied Woodpecker** *Melanerpes carolinus*
163. **Golden-fronted Woodpecker** *Melanerpes aurifrons*
164. **Downy Woodpecker** *Picoides pubescens*
165. **Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Picoides scalaris*
166. **Pileated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus pileatus*
2 White Memorial Park 16.4.
167. **Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet** *Camptostoma imberbe*
1 seen + 1 heard Bentsen 6.4.
168. **Eastern Wood-Pewee** *Contopus virens*
1 Eugene Smith 13.4.
169. **Acadian Flycatcher** *Empidonax virescens*
1 Sabine Woods 13.4.
170. **Eastern Phoebe** *Sayornis phoebe*
3 Neal's Lodge 10.4, 2 Lost Maples 11.4.
171. **Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*
1 Roma River Overlook 6.4, 1 Neal's Lodge 10.4, 1 Lost Maples 11.4.
172. **Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*
1 Road to Falcon 9.4.
173. **Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*
1 male Road to Falcon 9.4, 10 Neal's Lodge 9-10.4.
174. **Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens*
1 Salineño dump road 6.4, 1 SPI 8.4, 2 Neal's Lodge 10.4, 1 Kerr 11.4, 4 Lost Maples 11.4.
175. **Brown-crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tyrannulus*
1 Bentsen 6.4, 1 Salineño 6 & 9.4.
176. **Western Kingbird** *Tyrannus verticalis*
1 e.r. Bentsen 5.4, 1 Skillern Tract 14.4, 1 Katy Farmlands 15.4.
177. **Eastern Kingbird** *Tyrannus tyrannus*
178. **Couch's Kingbird** *Tyrannus couchii*
179. **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** *Tyrannus forficatus*
180. **Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus*
Seen in low numbers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
181. **Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*
182. **Warbling Vireo** *Vireo gilvus*
3 SPI 7.4, 1 SPI 8.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 1 The Willows 15.4.
183. **White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus*
Highest count: 20 SPI 8.4.
184. **Bell's Vireo** *Vireo bellii*
2 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
185. **Black-capped Vireo** *Vireo atricapillus*
2 Kerr 11.4.
186. **Red-eyed Vireo** *Vireo olivaceus*
Highest count: 15 SPI 8.4.
187. **Yellow-throated Vireo** *Vireo flavifrons*
5 SPI 7.4, 1 SPI 8.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 1 Boy Scout 14.4.
188. **Blue-headed Vireo** *Vireo solitarius*

- 1 Sabal Palms 4.4, 1 Bentsen 6.4, 2 Sabine Woods 13.4.
189. **Blue Jay** *Cyanocitta cristata*
190. **Green Jay** *Cyanocorax yncas*
Seen in few numbers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
191. **Western Scrub-Jay** *Aphelocoma californica*
2 e.r. Lost Maples 11.4, 1 Lost Maples 11.4.
192. **American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
193. **Fish Crow** *Corvus ossifragus*
3 Sabine Pass 14.4.
194. **Tamaulipas Crow** *Corvus imparatus*
2 Brownsville airport 5.4.
195. **Common Raven** *Corvus corax*
Seen at Neal's Lodge.
196. **Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus*
197. **Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*
2 Aransas Bay 2.4, 3 Bayside Drive, L Atascosa 3.4, 3 Bolivar Flats 12.4.
198. **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*
Highest count: c.1000 SPI 8.4.
199. **Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*
1 in a flock of 1000 Purple Martins on SPI 8.4, 5 Salineño 9.4, 1 Neal's Lodge 9.4.
200. **Cave Swallow** *Petrochelidon fulva*



Vermilion Flycatcher, Neal's Lodge, Concan, April 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

201. **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
202. **Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia*
203. **Tree Swallow** *Techycineta bicolor*
204. **Purple Martin** *Progne subis*
Highest count: c.1500 SPI 8.4.
205. **Carolina Chickadee** *Poecile carolinensis*
206. **Brown Creeper** *Certhia americana*
1 Willow Pond 13-14.4.
207. **Tufted Titmouse** *Baeolophus bicolor*
5 White MP 16.4.
208. **Black-crested Titmouse** *Baeolophus atricristatus*
209. **Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*
2 Bayside Drive, Laguna Atascosa 3.4, 1 Bentsen 6.4, 1 Salineño dump road 6.4, 3 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
210. **Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*

