



# GUIDE TO USING THE MAP

The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail — Central Texas Coast includes 11 separate loops, each of which encompasses an array of associated sites and birds. The color-coded loops on the front and back of the map provide easy access to related information. Site symbols on the map are shaped and colored to show access, indicate fees when applicable, and denote the availability of developed overnight facilities at each location. This map also furnishes information about the trail locations, including detailed instructions on how to reach each site and GPS coordinates where available. Using this map, travelers will no longer struggle to locate obscure birding spots that may contain the species they traveled to see.

This publication contains an illustrated highway map of the Central Texas Coast that shows the 95 designated sites. Each site is marked with a symbol that points to its location, with the shape of the symbol signifying the following:

- The site is open daily, and developed camping is available at the site.
- ▲ The site is open for day use only.
- Call ahead, access to the site is restricted; visitation may be arranged by contacting the managing entity at the address and telephone number provided.

Note: If the symbol is outlined in black, an entrance fee or donation may be required.

In addition, each symbol is colored to distinguish the segment or loop to which the site belongs. Each site has been assigned to one of the eleven loops, and no loop requires more than a long weekend to leisurely traverse.

Descriptions of the sites are on the back of the map, and include directions to each location, examples of the birds to be seen, and contacts for additional information. The text, like the map, is organized by loops. A list of contacts (chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus) begins each section. Information about food, lodging, and local points of interest may be obtained from these organizations. Several also publish maps and guides to the birds and sites in their regions, so visit the local visitor centers when traveling along the coast for additional information.

To aid travelers, each site is marked with a brown sign illustrated with the familiar Black Skimmer logo, as well as a unique site number that corresponds with the map. Just look for the skimmer logo on directional signs when driving along the Trail to confirm your route and location.



Birding Trail Sign Marker Central Texas Coast (CTC)

Rest Area

10 Interstate 90
71 111 State Highway
1604 State Loop or Spur
P11 Park Road

Park Road

2437 Farm or Ranch Road

Texas Travel
Information Center

One inch equals approximately 9 miles

# IMPORTANCE OF NATURE TOURISM

The Great Texas Wildlife Trail program was developed in an effort to make it easier for people to find special places throughout the state of Texas to go wildlife watching. TPWD produced these maps to help visitors by connecting nature tourism destinations into easy driving loops while also supporting sustainable economic development in local communities.

Wildlife watching is big business in Texas! With 4.2 million participants (2.5 million of whom are birdwatchers) wildlife watchers have an overall economic impact of \$5.2 billion on the Texas economy. Wildlife watchers spend more money in Texas each year than hunters or anglers! With the help of this map and the entire Great Texas Wildlife Trail series, enjoy this wonderful state and the great diversity of experiences waiting for you along the highways and back roads. As we like to say at TPWD, life's better outside.

## TEXAS PADDLING TRAILS

View wildlife from a different vantage point! The Texas
Paddling Trails program develops public inland and coastal
paddling trails throughout the state and supports these trails
with maps, signage, fishing and wildlife-viewing information,
and more! These trails provide well-mapped accessible day
trips in a variety of settings and for all levels of paddling
experience offering wildlife viewers another avenue for
exploring the outdoors. www.tpwd.texas.gov/paddling

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Texas Parks and Wildlife Information: (800) 792-1112 www.tpwd.texas.gov

Trail Map Edits and Updates: (512) 389-4500 www.tpwd.texas.gov/wildlifetrails

North American Rare Bird Alert: www.narba.org

Texas Travel Information: www.traveltex.com

### ▲ CTC 003: MATAGORDA COUNTY JETTY PARK

Drive west on FM 521 to the intersection of Texas 60 at Wadsworth, proceed south on Texas 60 to Matagorda. The grasslands along FM 521 between Sargent and Matagorda offer a fine opportunity to see White-tailed Hawks. The wooded lot within Matagorda have been planted with a variety of exotic trees and shrubs that attract neotropical birds in spring and fall. This area is also an important part of the nationally renowned Matagorda County — Mad Island Marsh Christmas Rird Count From Texas 60 in Matagorda, turn left (south) on FM 2031, and follow the Colorado River to the Gulf. There are numerous places to pull off the road, and the marshes adjacent to the road support a wide variety of wading birds such as White Ibis, Whitefaced Ibis (look closely for Glossy Ibis in spring), and Roseate Spoonbill, as well as salt marsh inhabitants such as Clapper Rail and Seaside Sparrow. Walk onto the pier in winter and scan the Gulf for Northern Gannet, Scoters or Jaegers (in the summer, look for Magnificent Frigatebirds soaring over the placid Gulf waters). Gulls, terns and shorebirds roost at the mouth of the river adjacent to the pier. In addition, the beach to the east is an excellent spot to look for Snowy and Piping ployers. Stop by Matagorda Bay Natural Science Center adjacent to Jetty Park for information on birding or the Matagorda area. The center features a free interactive exhibit hall illustrating the ecological and economic importance of the Colorado River to the region. The center also hosts community programs such as kayaking, beachcombing and live animal presentations to introduce visitors to the marvels of Matagorda. (979) 863-2603 www.lcra.org/matagorda

GPS: 28.59786, -95.97806

▲ CTC 004: ATTWATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE Travel north on TX 60 from Matagorda to Wharton, take FM 102 north to its

merger with FM 3013, then take FM 3013 east to the refuge entrance (approximately 6 miles northeast of Eagle Lake). Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR encompasses one of the most significant expanses of native grassland remaining in Colorado County. Established to protect a vestige population of Attwater's Greater Prairie-Chicken, the refuge is home to many species of grassland birds that have become scarce with the conversion of the native prairies to agricultural uses. White-tailed Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Sprague's Pipit, Sedge Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, and Harris's Sparrow are among the species that are relatively easy to find here in winter number of rarities have appeared here, including Least Grebe, Masked Duck, Zone-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, and Say's Phoebe. Access to the refuge is restricted. The refuge hosts the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken Festival each spring during the second weekend in April. In addition, the Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR CBC is held each year in late December (contact refuge to participate). Eagle Lake (approximately 2 miles south of the town of Eagle Lake on FM 102) furnishes quality viewing opportunities for waterfowl. Bald Eagles are frequently seen soaring over the lake in the winter. (979) 234-3021 www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/attwater/index.html

