

Upper Texas Coast Sub-regional Report, Spring 2019

Covering: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, Orange and Waller

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The Weather:

Rainfall was below average with 11.02 inches (28.0 cm) of rain falling during the period at Houston's Intercontinental Airport. That total was 0.79 inches (2.0 cm) below average. Temperatures averaged 0.4 degrees F (0.2 C) above average.

The Birds:

American Wigeon: A count of 17 American Wigeon at JJ Mayes Wildlife Trace, *Chambers* 4 May was late for so many (Carl Poldrack).

Northern Pintail: A late pair of Northern Pintails were at Pearland Nature Park, *Brazoria* on 12 May (Duane Och).

Ring-necked Duck: Late Ring-necked Ducks were at Cattail Marsh in Beaumont, *Jefferson* 30 Apr and CR2321 in Liberty, *Liberty* (ph. Collette & Paul Micallef) 9-24 May.

Lesser Scaup: A count of 12 Lesser Scaup at Archbishop Fiorenza Park, *Harris* 4 May was late for so many (ph. Jerry Chen).

Black Scoter: The last report of the winter-invasion Black Scoters were 23 seen at Galveston Island SP, *Galveston* 7 May (Susan Keefer).

Least Grebe: A Least Grebe at Lakeside Park in The Woodlands 22 Mar was perhaps the second for *Montgomery* (Gene Prejean).

Horned Grebe: A late Horned Grebe was at Bolivar Flats, *Galveston* 4 May (Ian Davies, Cullen Hanks, Tim Lenz, Michael Pease, Kelly Schaeffer).

White-tipped Dove: A White-tipped Dove was reported at San Bernard NWR, *Brazoria* 19 Mar-4 May where as many as two birds were first found last fall (Wendy McCrady).

Groove-billed Ani – Two Groove-billed Anis seen at Anahuac NWR, *Chambers* 17 Mar-19 Apr were rare for spring (ph. Letha Slagle, Alan Gutsell).

Lesser Nighthawk: One or more Lesser Nighthawks were seen 6-13 Apr at Quintana NBS, *Brazoria* (ph. Wendy McCrady, mobs.) and 10-14 Apr at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* (ph. Gary Byerly, ph. Jeff Corcoran).

Common Nighthawk: An early Common Nighthawk was photographed 10 Apr at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* (ph. Gary Byerly, ph. Benjamin Byerly). Very few records earlier than this have been physically documented.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: A male Black-chinned Hummingbird at the Champions Lake access of the Trinity NWR, *Liberty* 19 Apr was late and rare so far east (Bill Sain).

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: The overwintering female Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Nederland, *Jefferson* was last seen 28 Mar (John Whittle).

Broad-billed Hummingbird: A female Broad-billed Hummingbird that spent 24 Feb-6 Mar at Willis, *Montgomery* (Adriel Resh) was very rare for East Texas.

Sora: An estimate of 100 Sora from Cattail Marsh in Beaumont, *Jefferson* 18 Apr was a notable total (Tony Frank, Mark Scheuerman, John O'Brien).

Whooping Crane: A group of 2 to 4 Whooping Cranes seen by hundreds of birders 31 Mar tp in NE *Chambers* were likely part of the re-introduced non-migratory LA flock that has been seen at times not far away in western *Jefferson* (David Hanson, ph. M. Kwan, mobs.).

Marbled Godwit: A flock of 6 Marbled Godwits along FM529 in *Waller* 9 Apr was unusual for the inland location (Jean Martin).

Black Turnstone: Texas first Black Turnstone was photographed at Sea Rim SP, *Jefferson* 3 May (ph. Joanna Morelli). Many searched the local beaches the next day, but the bird was not to be found.

American Woodcock: An American Woodcock flushed from the Katy Prairie, *Waller* 5 May was late (Bob Honig). Diagnostic wing whistling heard after it flushed.

Wilson's Snipe: A count of 8 Wilson's Snipe at Brazoria NWR, *Brazoria* 29 Apr was late for so many (Larry Parmeter).

Pomarine Jaeger: Pomarine Jaegers were seen at McFaddin NWR, *Jefferson* 24 Mar (Dominic Le Croisette, Thomas Hellwig) and East Beach, *Galveston* 24 May tp (ph. Brandon Nidiffer, ph. Chuck Davis, et al.).

Parasitic Jaeger: A Parasitic Jaeger seen pirating other birds at McFaddin NWR, *Jefferson* 24 Mar (Dominic Le Croisette, Thomas Hellwig).