- 3 Road to Falcon 9.4, 2 Bat cave 10.4.
211. **Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*
1 Goose Island 2.4, 1 heard Salineño 9.4, 3 Attwater 12.4.
212. **Sedge Wren** *Cistothorus platensis*
1 Old Port Isabel Rd 3.4, 2 Anahuac 15.4, 2 Anahuac 16.4.
213. **Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus*
2 Bat cave 10.4.
214. **Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus*
1 Bat cave 10.4, 1 Kerr 11.4, 1 Lost Maples 11.4.
215. **Carolina Wren** *Thryothorus ludovicianus*
216. **Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*
217. **House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*
218. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*
219. **Black-tailed Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila melanura*
1 Road to Falcon 9.4.
220. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila caerulea*
221. **Swainson's Thrush** *Catharus ustulatus*
1 SPI 7.4, 10 SPI 8.4, 1 Smith Oaks 12-14.4, 2 Boy Scout 13.4, 1 Sabine Woods 13.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4.
222. **Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*
1 Neal's lodge 10.4, 1 Smith Oaks 12.4.
223. **Wood Thrush** *Hylocichla mustelina*
1 SPI 7.4, 3 SPI 8.4, 2 Smith Oaks 12.4, 2 Boy Scout 13.4, 3 Sabine Woods 13.4, 1 Eugene Smith 13.4, 2 Boy Scout 14.4, 1 Smith Oaks 15.4.
224. **Clay-colored Robin** *Turdus grayi*
1 heard Santa Ana 4.4.
225. **Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*
2 SPI 7-8.4, seen at High Island.
226. **Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*
227. **Brown Thrasher** *Toxostoma rufum*
1 Katy Farmlands 1.4, 1 SPI 7-8.4, a few around High Island.
228. **Long-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma longirostre*
Seen in few numbers in Lower Rio Grande Valley.
229. **Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre*
5 Salineño dump road 6.4.
230. **American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*
1 Isla Blanca, SPI 8.4.
231. **Sprague's Pipit** *Anthus spragueii*
1 Attwater 15.4.
232. **Cedar Waxwing** *Bombicilla cedrorum*
25 Katy Farmlands 1.4, commonly seen in Lower Rio Grande Valley with many flocks, highest count: 250 Road to Falcon 9.4.
233. **European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*
234. **Tennessee Warbler** *Vermivora peregrine*
Highest count: 35 SPI 8.4.
235. **Nashville Warbler** *Vermivora ruficapilla*
Seen in few numbers in Lower Rio Grande Valley.
236. **Orange-crowned Warbler** *Vermivora celata*
Seen in few numbers in Lower Rio Grande Valley.
237. **Blue-winged Warbler** *Vermivora pinus*
5 SPI 7.4, 10 SPI 8.4, 1 Smith Oaks 12-14.4, 1 Sabine Woods 13-14.4, 1 Boy Scout 13.4, 1 White Memorial Park 16.4.
238. **Northern Parula** *Parula americana*
239. **Yellow Warbler** *Dendroica petechia*
1 m Willow Pond 14.4, 1 m Sabine Woods 14.4, 1 f The Willows, Anahuac 14.4, 1 m The Willows 16.4.
240. **Chestnut-sided Warbler** *Dendroica pensylvanica*
1 Smith Oaks 13.4.
241. **Blackburnian Warbler** *Dendroica fusca*
1 Boy Scout's Woods 13.4, 1 Willow Pond 13.4, 1 Smith Oaks 14.4, 1 Smith Oaks 15.4.
242. **Cerulean Warbler** *Dendroica cerulea*
2 Smith Oaks 13.4.