### GPS: 29.64431, -96.25639

▲ CTC 005: TEXAS R.I.C.E./PIERCE RANCH WATERBIRD VIEWING SITE Return to Wharton, then travel southwest on US 59 (toward El Campo) to Pierce. Continue on US 59 past Pierce, then exit on Pierce West Road and travel south for 4 miles. The waterbird viewing sites are well marked and may be accessed from the roadside. The rice fields here are maintained throughout the waterfowl season for benefit of roosting geese, ducks, cranes, and shorebirds. Also try visiting this area in October when rice growers are harvesting their second crop of the year. The rice harvesting machinery will often flush waterbirds from the rice fields as they cut the rice, and several species of rails (King, Virginia, Sora, Yellow) are relatively easy to see as they fly ahead of the harvesters. GPS: 29.23317, -96.20869 △ CTC 005A: MATAGORDA COUNTY BIRDING AND NATURE CENTER

Return to Wharton and take TX 60 south to Bay City. Take TX 35 south 1.7 miles to the entrance. The nature center features an outdoor learning center and hummingbird/butterfly gardens. The ADA accessible trails, observation bridges and platforms provide access to wetlands, native grasslands, and bottomlands along the Colorado River. Future plans include an indoor learning center and interpretive displays (979) 245-3336 www.mcbnc.org

#### GPS: 28.98333, -95.97811 ▲ CTC 006: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT PRAIRIE WETLANDS

Return to the intersection of FM 521 and TX 60 and travel west 2 miles past the 110-acre project consists of three seasonally flooded wetlands which host man species of wintering ducks and roosting geese. In spring, look for migrant shorebird and other waterbirds. Site is a good place to look for Least Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, and Bald Eagle when flooded. For a tour of the site, contact the Visitors Center (361-972-3611).GPS: 28.80519, -96.03767

## TRES PALACIOS LOOP

**Palacios Chamber of Commerce** www.palacioschamber.com (361) 972-2615

CTC 007: MAD ISLAND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA. CLIVE RUNNELS FAMILY MAD ISLAND MARSH PRESERVE From FM 521 and FM 1095, take FM 1095 south toward Collegenort and its

intersection with Brazos Tower Road, Turn left (south) on Brazos Tower Road. and then left (east) on A-P Ranch Road. After 2 miles the gate marks the entrances to both Mad Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA), managed by TPWD, and The Clive Runnells Family Mad Island Marsh Preserve, managed by The Nature Conservancy of Texas (TNCT). Both of these sites are closed to the public, although access may be arranged through the managing agencies and organizations on special occasions. In addition to seasonal public trips into these properties, Mad Island Marsh CBC is conducted each year in December or on volunteer workdays. Contact TPWD or TNCT if you wish to participate.

Mad Island Marsh Preserve Mad Island WMA The Nature Conservancy of Texas (979) 323-9579 (361) 972-2559

GPS: 28.68808, -96.13792

▲ CTC 008: OYSTER LAKE ROAD

From the interception of A-P Ranch Road and Brazos Tower Road, continue west on Franzen Road. Turn south onto Oyster Lake Road. Oyster Lake Road continues toward Matagorda Bay for several miles as a gravel road. During most weather conditions this road is passable, but be cautious during heavy rain. Oyster Lake Road travels through an extensive salt marsh, and in winter many species such as Clapper Rail, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Seaside Sparrow may be found along the roadside. Scan the islands along the bayshore for American Oystercatcher, and watch for bay ducks such as Redhead, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Red-breasted Merganser. In migration the scrubby trees along the roadside may be swarming with migrants, and always remember to watch overhead for raptors and swallows. The rice fields that border the northern section of Oyster Lake Road (as well as along Franzen Road) may be packed in spring with migrant shorebirds such as American Golden-Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Baird's Sandpiper, and White-rumped Sandpiper. Both Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes are ubiquitous in winter, and remember to examine each Snow Goose flock for Ross's. As you return to Brazos Tower Road, you

may wish to continue west toward Collegport. Park at the end of the pavement and

### GPS: 28.6199, -96.21142 ▲ CTC 009: CASH'S CREEK

search the bay for loons, grebes, and ducks.

Return to the intersection of FM 1095 and FM 521, go west on FM 521 to FM 2853, then take FM 2853 south. The agricultural fields in this region of Texas (particularly rice) attract many cranes, geese, and ducks each winter. Check the Snow Goose flocks carefully; Ross's Goose is an increasingly common winter visitor to this region. Cash's Creek crosses FM 2853, and the freshwater marshes along the creek can be viewed from the shoulder of the bridge. Cliff Swallows nest under the bridge in the summer. Search the grasslands along FM 2853 for raptors, including White-tailed Hawk. GPS: 28.76483, -96.19339

## ▲ CTC 010: BAYSHORE DRIVE

From Cash's Creek Bridge proceed on FM 2853 1.3 miles south to Bayshore Drive (which parallels Tres Palacios Bay to Business 35/1st Street). The drive offers an opportunity to inspect Tres Palacios Bay and the bordering marshes for a variety of waterbirds. Look for Common Loon, Eared Grebe, and a selection of diving ducks species of scoters, as well as rarities such as Pacific Loon and Oldsquaw, are always a possibility in the winter.

such as Redhead, Common Goldeneye, and Red-breasted Merganser. The three GPS: 28.74439, -96.19381 ▲ CTC 011: TRULL MARSH

This site extends for two blocks north of the intersection of Business 35 and Bayshore Drive, with Trull Marsh on the west and Brookings on the east of Busines 35/1st Street. With the water beginning where the highway shoulder ends, ducks often dabble within a few feet of the cars that whiz by. Ducks such as Lesser Scaup Ring-necked Duck, and Bufflehead and shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilt (nesting), Greater Yellowlegs, and Long-billed Dowitcher crowd the shallow lagoons. The observation deck at Trull Marsh offer birders views of herons, egrets, ibis, shorebirds, and waterfowl. GPS: 28.71153, -96.21053

#### ▲ CTC 012: PALACIOS WATERFRONT AND **TEXAS BAPTIST ENCAMPMENT**

The Texas Baptist Encampment is situated on a point of land (Hamilton's Point) near the conjunction of East and South Bay boulevards, and may be reached by continuing south three blocks on Business 35 from Trull Marsh and turning left on East Bay Boulevard. Park along Bay Drive near the fishing pier, and search Tres Palacios Bay for loons, grebes, pelicans, ducks (Common Goldeneye), gulls, and terns. Combined with Bayshore Drive (CTC 010), and Lookout Point (CTC 013), the time invested here in scouring the bay for waterbirds should be well rewarded. GPS: 28.7015, -96.20869

▲ CTC 013: LOOKOUT POINT From CTC 012, proceed west on Business 35 past the turning basins, then turn left (south) on Margerum Road toward Tres Palacios Bay. Park at the end of Margerum Road and scan the bay for waterbirds (as with the previous two sites). In addition, pay close attention to the various gulls that congregate around the fishing boats docked in the harbor. Bonaparte's, Laughing, Ring-billed, and Herring are to be expected in winter, but each year a few oddities find their way to the coast as well. GPS: 28.70158, -96.23336