Franklin's Gull: An impressive 1000 Franklin's Gulls were estimated along the beaches at Sea Rim SP, *Jefferson* 14 Apr (Chris Charlesworth).

Iceland Gull: Iceland Gull reports included an apparent first cycle 31 Mar at Quintana, *Brazoria* (Fred Collins) and a second cycle 14 Apr at Port Bolivar, *Galveston* (ph. Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis).

Glaucous Gull: A first cycle Glaucous Gull was photographed at Sea Rim SP, *Jefferson* 15 Apr (ph. Mark & Joanie Hubinger).

Sooty Tern: Two Sooty Terns were seen checking out a colonial water bird colony in West Galveston Island, *Galveston* 24 May (Susan Heath).

Common Tern: A massive concentration of an estimated 5000 Common Terns were at Bolivar Flats, *Galveston* 4 May were impressive but likely not unprecedented (Ian Davies, Tim Lenz, Cullen Hanks, Kelly Schaeffer).

Wood Stork: There were several April records of Wood Stork this spring including one at Riverpark Nature Trails, *Fort Bend* 5 Apr (ph. Mark Scheuerman), 2 seen at Sylvan Beach, *Harris* 19 Apr (ph. Jackie Farrell, Jane Murtinshaw), and 4 seen near High Island, *Galveston* 20 Apr (Greg Chapman).

Brown Booby: Brown Boobies continue to be seen with regularity along the coast with one seen flying by the seawall in Galveston, *Galveston* 12 Apr (Cin-Ty Lee), as many as 4 seen flying by Galveston Island SP, *Galveston* 17-18 Apr (Kyle O'Haver), and another at the Texas City Dike, *Galveston* 3 May (ph. Joey Henderson, Brian Henderson, Mike Weber, William Crane).

Northern Gannet: A Northern Gannet was spotted flying over the Gulf near High Island, *Galveston* 4 May (William Vanderpoel).

American Bittern: The latest American Bittern was at San Bernard NWR, *Brazoria* 10-12 May (ph. Todd McGrath, Wendy McCrady).

Least Bittern: Four Least Bitterns heard at Shoveler Pond at Anahuac NWR, *Chambers* 28 Mar was early for multiple birds (Timothy Freiday).

Burrowing Owl: One photographed on a culvert along FM 1663 east Hamkamer, *Chambers* 20 Apr was the 2nd latest ever for the U.T.C. (ph. Jacob Drucker, Eric Bruhnke, et al.).

Ringed Kingfisher: An out-of-range Ringed Kingfisher was photographed flying over White Lake at Cullinan Park in Sugar Land, *Fort Bend* 28 Apr (ph. Ron Weeks). This is the second straight year this species has been found in the county.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: A very later Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at San Bernard NWR, *Brazoria* 3 May (Wendy McCrady).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: A very early Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was photographed at Corp Woods in Galveston, *Galveston* 20 Apr (ph. Nancy Leonard).

Willow Flycatcher: An early Willow Flycatcher was seen and heard calling at Boy Scout Woods at High Island, *Galveston* 23 Apr (Ray Werschler).

Black Phoebe: A Black Phoebe seen 21 Apr at Anahuac NWR, *Chambers* 21 Apr was definitely out-of-range and a first for *Chambers* (Tom & Connie Unsicker).

Eastern Phoebe: A pair of Eastern Phoebes were seen and heard in Katy, *Fort Bend* 21-22 May implying a rare breeding occurrence for the U.T.C. (ph. Gary Yoder).

Say's Phoebe: A Say's Phoebe on White's Ranch Road, *Chambers* 15 Apr was late (Chris Charlesworth).

Vermilion Flycatcher: Vermilion Flycatchers lingered later than usual this spring with singles seen on Galveston Island, *Galveston* at Pirate's Beach 18 Apr (Dennis Cooke), East Beach 19 Apr (ph. Chip Clouse, Don Hall, Cynthia Kristensen), 8 Mile Road 27 Apr (Tommy Duvall), and Settegast Road 5 May (Greg Hall).

Couch's Kingbird: A pair of Couch's Kingbirds built a nest in Katy, *Fort Bend* 1 May tp (Sergey Buben). There have been U.T.C. nests discovered before, but none to my knowledge has been successful other than the mixed Couch's x Eastern pair at Smith Point, *Chambers*.

Eastern Kingbird: An Eastern Kingbird at Lafitte's Cove, *Galveston* 13 Mar was early (ph. Greg Hall, Dennis Cooke).