243. **Black-throated Green Warbler** *Dendroica virens*
Highest count: 7 Boy Scout 14.4.
244. **Golden-cheeked Warbler** *Dendroica chrysoparia*
3 Neal's lodge 10.4, 5 Lost Maples 11.4.
245. **Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Dendroica coronata*
Daily maximum 10.
Audobon's Warbler: 5 Road to Falcon 9.4
246. **Palm Warbler** *Dendroica palmarum*
1 Port Bay Club Rd, Rockport 2.4, 1 male The Willows, Anahuac 16.4.
247. **Prairie Warbler** *Dendroica discolor*
1 Willow Pond 14.4.
248. **Yellow-throated Warbler** *Dendroica dominica*
1 SPI 7.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 2 Sabine Woods 14.4.
249. **Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia*
250. **American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla*
1 m SPI 7.4, 2 m Smith Oaks 12.4, 1 f Willow Pond 13.4, 1 m Sabine Woods 13.4, 1 m Boy Scout 13.4.
251. **Prothonotary Warbler** *Protonotaria citrea*
6 SPI 7.4, 1 Willow Pond 13 & 14.4, 1 Sabine Woods 14.4.
252. **Worm-eating Warbler** *Helmitheros vermivora*
4 SPI 7.4, 3 SPI 8.4, 2 Smith Oaks 12.4, 1 Boy Scout 13.4, 1 Sabine Woods 13.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 1 Eugene Smith 15.4, 1 Smith Oaks 15.4.
253. **Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*
254. **Kentucky Warbler** *Oporornis formosus*
4 SPI 7.4, 3 SPI 8.4, 5 Smith Oaks 12.4, 1 Boy Scout 13.4, 1 Sabine Woods 13.4 & 1 14.4.
255. **Northern Waterthrush** *Seiurus noveboracensis*
1 SPI 7.4, 2 SPI 8.4, 1 Willow Pond 13.4, 1 Eugene Smith 15.4.
256. **Louisiana Waterthrush** *Seiurus motacilla*
1 SPI 7.4, 3 SPI 8.4.
257. **Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapillus*
3 SPI 7.4, 2 SPI 8.4, 2 Smith Oaks 12.4, 1 Willow Pond 13.4, 1 Eugene Smith 13.4, 2 Boy Scout 13.4, 1 Sabine Woods 13.4, 2 Boy Scout 14.4, 1 Eugene Smith 15.4, 2 Smith Oaks 15.4.
258. **Swainson's Warbler** *Limnethlypis swainsonii*
1 Smith Oaks 12.4.
259. **Hooded Warbler** *Wilsonia citrine*
Highest count: 25 SPI 8.4.
260. **Wilson's Warbler** *Wilsonia pusilla*
1 Sabal Palms 4.4, 1 SPI 7.4, 2 SPI 8.4.
261. **Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens*
2 Neal's lodge 9-10.4, 1 Boy Scout's Woods 13.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 1 Sabine Woods 14.4
262. **Scarlet Tanager** *Piranga olivacea*
1 Santa Ana 5.4, 2 SPI 7.4, 2 SPI 8.4, 2 Smith Oaks 12.4, 5 13.4, 1 Smith Oaks 15.4.
263. **Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra*
Highest count: 50 SPI 8.4.
264. **Dickcissel** *Spiza americana*
2 Anahuac 15.4.
265. **Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea*
2 SPI 7.4, 10 SPI 8.4, 1 Willow Pond 13-14.4, 1 Sabine Woods 14.4.
266. **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus*
1 Sabine Woods 13-14.4, 1 Willow Pond 13.4, 1 Smith Oaks 14-15.4, 2 Boy Scout 14.4.
267. **Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea*
Commonly seen. Highest counts were: around 250 SPI 8.4.
268. **Painted Bunting** *Passerina ciris*
1 m SPI 8.4, 1 m Sabine Woods 14.4.
269. **Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor*
1 m Laguna Madre, SPI 8.4, 1 m Isla Blanca, SPI 8.4.
270. **Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*
271. **Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus*
2 Salineño dump road 6.4, 2 Road to Falcon 9.4.
272. **Eastern Towhee** *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*
1 f Sabine Woods 13.4.