▲ CTC 014: PALACIOS MARINE EDUCATION CENTER NATURE TRAIL From the intersection of Margerum Road and Business 35, drive west 0.6 miles to Camp Hulen Road and go south 0.7 miles to the entrance gate. Park in the visitor's parking lot, and walk the nature trail beginning to the left of the pier. At times in spring the scrub along the trail may be alive with migrant vireos, warblers, buntings, and orioles. Check the pond for wading birds such as herons, egrets, and waterbirds. In the marsh around the observation deck you should find Clapper Rail, Seaside Sparrow, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (winter). GPS: 28.70158, -96.2425

#### ▲ CTC 015: PERRY R. BASS STATE MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH STATION

Go west on TX 35 from Palacios for 7.5 miles, then turn left (south) for 5.5 miles on FM 3280 to the Perry R. Bass State Marine Fisheries Research Station. Examine the prairies and marshes along FM 3280 for a variety of coastal grassland species such as Northern Harrier, Sandhill Crane, and Short-eared Owl (in winter), and scan the Gulf at the end of the road for loons, grebes, ducks, gulls, and terns. Shorebirds, such as Ruddy Turnstone and Sanderling, may be seen along the beach. During migration, the hedge and fence rows may be lined with migrants such as Eastern and Western kingbirds, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Dickcissel. GPS: 28.64242, -96.32278 ▲ CTC 016: OLIVIA/PORT ALTO

Continue west on TX 35 to Carancahua Bay. Park at the boat ramp, and search the bay for ducks (Redhead, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser) and perhaps an Osprey or two. Although not a major stop on the trail, the bay always has the potential to produce a surprise! Continue west on TX 35 to the intersection with TX 172; turn south on TX 172 toward Port Alto and Olivia. From the end of TX 172 south in Olivia, scour Keller Bay for loons, grebes, and bay ducks, and search the adjacent marshes for rails and shore birds. Travel east from Oliva on CR 314 toward Carancahua Bay and Port Alto. This road transects thickets of Tamaulipan scrub that may be teeming with warblers during a spring fallout. Along this road you may also hear the skylark song of the Cassin's Sparrow (summer only). Eventually you will reach the western shore of Carancahua Bay. Scan the bay for waterbirds, and at low tide, shorebirds, Turn north and take M. Johnson Ave, toward Port Alto, The scrub along this road is home to both Bewick's Wren and Curve-billed Thrasher, South Texas species that rarely range farther north along the coast. Return to TX 172 on Spur 159, checking the fields for Sandhill Cranes in winter and grassland shorebirds in spring.

### GPS: 28.63761, -96.45583

▲ CTC 017: FORMOSA-TEJANO WETLANDS Returning to the intersection of TX 35 and TX 172, travel north on TX 172 toward Ganado. Continue north 6.9 miles to the gate (left) of the Formosa-Tejano Wetlands. This 245-acre site, already a popular fieldtrip venue with local school groups, is owned by Formosa Plastics Corp. There are several distinct habitats including ponds, permanent wetlands, and coastal prairie, plus woodlands that attract neotropical migrants. During fall and winter, increased water depths are maintained for the numerous ducks, geese, large waders, and shorebirds that winter here. The site is divided into six units, four of which are west of TX 172. The northernmost of the western four is adjacent to a 100-acre reservoir that provides habitat for American White Pelicans, Wood Storks, diving ducks, and other waterbirds. Parking is available at the north end of the sites west of TX 172 and the south end of the two sites east of

GPS: 28.78451, -96.46099

### TEXANA LOOP

**Jackson County Chamber of Commerce** www.jacksoncountytexas.com (361) 782-7146

▲ CTC 018: LAKE TEXANA MUSTANG CREEK BOAT RAMP The Lavaca Navidad River Authority (LNRA) Mustang Creek boat ramp on TX 172 south of Ganado offers the opportunity to park and bird the oak woodlands that typil the bottomlands of the sister rivers: the Navidad and the Lavaca. Eastern woodland species such as Red-shouldered Hawk. Pileated Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, and Carolina Chickadee abound here. Wood Ducks often spill out over the woodlands in early morning while the lake water around the boat ramp is frequently swarming with a variety of dabbling ducks. GPS: 29.02239, -96.50458

### CTC 019: MUSTANG CREEK RECREATION AREA

This interesting wooded enclave is admittedly difficult to find. From Ganado, go west on Loop 522 W to FM 2982 S, then turn left (south) on FM 2982 to CR 249. Turn left (east) on CR 249, and drive straight to the entrance of the Mustang Creek Recreation Area. Relatively unspoiled and rarely visited, this forested area offers the opportunity to see a variety of eastern woodland birds, most of which are identical to those seen in Texana Park and Campground. However, migration tends to shuffle the deck, and one will never know exactly what to expect at any given location. Wilderness camping GPS: 29.00444, -96.53125

CTC 020: TEXANA PARK AND CAMPGROUND To reach the LNRA Lake Texana Boat Ramp and then Texana Park and Campground, continue southwest on US 59 and cross the Lake Texana bridge. Immediately west of the lake take the exit for the LNRA boat ramp on the north side of the lake. Continue southwest on US 59; turn north on FM 530 for a stretch of interesting roadside birding between Cordele and Vienna, including the Navidad River crossing in Lavaca County. Return to US 59 and continue southwest on US 59 to Edna, then turn south on TX 111. Continue on TX 111 as it veers to the east until reaching the entrance to the park and campground (approximately 6.5 miles from Edna). This site is an example of Texas coastal riparian forest, as well as the woodland birds that inhabit such a forest. Mississippi Kite (in summer), Red-bellied, Downy, and Pileated odpeckers, Carolina Chickadee, and American Crow are examples of eastern species that soon disappear (to be replaced by more tropical species) as one drifts to the south. The park offers overnight facilities (partial and full hookup campsites, (361) 782-5718

## GPS: 28.95381, -96.54772

■ CTC 021: BRACKENRIDGE PARK AND CAMPGROUND With similar habitats, birds, and facilities as the Texana Park, Brackenridge Park and Campground is another LNRA-managed park. Brackenridge Park is located directly across TX 111 from the entrance to Texana Park. Full hook-ups are available at this campground. This park also features sports and recreation areas, historical sites, hike and bike trails, nature trails, water activities and lots of quiet places to relax.