Gray Kingbird: A Gray Kingbird found at Sea Rim SP, *Jefferson* 5 May was just the 15th for TX (Gerald Duhon, ph. Gary Binderim, ph. Steve Mayes, et al.).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: Following the spectacular fall and winter invasion, Fork-tailed Flycatchers were spotted along on White's Ranch Road near the Skillern Unit of Anahuac NWR, *Chambers* 12-13 Apr (ph. Chris Charlesworth, ph. Joanie & Mark Hubinger, et al.) at the main unit of Anahuac NWR (about 7 miles west of the aforementioned location), *Chambers* 17 Apr (Don Glasco) and at Smith Oaks at High Island, *Galveston* 13-15 Apr (Sam Saunders, ph. John Smelser, et al.). The timing of these sightings indicates at least two and perhaps three individuals were involved.

Bell's Vireo: Bell's Vireo included one that overwintered at Robert C. Stuart Park, *Harris* through 23 Mar (ph. James Rieman, Nina Rach, Tony Frank) and another at the Rice University campus, *Harris* 9 Apr (Cin-Ty Lee, Stuart Nelson).

Yellow-throated Vireo: A Yellow-throated Vireo at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 5 Apr was early (John Haynes).

Plumbeous Vireo: A Plumbeous Vireo photographed at Houston, *Harris* 6 May was just the 6th for the U.T.C. (ph. Sue Orwig, John Berner).

Warbling Vireo: A Warbling Vireo seen at Lafitte's Cove, *Galveston* 31 Mar-1 Apr was early (Kyle O'Haver, Jamie Schubert, ph. Laurie Looper, et al.).

Green Jay: A Green Jay seen near Baldwin Park in Houston, *Harris* 7-18 Mar prompted much discussion about possible origin (ph. Tony Dang, et al.). This species will undoubtedly make it to the area naturally at some point, but it is hard to take a given individual and know how it got there. This bird was eating seed at feeders and was extremely wary.

Chihuahuan Raven: A Chihuahuan Raven seen with grackles on a corral near High Island, *Galveston* 29 May was just the 12th record for the U.T.C. and the first since 2012 (Richard Gibbons).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: A Red-breasted Nuthatch photographed at Clear Lake, *Harris* 10 May was a very late record of this irruptive species (Dale Wolck).

Bewick's Wren: Bewick's Wren have become rare winter residents so one seen east of the "huisiache zone" at W.G. Jones SF, *Montgomery* 11 Apr was notable (Jonathan Feenstra, Ethan Kistler).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: A late Ruby-crowned Kinglet was recorded singing in the New Territory subdivision, *Fort Bend* 10-12 May (Bill Schneider).

Swainson's Thrush: Swainson's Thrushes noted at Lafitte's Cove, *Galveston* (Duke Liebler) and 7 ½ Mile Road, *Galveston* (Laurie Looper) both on 20 Mar were the earliest ever reported for the U.T.C.

Hermit Thrush: Late Hermit Thrushes were reported from Cullinan Park, *Fort Bend* (Jeff Schaberg), and Quintana, *Brazoria* (Jerry Chen) on 4 May.

Purple Finch: The last of the winter invasion of Purple Finches was one seen southern *Harris* 19 Mar (Mike Austin).

Dark-eyed Junco: A Dark-eyed Junco photographed at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 15 Apr was very late for the species on the U.T.C. (ph. Teresa Connell, Michael B. Cooper, ph. Mark & Joanie Hubinger, et al.).

White-throated Sparrow: A late White-throated Sparrow was at the Laas Farm in *Waller* 6 May (Harvey Laas).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Eight Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Lake Houston, *Harris* 12 May were on the late side (Joseph Masters).

Bullock's Oriole: Bullock's Orioles were found 17 Mar at Kempner Park, *Galveston* (ph. Kyle O'Haver, ph. Greg Hall), Houston, *Harris* 27 Mar (ph. John O'Brien) and 14 Apr on Pelican Island, *Galveston* (ph. Jodi Hendricks).

Louisiana Waterthrush: A late Louisiana Waterthrush was along Sportsman's Road, *Galveston* 7 May (Erik Ostrander, Hannah Buschert).

Blue-winged Warbler: A Blue-winged Warbler seen at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 10 May was late (John Haynes).

Prothonotary Warbler: A Prothonotary Warbler that returned to Liberty, *Liberty* 14 Mar was early (Gary & Lisa Holmes).

Orange-crowned Warbler: Late Orange-crowned Warblers were at Quintana, *Brazoria* 2-3 May (Gary & Lisa Holmes), the Edith Moore Sanctuary in Houston, *Harris* 4 May (Nathaniel Pylant), and Hogg Sanctuary in Houston, *Harris* 7 May (Skip Almone).