273. **Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*
2 Neal's Lodge 10.4
274. **Canyon Towhee** *Pipilo fuscus*
2 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
275. **Olive Sparrow** *Arremonops rufivirgatus*
Common in Lower Rio Grande Valley.
276. **White-collared Seedeater** *Sporophila torqueola*
1 2y-m San Ygnacio 9.4.
277. **Lark Bunting** *Calamospiza melanocorys*
20 Road to Falcon 9.4.
278. **Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata*
1 Road to Falcon 9.4, 2 Neal's lodge 10.4, 3 Bat cave 10.4.
279. **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** *Aimophila ruficeps*
1 Neal's lodge 10.4, 1 Lost Maples 11.4.
280. **Cassin's Sparrow** *Aimophila cassinii*
1 Bayside Dr, L Atascosa 3.4, 10 Old Port Isabel Rd 3.4.
281. **Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina*
30 SPI 8.4, 50 Road to Falcon 9.4, 3 San Ygnacio 9.4, 2 Neal's Lodge 9.4, 60 Neal's Lodge 10.4, 1 Willow Pond 14.4, 1 Sabine Woods 14.4, 1 Attwater 15.4.
282. **Clay-colored Sparrow** *Spizella pallida*
20 Salineño dump road 6.4, 200 SPI 8.4, 15 Road to Falcon 9.4, 5 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
283. **Brewer's Sparrow** *Spizella breweri*
1 Road to Falcon 9.4.
284. **Field Sparrow** *Spizella pusilla*
7 Neal's Lodge 10.4.



Varied Bunting, South Padre Island, April 8th 2007. Copyright: Måns Grundsten

285. **Vesper Sparrow** *Poocetes gramineus*
10 SPI 8.4, 20 Road to Falcon 9.4, 1 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
286. **Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus*
10 SE Kingsville 2.4, 1 Laguna Atascosa 3.4, 1 Old Port Isabel Road 3.4, 2 SPI 7.4, 500 SPI 8.4, 15 Road to Falcon 9.4, 5 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
287. **Grashopper Sparrow** *Ammodramus savannarum*
1 SPI 7.4, 3 SPI 8.4, 2-3 Road to Falcon 9.4, 2 Attwater 12.4, 1 Attwater 15.4.
288. **Seaside Sparrow** *Ammodramus maritimus*
1 Goose Island 2.4, 8 Aransas Bay 2.4, 2 Anahuac 16.4.
289. **Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*

290. **Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*
291. **Swamp Sparrow** *Melospiza Georgiana*
3 Willow Pond 13-14.4, 10 Anahuac 15.4.
292. **White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*
5 Katy Farmlands 1.4, 5 Salineño dump road 6.4, 6 Pecan Grove, NL 10.4, 10 Attwater 11-12.4.
293. **White-throated Sparrow** *Zonotrichia albicollis*
6 Boy Scout 13-15.4, 5 Sabine Woods 13-14.4.
294. **Baltimore Oriole** *Icterus galbula*
13 SPI 8.4, 2 Smith Oaks 12.4, 1 Sabine Woods 13.4, 1 Smith Oaks 13.4, 1 Boy Scout 13.4, 1 Smith Oaks 14-15.4,
295. **Bullock's Oriole** *Icterus bullockii*
1 SPI 8.4, 1 Salineño 9.4, 2 Road to Falcon 9.4.
296. **Orchard Oriole** *Icterus spurius*
Highest count was 150 at SPI 8.4.
297. **Hooded Oriole** *Icterus cucullatus*
1 Utah St, Brownsville 4.4, 1 e.r. Concan 9.4, 2 Neal's Lodge 9-10.4.
298. **Altamira Oriole** *Icterus gularis*
Seen in few numbers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
299. **Audobon's Oriole** *Icterus graduacauda*
1 m Salineño 9.4.
300. **Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*
201. **Western Meadowlark** *Sturnella neglecta*
3 SPI 7.4, 2 SPI 8.4.
302. **Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*
303. **Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*
1 Road to Falcon 9.4.
304. **Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*
10 Katy farmlands 1.4.
305. **Common Grackle** *Quiscalus quiscula*
306. **Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*
307. **Boat-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus major*
Seen between Sabine Woods and Willow Pond.
308. **Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*
309. **Bronzed Cowbird** *Molothrus aeneus*
310. **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*
311. **American Goldfinch** *Carduelis tristis*
10 Neal's Lodge 10.4.
312. **Lesser Goldfinch** *Carduelis psaltria*
313. **House Finch** *Carpodacus mexicanus*
15 Neal's Lodge 9-10.4.