#### (361) 782-5456 www.brackenridgepark.com GPS: 28.95383, -96.54394

▲ CTC 022: PALMETTO BEND DAM Return west on TX 111 to the intersection with FM 3131, then travel south on

FM 3131 as it turns east to Palmetto Bend Dam. The agricultural fields along FM 3131 are attractive to grassland shorebirds in the spring, so be alert for flocks of American Golden-Plovers, Long-billed Curlews, and Upland Sandpipers. Turn left (east) on CR 417, and continue to Lake Texana and the LNRA Simon's Boat Ramp. Returning to FM 3131, continue 2 miles south to Palmetto Bend Dam. Upon reaching Palmetto Bend Dam, park in the designated sites and scan the lake for loons, grebes, and diving ducks. Listen for a variety of woodland birds in the bottomland forest below the dam. There is typically a Bald Eagle nest south of the dam with birds on it from October to May. Bald Eagles can be seen from the viewing stand on the east side of the parking lot as well. GPS: 28.91428, -96.58967

## ▲ CTC 023: LAVACA/NAVIDAD ESTUARY

Continue on FM 3131 east to the intersection with FM 1593, then turn right (south) on FM 1593 until reaching FM 616 at Lolita, Turn right again (west) on FM 616, and proceed until reaching the observation deck on FM 616 that overlooks the Lavaca Navidad estuary. Few sites along the Texas coast match this estuary for its wildlife spectacle. The herons, egrets, spoonbills, Anhingas, ducks, bitterns, and shorebirds milling in, above, and around these marshes offer observers a good variety of birds. In late summer and early fall look for Wood Stork. GPS: 28.83242, -96.57794

## ▲ CTC 024: BENNETT PARK

To reach the park, continue west on FM 616 and turn right (north) on CR 325 at LaSalle. Cross the tracks, and at the T-intersection (0.7 miles) follow CR 325 left. Turn left on CR 326 (1.3 miles) to the entrance to the park (1 mile). Visit during migration for the best birding. The palms within this small park (40 acres) are Mexican palmettos or Texas sabal palms (Sabal mexicanas), a species once thought limited in Texas to the Rio Grande Valley in southernmost Texas. The palms in the park occur here naturally and if left undisturbed will eventually grow to tree size. GPS: 28.80669, -96.69017

▲ CTC 025: GARCITAS CREEK BOAT RAMP Retrace your path from Bennett Park to FM 616 at LaSalle, then continue west on FM 616 to the Garcitas Creek crossing. Park at the boat ramp, and bird the surrounding woodlands. The boat ramp offers a similar habitat to Bennett Park, and with proper weather conditions migrants will enliven these woods as well. Check the marshes adjacent to the boat ramp for Common Yellowthroat, Marsh Wren, and the two species of waterthrush in migration. PLEASE DO NOT CROSS FENCES OR TRESPASS ON ADJACENT PRIVATE PROPERTY GPS: 28.7785, -96.69711

## **GUADALUPE LOOP**

**Victoria Convention** and Visitor's Bureau www.visitvictoriatexas.com (361) 485-3119

The Gonzales Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture www.gonzalestexas.com

### (830) 672-6532 ▲ CTC 027: RIVERSIDE PARK AND ATHEY NATURE SANCTUARY

to Victoria. From the intersection of US 59 and US 87 in Victoria, go north on US 87 to Red River turn left (west), and continue to Vine. Turn right (north) on Vine and continue to the Victoria South Texas Crossroads RV Park. Park near the entrance to the Athey Nature Sanctuary (continue west on Red Guadalupe River until reaching the park entrance). A trail has been created that connects Athey Nature Sanctuary and Riverside Park (crossing an old river channel or resaca), and a visit to Grover's and Fox's Bend may yield a surprising variety of woodland birds. GPS: 28.81608, -97.00858

### A CTC 028: CUERO Travel north from Victoria on US 87 to Cuero. Drop by the DeWitt Historical Museum

(312 East Broadway) and DeWitt County Wildflower Association (located at the museum) for information about areas for viewing (and photographing) the spring wildflower displays. The grasslands of this region are renowned (at least among birders) for winter sparrows, and roadside birding is a rule here. Venture out from Cuero onto the backroads and bird the fence and hedgerows. In the brush of Karnes County, a number of South Texas thornscrub species reach their northeastern range limit (for example, Least Grebe, Pauraque, and Olive Sparrow). GPS: 29.08767, -97.26564

CTC 029: PALMETTO STATE PARK

Continue north from Cuero on US 183 to Gonzales. Gonzales is known as "The Cradle of Texas Independence." The first shot for Texas independence was fired here in 1835, and many artifacts from that era are displayed in local museums. The park is located 14 miles north of Gonzales within the palmetto swamps of the San Marcos River, and offers a striking change from the rather arid grass and brush country to the south. A number of eastern woodland species nest within the park, including Prothonotary and Kentucky warblers, Northern Parula, and Indigo and Painted buntings. The poultry farms in Gonzales County attract numbers of Crested Caracara and roosting flocks of caracaras in the park and the surrounding woodlands in (830) 672-3266 www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/palmetto GPS: 29.59753, -97.58461

## CALHOUN LOOP

www.portlavacatx.org (361) 552-2959 ▲ CTC 030A: SIX MILE PARK www.portoconnorchamber.org (361) 983-2898

#### At the intersection of TX 35 and FM 1090 travel north on FM 1090 approximately 6 miles, turn right onto Park Road, and follow the winding road until it ends at the shore of Lavaca Bay. The 2-acre park is quiet on weekdays, offers a lighted pier, boat ramps, a marshland habitat, rip-rap shoreline, and a 350-foot natural sand beach. There you will spot Reddish Egret, shorebirds, terns, and other waterbirds.

GPS: 28.693962, -96.663943 ▲ CTC 030: PORT LAVACA BIRD SANCTUARY Return to the intersection of FM 1090 and TX 35 in Port Lavaca, and go east or TX 35 a short distance to the Port Lavaca Lighthouse Beach and Bird Sanctuary (exit to your right immediately before the bridge across Lavaca Bay). Walk out on the Formosa Wetlands Walkway to the Alcoa Birding Tower. Look in the marsh that borders the walkway for Seaside Sparrow, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (in winter) and Clapper Rail. The bay may be viewed from the birding tower, and you should see

Brown Pelican, and a variety of gulls and terns. If you have time, drive east across the Lavaca Bay bridge toward Point Comfort and then out onto the old causeway. Search the bay and spoil islands for Common Loon, Horned Grebe (uncommon), Common Goldeneye, American Oystercatcher, and Osprey. GPS: 28.637453, -96.614352

▲ CTC 031: MAGNOLIA BEACH

travel a short distance to the intersection with TX 316. Continue straight on TX 316 and follow the signs to Magnolia Beach and Indianola. In winter, Sandhill Cranes, Snow Geese, and a variety of hawks (including White-tailed) abound. The rice paddies should be searched in spring for migrating shorebirds (including Wilson's Phalarope, Hudsonian Godwit, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper). The marshes near the end of the road (near Magnolia and the LaSalle Monument) are worth a look (or listen) in spring for rails, including Black. Wander from Magnolia Beach north along the bay, and search both the beach and bay for waterbirds (a number of interesting gulls have been discovered in this area, as well as the three species of scoters). GPS: 28.55447, -96.54483 From Magnolia Beach, continue south along Lavaca Bay to Indianola Beach.