Mourning Warbler: A Mourning Warbler that was recorded singing at Sabine Woods, *Jefferson* 21 Apr was the earliest ever documented for the U.T.C. (Tim Linz, Patty McLean).

Kentucky Warbler: A very early male Kentucky Warbler at Quintana, *Brazoria* 11-29 Mar was the earliest ever for the U.T.C. (Melissa Crookshank, Michael Heather, ph. Denise Stephens, et al.).

American Redstart: Early American Redstarts at Lafitte's Cove, *Galveston* 13 Mar (Dennis Cooke) and at Discovery Green in Houston, *Harris* 17 Mar (David Kirsch) may have been birds that overwintered north of the normal range.

Tropical Parula: A male Tropical Parula was at the Armand Bayou Nature Center, *Harris* 6-13 Mar (Mike Austin, Christy Esmahan, ph. Nina Rach, et al.).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: An extremely early Chestnut-sided Warbler was reported from the Bolivar Peninsula, *Galveston* 16 Mar (William Seleen).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A male Black-throated Blue Warbler photographed 16 Mar at Lakeside, *Montgomery* was most unexpected and likely was a bird that winter north of its normal range (Connie McNabb).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: A late Yellow-rumped Warbler was at the Cross Creek Wetlands, *Fort Bend* 7 May (Nathaniel Pylant).

Scarlet Tanager: A male Scarlet Tanager seen near Westfield, *Harris* 21 Mar was very early (Matthew Abernathy).

Western Tanager: The latest Western Tanager was a singing male near the Johnson Space Center area, *Harris* 13 May (Steve Berenzweig).

Black-headed Grosbeak: Late Black-headed Grosbeaks were at Sugar Land, *Fort Bend* 4 May (ph. Robbin Mallett) and Dos Vacas Muertes, *Galveston* 10 May (Shantel Porterfield).

Lazuli Bunting: A female Lazuli Bunting was at Quintana, *Brazoria* 30 Apr-1 May (ph. Greg Page, Kris Cannon, Martin Hagne).

Observers:
Matthew Abernathy
Skip Almoney
Mike Austin
Steve Berenzweig
John Berner
Gary Binderim
Eric Bruhnke
Sergei Buben
Hannah Buschert
Benjamin Byerly
Gary Byerly

Kris Cannon
Greg Chapman
Chris Charlesworth

Jerry Chen
Chip Clouse
Teresa Connell
Dennis Cooke
Michael B. Cooper
Jeff Corcoran
William Crane
Tony Dang
Ian Davies
Chuck Davis
Jacob Drucker
Gerald Duhon
Tommy Duvall
Christy Esmahan
Jackie Farrell
Tony Frank
Jonathan Feenstra
Timothy Freiday
Richard Gibbons
Don Glasco
Alan Gutsell
Martin Hagne
Greg Hall
John Hall
Cullen Hanks
David Hanson
John Haynes
Susan Heath
Michael Heather
Thomas Hellwig
Brian Henderson
Joey Henderson
Jodi Hendricks
Gary Holmes
Lisa Holmes
Bob Honig
Mark Hubinger
Joanie Hubinger
Tom Jackson
Jackie Jackson
David Kirch
Ethan Kistler
Susan Keefer
Cynthia Kristensen
M Kwan
Harvey Laas
Dominic Le Croisette
Cin-Ty Lee

Nancy Leonard
Tim Lenz
Duke Liebler
Tim Linz
Robert Long
Laurie Looper
Robbin Mallett
Jean Martin
Joseph Masters
Steve Mayes
Wendy McCrady
Todd McGrath
Patty McLean
Connie McNabb
Colette Micallef
Paul Micallef
Jane Murtinshaw
Stuart Nelson
Brandon Nidiffer
John O'Brien
Michael O'Brien
Duane Och
Kyle O'Haver
Sue Orwig
Eric Ostrander
Greg Page
Larry Parmeter
Caleb Paul
Michael Pease
Gene Prejean
Nathaniel Pylant
Carl Poldrack
Shantel Porterfield
Nina Rach
Adriel Resh
James Rieman
Bill Sain
Sam Saunders
Jeff Schaberg
Kelly Schaeffer
Bill Schneider
Jamie Schubert
Mark Scheuerman
William Seleen
Letha Slagle
John Smelser
Denise Stephens
Connie Unsicker

Tom Unsicker
William Vanderpoel
Mike Weber
Ron Weeks
Ray Werschler
John Whittle
Dale Wolck
Gary Yoder
Louise Zemaitis