Comments on some species NOT seen

Magnificent Frigatebird

Sometimes seen at Bolivar peninsula.

Wood Duck

Sometimes seen around WG Jones and at Taylor's Bayou.

Canvasback

Common wintering species. But this late in spring most birds have left.

Hook-billed Kite

Very rarely seen at Santa Ana, Bentsen and Salineño.

Zone-tailed Hawk

Possible at Neal's Lodge, Concan and at Lost Maples.

Scaled Quail

Possible around Salineño dump road and Falcon State Park.

Black Rail

Some years seen at Anahuac Rail Walk.

Clapper Rail

Should be seen at Anahuac or SPI.

King Rail

Sometimes seen at Anahuac.

Virginia Rail

Difficult species, sometimes seen at Anahuac and SPI.

Hudsonian Godwit

We missed one by one minute at Anahuac on the 14th, before all waders took off when a male Northern Harrier flew by.

Black-billed Cuckoo

One bird was seen at Boy Scout's Wood at 12th.

Groove-billed Ani

Difficult bird to find. Best place seemed to be Sabal Palms, although there were very few reports. It should be easier to find later in the season, and could probably turn up anywhere.

Barred Owl

Frequently seen at Taylor's Bayou and Big Thicket. We never tried for the species.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Easy at WG Jones, N of Houston, we had already seen this species in Florida.

Great Crested Flycatcher

Easy at WG Jones, N of Houston, should also occur as a migrant.

Tropical Kingbird

There are sites known in Brownsville, very hard to separate from Couch's Kingbird. We didn't make any effort trying to see one.

Bushtit

Should be possible in Lost Maples.

Brown-headed Nuthatch

Can be found in WG Jones, N of Houston.

Veery

Regularly seen migrant, especially around High Island. There was one bird seen in Boy Scout's Wood on 14th.

Gray-cheeked Thrush

Rarely seen migrant around High Island and SPI.

Philadelphia Vireo

Rarely seen migrant, mainly around High Island, Sabine Woods, better later in the season.

Golden-winged Warbler

Increasingly difficult species to see, according to a man we met in Sabine Woods. He said that the Blue-winged Warbler frequently interbreed with and steal habitat from the Golden-winged and that the latter species is actually decreasing in population size. Don't know if it's true though. We missed one by an inch at SPI.

Bay-breasted Warbler

Easier later in the season.

Blackpoll Warbler

Easier later in the season.

Tropical Parula

This year was apparently a bad year for the species in the Rio Grande Valley. Around King Ranch they still can be found and also at Santa Ana and Bentsen during the winter months, but at this time of year they're more difficult to find. Previous reports show that at least one or two Tropical Parulas normally occur at Santa Ana or Bentsen even late in spring.

Brown Jay

The only place where they are seen is at Chapeño. Earlier in winter they can also be found at some feeders in Salineño. Very hard to get.

Bachman's Sparrow

Could be found in Big Thicket, we had seen this species in Florida.

Botteri's Sparrow

Apparantly we were too early in the season for this breeding resident. We tried both the Old Port Isabel Road and the site SE of Brownsville mentioned in the ABA guide.

Le Conte's Sparrow

During the Anahuac Rail Walk a few sparrows were flushed of which a few were claimed as Le Conte's Sparrows. Sometimes seen at Bolivar Flats as well.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Should be possible on Bolivar Flats.

Scott's Oriole

Frequently seen at Lost Maples.

This report was written by Måns Grundsten: m.grundsten@spray.se