From Port Lavaca travel west on TX 35 to the intersection with FM 2433. Turn left

(south) and continue to the intersection with TX 238, then veer right on TX 238 and

indianola was the most significant seaport in Texas until a series of devastating hurricanes in the late 19th century led to its abandonment. Turn right on FM 316 continue about ¼ mile, then turn right onto Zimmerman Road. Cross the cattle guard and continue toward the Old Town Cemetery. You will be at Magic Ridge, a shell ridge covered with one of the northernmost stands of native Tamaulipan scrub and now a 200-acre avian sanctuary owned by the Texas Ornithological Society. Walk along Eimmerman Road north to the gate and south back to the cattle guard, scanning the scrub and the wetlands that straddle the road. TOS requests that you bird from the pavement to protect the habitat and to avoid trespassing on private property. Watch for scrub birds such as Curve-billed and Long-billed thrashers, Bewick' Wren, and, in migration, hordes of songbirds and concentrations of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The ponds along the road are productive: watch for whistling-ducks Boat-tailed Grackle, various gulls and terns, Roseate Spoonbill, Reddish Egret, and Wood Stork (late summer). Butterflying can be rewarding; watch for Salt Marsh and Obscure skippers, Great Southern White, and the diminutive Western Pygmy-Blue. eaving Zimmerman Road, continue straight (south) to Powderhorn Lake and Indianola. Check the mouth of Powderhorn Lake for roosting waterbirds and American Ovstercatcher.

### ▲ CTC 033: POWDERHORN LAKE

GPS: 28.53436, -96.51444

Return to TX 316 to TX 238, turn left on TX 238 (toward Seadrift) and travel a short distance to FM 1289, then turn left (south) on FM 1289 toward Port O'Connor. Powderhorn Lake may be viewed from along FM 1289 where Coloma Creek crosses the highway and widens into Powderhorn Lake. At low tide the mudflats here may be crawling with shorebirds. Also watch for flights of cranes and geese at sunrise. GPS: 28.47361, -96.55575

CTC 034: MATAGORDA ISLAND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA The Matagorda Island WMA consists of 56,688 acres of offshore barrier island and bayside marshes which is operated as a wildlife management area, jointly owned by the Texas General Land Office and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is cooperatively managed as the Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge and State Natural Area. No island on the Texas coast with public access is as unspoiled as Matagorda, and no visitor to Texas should leave without experiencing the breathtaking scenery and birdlife found here. The island is only accessible by boat. Over 320 species have been catalogued by TPWD and the USFWS, including Whitetailed Hawk, Whooping Crane, Brown Pelican, Aplomado Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, and a host of shorebirds. The north end of the island (throughout the runway/ headquarters complex, extending down the road system to the lighthouse and including the beach) is available for unsupervised wildlife viewing and hiking, during daylight hours only. Note that such activities are not allowed while public hunts are in progress. Wildlife viewing can be conducted either via bicycling or hiking. Overnight campers over the age of 16 are required to possess either a Limited Public Use Permit (LPU) or an Annual Public Hunting Lands Permit (APH). Permits can be purchased at any location that sells hunting or fishing licenses. Removing plants,

#### animals, or artifacts is prohibited. (979) 323-9553, (979) 323-9669

GPS: 28.247538, -96.635742 A CTC 035: SEADRIFT/SWAN POINT Travel west on TX 185 to Seadrift. Swan Point, near Seadrift, is an excellent location for viewing San Antonio Bay. To reach Swan Point follow the signs to the public boat ramp 1 mile east of Seadrift off of TX 185, Scoters, Oldsquaw, and a variety of

bay ducks have been seen in this area, so inspect the bay waters closely. Return to

### Seadrift, and drive along the bayfront. Numerous ducks, gulls, and terns may be GPS: 28.38917, -96.70758

CTC 036: GUADALUPE DELTA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA Travel north on TX 185 back to TX 35, then turn left (west) on TX 35. Continue until eaching the Guadalupe Delta WMA entrance and observation deck (the platform is located on the south side of TX 35, 1.3 miles west of the entrance). The observation platform is open throughout the vear, but the WMA itself is closed and is accessible only during scheduled events. The freshwater lake and marshes at Guadalupe Delt are seasonally swamped with flood waters as well as attendant waterfowl, shorebirds, and a variety of herons and egrets. Wood Storks may be seen here in late summer and early fall, and the marshes around Buffalo Lake usually swarm with herons, egrets, White-faced Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, and Least Bittern (in summer). Listen for the bubbling trill of the Marsh Wren in late spring. The woodlands within Guadalupe Delta offer fine migrant birding. (361) 576-0022 or (361) 790-0308 (regional office)

GPS: 28.51414, -96.81289

## LA BAHIA LOOP

**Goliad Chamber of Commerce** www.goliadcc.org (361) 645-3563

**Refugio County Chamber of Commerce** www.refugiocountytx.org (361) 526-2835

Sinton Chamber of Commerce www.sintontexas.org (361) 364-2307 ▲ CTC 037: ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

No single location along the Texas coast captures the traveler's imagination more than Aransas NWR, the winter home of the Whooping Crane. To reach the entrance to the refuge, continue south on TX 35 until reaching the intersection with TX 239, then turn left (east) and follow the signs through Austwell. Although famed for wintering cranes (best seen in the refuge from atop the observation tower along the Tour Loop Drive), Aransas NWR is better known among birders for its exceptional variety of resident and transient birds (the number of species seen within the refuge is now approaching 400). Look in the shallow waters along the margins of San Antonio Bay (as well as from the Jones Lake viewing platform) for Roseate Spoonbill, Reddish Egret, both ibis (White and White-faced), and a variety of ducks, grebes, and shorebirds. The oak woodlands along the birding trail immediately past the Heron Flats parking area are especially favorable for migrant landbirds. Search for wading birds (ducks, grebes, Purple Gallinule, Common Moorhen), Buff-bellied Hummingbirds, and alligators along Heron Flats Trail and from Jones Lake Platform as well. Wildlife along the tour loop becomes active (and therefore visible) in early morning and late evening with Crested Caracara, Javelina (Collared Peccary), and

Nine-banded Armadillo among the species that might be seen feeding in open fields

From TX 35 and FM 774, travel west to Refugio. Search the power poles and brush

along the road for raptors. Crested Caracara, White-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk

CTC 039: GOLIAD STATE PARK AND HISTORIC SITE

From Refugio, take US 183 north toward Goliad, and continue until reaching the

hallowed of Texas cities, with the Mission Espíritu Santo, the General Zaragoza

entrance to the park (on US 183 just south of Goliad). Goliad is among the most

birthplace, the grave of Col. James W. Fannin and his soldiers, and the Presidio la

Bahía indelibly imprinted on the pages of Texas colonial history. Goliad is situated

within a transition zone where broad ecological influences join at a biological

juncture. Nature trails in the park traverse a selection of upland and bottomland

habitats, and during an early morning walk an observer will be confronted by an

www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/goliad

eclectic mix of eastern, western, and south Texas thorn-scrub species.

#### and along the shoulder. (361) 286-3559 www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/aransas

▲ CTC 038: LION'S/SHELLY PARK (REFUGIO)

GPS: 28.237859, -96.858215

(361) 645-3405

GPS: 28.65625, -97.38517

Commerce and Agriculture www.cuero.org (361) 275-2112

Cuero Chamber of

#### (rare), and Red-tailed Hawks are usually present. Continue on FM 774 across Return east on FM 616 to its intersection with US 87 in Placedo. Go north on US 87 US 77 and into Lion's/Shelly Park, situated on the Mission River. The bottomland forests here often swarm with migrant landbirds in spring and fall. Riparian woodlands such as these focus the migrants since the surrounding terrain (coasta prairie, now mainly either agricultural or brush) is generally inhospitable to forest species. Carefully look along the Mission River for Green Kingfisher, a south Texas specialty that is seen here regularly GPS: 28.29658, -97.27897

### GPS: 28.664317, -97.39235 CTC 039B: BARNHART Q5 RANCH & NATURE RETREAT

Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce Port O'Connor Chamber of Commerce and drive 8.2 miles to the ranch on the north (right) side of the road marked by

a bright green gate and large hanging sign with ranch's donkey logo. Visit a Lone Star Land Steward Award-winning ranch whose management practices focus on wildlife with special attention to birds. Spring and fall migrations bring seven species of hummingbird, Wood Storks, buntings, orioles, Green Jays, and more. Enjoy observation blinds at each of eight water sources, 17 miles of hike and bike trails. stargazing platform, horse stables (bring your own), and guest housing for 1-20. www.barnhartranchretreat.com GPS: 28.612668, -97.660518

Return to US 59 and turn left (west) to Berclair (16 mi). Turn right onto FM 883

Take US 183 into Goliad and turn left (west) on US 59/TX239. Turn left (south) on

commercial Street, go 0.2 miles to Fannin St. for on-street parking along the park.

From a mix of live oaks, hackberry, and anagua trees to bottomland habitat of mostly

pecan trees mixed with a few oaks, cedar elms, and hackberry within the 100-year

formed by Snake Creek, a small perennial creek that supports lush growth of native

for migratory and resident birds including turkeys, mockingbirds, Plain Chachalacas

of the 2+ mile Angel of Goliad Hike and Bike Trail that tracks along the north side

of the San Antonio River, and extends east through Goliad State Park and on to the

along the streets bordering the park on the west and north.

www.sara-tx.org

(361) 575-6366

historic Presidio La Bahía. Free public parking is available at the trailhead, as well as

Green Jays, hawks, and humminghirds. The 4-acre park abuts the west trailhead

floodplain, this park offers great diversity. The southern edge of the park property is

shrubs and grasses, near its convergence with the San Antonio River. Keep an eye out

▲ CTC 039A: BRANCH RIVER PARK

CTC 040: COLETO CREEK RESERVOIR AND PARK Palmetto Street, and turn left to return to Park Road 13 and the entrance to the park As you pass through the park (be sure to ask for a bird checklist at the entrance) Travel east on US 59 from Goliad to the entrance to Coleto Creek Reservoir and Park look for migrants in the live-oak thickets, and search the marshes for rails, Seaside approximately 13 miles northeast of Goliad on US 59). Coleto Creek Park is a multi and Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrows, Sedge, and Marsh wrens. A 100-ft. observation use facility operated by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority. The park contains pier juts out into the marsh on the west end of the island and a 1,600-ft. pier is on camping, nature trails, photo/wildlife viewing blinds, and a variety of other day-use the east end. Walk the nature trail within the park to enjoy the scenic beauty of the opportunities. Birding is generally best around the reservoir itself, so scan the lake bay and the wind-sculpted oaks that fringe the shore, or take a peaceful rest at the for Bald Eagle, Osprey, roseate spoonbills, waterfowl, grebes, and cormorants bird sanctuary on Warbler Way and watch the birds bathe at the water features. Almost any inland reservoir in Texas may lure an odd gull, grebe, or duck in the winter, so search the lake carefully.

www.coletocreekpark.com

### GPS: 28.70933, -97.17222 CTC 041: FENNESSEY RANCH

Return to Refugio, then take FM 774 east 2 miles to the intersection with FM 2678. Turn right (south) on FM 2678, travel 4.6 miles south to the entrance of the Fennessey Ranch. The ranch is private, and visitation must be arranged through Fennessey Ranch Nature Tours. With an array of habitats (inland marsh, riparian woodland, coastal grassland, thorn-scrub brush), the ranch supports an equally prolific and diverse birdlife. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Mottled Duck nest in the marshes (along with Least Bittern, Purple Gallinule, Common Moorhen, and Marsh Wren), and Masked Duck has appeared here in the recent past. In winter hordes of sparrows seem to litter the grasslands, and Sprague's Pipits often "rocket" out from underfoot when hiking through the fields. The riparian forest along the Mission River is a vector for migrant landbirds moving inland in spring (and toward the coast in fall), and in migration the trees vibrate from the sound of hummingbird feeding on turk's cap and hawking insects. A winter's sunset at the Fennessey Ranch,

skies choked with tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes, geese, and waterfowl, evokes

#### (361) 529-6600 www.fennesseyranch.com GPS: 28.23017, -97.24328

▲ CTC 042: MISSION RIVER FLATS Continue south on FM 2678 toward Bayside. The road crosses the Mission River, and the Mission River Flats may be birded (with caution) from the shoulder. In late summer and early fall Wood Storks may be seen here, and waterfowl flocks in the winter may be prodigious. Low water levels in spring may expose vast expanses of mudflats, and migratory shorebirds will concentrate in the shallow waters (also look for American Avocet here in winter).

#### GPS: 28.17928, -97.21203 ▲ CTC 043: BLACK POINT

the spirit of the Texas coast.

Continue south on FM 2678 (which becomes FM 136 immediately south of the Mission River) to Bayside. Inspect the flats south of Bayside for pelicans, herons, egrets, waterfowl, and shorebirds. These shallows are especially attractive to Reddish Egrets, and at low tide thousands of shorebirds may crowd the exposed flats (test vour prowess with "peeps" here). Notice that Bayside is perched upon a bluff overlooking Copano Bay. During migration hawks ride the updrafts from this ridge which offers an advantageous spot from which to see raptors such as Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks, all three falcons (American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine), and Northern Harrier at eye level. Bird this area in fall during the passage of cold fronts or northers to enjoy the peak raptor movements.

#### GPS: 28.08381, -97.22339 ▲ CTC 044: EGERY FLATS

Continue south on FM 136 from Bayside to Egery Flats, turning left (east) after leaving the causeway onto Egery Road. Search the flats along the road for herons egrets, and waterfowl, and the salt marshes for Clapper Rail and Seaside and Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrow. During low tides a broad selection of shorebirds, including American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Curlew, Black-bellied Plover, botl dowitchers, Dunlin, and Least Sandpiper will frequent the acres of exposed mudflat The shallow waters of Egery Flats attract all of the resident terns, so look in warm months for Caspian, Royal, Sandwich, Gull-billed, Forster's, and Least here. Black Terns may also be seen here in migration. Watch the marshes in the evening for flights of Roseate Spoonbills going to roost, and listen for the squawk of Blackcrowned Night-Herons as they fly out to the flats to feed each evening.

### GPS: 28.07125, -97.21903 ▲ CTC 045: WELDER PARK

Continue south on FM 136 to the intersection with TX 188. Turn right (west) on TX 188, and continue to Sinton and US 181. Welder Park (not to be confused with the Rob and Bessie Welder Park) may be reached off US 181 on N. Rachal in Sinton. From the intersection with N. Rachal, turn right (look for the sign to the Wayne Hitt Law Enforcement Center). Continue on N. Rachal across Chiltipin Creek to the entrance to the park (700 North Rachal Avenue). Welder is tucked away in a remote corner of Sinton, and the park is now closed to vehicular traffic in order to ensure its sanctity and solitude. Park at the entrance and stroll into the park. Welder is a magnet for migrating landbirds, and the immense trees along the creek may harbor flocks of migrants in the spring. Be sure to walk along the edge of the creek to find the two waterthrushes, Prothonotary Warbler, or Common Yellowthroat, Check the densest underbrush for skulkers such as Worm-eating, Hooded, and Mourning warblers. Adjacent to the park entrance is mesquite scrub, and a brief stop at the fence's edge may uncover a number of species (such as Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Bewick's Wren) that may not be seen within the park itself. GPS: 28.0485, -97.511086

## ▲ CTC 046: ROB AND BESSIE WELDER PARK

Rob and Bessie Welder Park is located on US 181 N approximately 2.5 miles north of Sinton. Within this multi-use facility (approximately 300 acres), the City of Sinton edicated about 45 acres to remain as a natural preserve. Enter the park and stay to the right past the ballparks until reaching the parking area for the nature trail. The trail loops through an area of open grasslands with scattered trees, and eventually passes by an observation platform overlooking a densely vegetated pond. Look in the cattails for Common Yellowthroat and Marsh Wren and in the trees surrounding the pond for migrant landbirds. An additional site, the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation, is located approximately 8 miles north of Sinton on US 77. Contact the Welder Wildlife Foundation for a bird checklist and information about public access. (361) 364-2643 www.welderwildlife.org GPS: 28.06791, -97.531621

Rockport-Fulton Area Aransas Pass Chamber of Commerce **Chamber of Commerce** www.aransaspass.org www.rockport-fulton.org (361) 758-2750 or (800) 633-3028

**ARANSAS LOOP** 

## (361) 729-6445 or (800) 242-0071

▲ CTC: 047A NORTH BAY SANCTUARY Leaving Sinton on TX 188, travel east toward Rockport. At the intersection with TX 136, turn right (south) and travel to CR 93A. Turn left on CR 93A and go 2.5 miles until you come to a white gate straight ahead of you. Park on the grass on the left side of the road. The entrance to the sanctuary is the gate on the left. The sanctuary is a 75-acre wildlife preserve that supports a wide array of South Texas wildlife. The combination of aquatic habitats, wetlands, grasslands, and brushy areas makes the sanctuary a haven for a diversity of bird species year-round. There are several naintained trails, and an elevated viewing platform that gives an "above-the-brush" view of the property. A 12-foot viewing tower allows viewers to check out the new prairie wetland project and to look across the fence at the larger wetlands containing an occasional Cattle Egret or Neotropic Cormorant rookery. A spacious photography/

### www.coastalbendaudubon.org/sanctuary.html GPS: 27.974143, -97.207082

viewing blind allows visitors to get close to the action.

▲ CTC: 047 ARANSAS WOODS Return to TX 136, turn right and continue to the intersection with TX 188. Turn right on TX 188 and continue east, allowing for a stop at Port Bay. Scan the bay for waterfowl and wading birds, and inspect the mudflats for shorebirds. Continue east to the intersection with TX 35 Bypass, turn left (north), and travel for 1.6 miles to the entrance to Aransas Woods (on your right). Park at the gate and enter. Aransas Woods is 140 acres of freshwater wetlands and Live Oak uplands with an extensive but primative walking trail system. During "fallouts" coastal mottes such as Aransas Woods offer food and protection to thousands upon thousands of weary landbirds who might otherwise perish if forced to continue inland to the nearest contiguous forests. The site's observation platform overlooks a complex of grassland, oak motte, and shallow wetlands, making this site attractive to birds and other wildlife year-round. GPS: 27.98769, -97.11019

#### ▲ CTC 047B: CAPE VELERO/PORT BAY ROAD Enjoy two birdy drives along Cape Velero Drive and Port Bay Road. Travel to the intersection of FM 1069 and Cape Valero Drive, turning onto Cape Velero. Birders are welcome in this subdivision. This 3-mile paved road winds through grassland and shrub areas before entering the marsh area. At the beginning of the road, a Great Kiskadee was regularly found for several years. Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese are

often found in winter in the scrubby middle section of the road. In the marsh areas farther down the road, look for Clapper Rails, Virginia Rails, Northern Harriers, Osprey, Black-necked Stilts, and herons. Continue south on FM 1069 for 2.2 miles to Port Bay Road (on your right). Port Bay Road consists of grassy dry scrub habitat. American Golden-Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Greater Roadrunner, Sandhill Crane, and White-tailed Hawk. GPS: 28.030849, -97.094314

Return to TX 35 and head north, cross Copano Bay Bridge, and continue another

5.5 miles. Cavasso Creek has a small boat launch on the south side of the creek's

year-round. Winter birds include Virginia Rail and Sora. All three grackle species

bridge. There is a pull off with good parking. This is a brackish estuary marsh with

resident Clapper Rails and Seaside Sparrows. Herons and egrets are often found here

### GPS: 28.217247, -96.987801

▲ CTC 047C: CAVASSO CREEK

▲ CTC 047D: HOLIDAY BEACH POND Head south back toward Holiday Beach on TX 35 until you arrive at a blinking light at Holiday Beach Blvd., and turn left. Head east on Holiday Beach Blvd., turn right onto St. Charles Loop W, turn left on Desota Dr., turn right onto St. Charles Loop E, and then turn right onto Lakeview Dr. Holiday Beach Pond runs the length of Lakeview Drive and is a large freshwater pond that can host large numbers of birds. In the winter, large numbers of ducks can be found here along with Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. Both night herons are found here year-round. In the spring and summer Purple Gallinule and Least Bitterns are regular visitors. Wood Storks are also summer visitors. Aransas Pathways is planning to build two observation platforms on this pond in the future. GPS: 28.163867, -96.994509

#### ● CTC 048: GOOSE ISLAND STATE PARK Continue north on TX 35 Bypass until reaching its dead end at FM 3036. Turn right (east), and continue until the intersection with TX 35. Turn left (north) on TX 35 and continue across Copano Bay on the Lyndon B. Johnson Causeway. Turn right (east) on Main Street in Lamar. Continue straight ahead to Park Road 13 and the entrance to the park. Notice the live oaks within the esplanade as you approach the park. During a spring cold front these trees may be congested with migrant landbirds, and the groundings or "fallouts" that have occurred here on the southern tip of the Lamar Peninsula are legendary. Goose Island is uniquely located on the coast, both trans-gulf and circum-gulf migrants pass through the park. Travel straight to Lamar can be rewarding. Beach Rd. at St. Charles Bay. Turn left (north), and proceed along the bayfront, halting periodically to view the rafts of waterfowl that crowd these waters. Check out the freshwater pond at the junction of 4th St. for bitterns, Anhingas and night herons. Be sure to check the open fields on your left; Whooping Cranes make Lamar Peninsula their over-wintering ground. The road will veer left (west) on 12th Street, and you will soon approach Big Tree, the live oak estimated to be around 1,000 years old (Whooping Cranes are regularly reported near here as well). Continue straight to

#### (361) 729-2858 www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/goose-island GPS: 28.135085, -96.986661 warblers during dry spells. ● CTC 049: COPANO BAY FISHING PIER

Return to TX 35 via Main Street and turn left (south) toward Fulton. The Copano Bay State Fishing Pier extends from the tip of Lamar Peninsula to Fulton, and may be accessed (for a fee) from the base of the Lyndon B. Johnson Causeway. Try walking the fishing pier with a scope, and scanning the bay for loons, grebes, and diving ducks. Directly across from the pier is a free site called Oystercatcher Point (southeast corner of the causeway) that you can scope as well for ducks, shorebirds and wading birds including resident American Oystercatcher, Willet, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Tricolored Heron, and Reddish Egret. Watch over the causeway itself during spring and fall for migrating hawks. Peregrine Falcon, Merlin Osprey, and Swallow-tailed Kite (rare) have been seen traversing the bridge. GPS: 28.113077, -97.024705

#### 2.6 miles and the park will be on your right. This small park's stands of mesquite and ebony trees provide habitat for passerines. There is also access to Copano Bay and to a shell reef. Walk along the shore and scan for birds. This is a good sites for American Oystercatcher, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Roadrunner, Long-billed Thrasher, and Forster's, Royal, and Caspian terns. GPS: 28.09554, -97.05175

Continue south on TX 35 to the intersection with FM 1781 and turn right; continue

▲ CTC 049A: HOWARD MURPH MEMORIAL PARK

▲ CTC 050: ROCKPORT DEMO BIRD GARDEN AND WETLANDS POND Continue south on TX 35 toward Rockport, and stop at the TXDOT highway rest area on the left (0.9 miles south of the intersection of TX 35 and FM 3036). Park and walk around the hummingbird garden and walking trails in the adjacent live oak ridge. In early September tens of thousands of hummingbirds (predominantly Ruby-throated) pass through Rockport, and the community celebrates this event with their annual HummerBird Celebration. At this rest stop garden you may study hummingbirds and learn about the various native plants that attract them. Shore birds, migratory birds, and waterfowl are seen here. Enjoy the wetland demonstration ponds constructed to show the value of wetlands as a natural resource. GPS: 28.047667, -97.04229

▲ CTC 050A: ROCKPORT BEACH PARK/ROCKPORT HARBOR Continue south on Business TX 35 for 1.4 miles, turn left on East Laurel and there will be a sign directing you to the Rockport Beach Park entrance at the end of the street. Aransas Bay is on your right and Little Bay is on the left as you enter the park. This stretch of road is about a mile long. There are two bird islands in Little Bay. There is an observation platform along the loop at the end of the park road. During breeding season, this area supports hundreds of Black Skimmers, Least Terns, Tricolored Herons, and Roseate Spoonbills. In the winter, there is a large variety of species including Merlin and large flocks of Avocets. Common in spring and summer are Black Tern, Magnificent Frigatebird, and Wilson's Plover. As you leave the park, continue straight and turn left on Veteran's Memorial Drive which leads to Rockpor Harbor. This is a semi-circle drive around the harbor. Because this is deep water habitat, Common Loons are found here most of the winter. Diving ducks also like the deeper waters of the harbor. They include scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, and GPS: 28.02691, -97.046399

### ■ CTC 050B: WHOOPING CRANE BOAT TOURS TO ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Rockport is also the base for several boats that visit the feeding areas of the Whooping Crane at Aransas NWR in the winter, and various nesting islands for colonial waterbirds in the summer. For the best views of Whooping Crane, it is advisable to go by boat (you may see Whooping Crane from the observation tower at Aransas NWR, but such views are normally distant). For boat trips to see birds, in season, contact the Rockport-Fulton Area Chamber of Commerce. www.rockport-fulton.org/index.php/birding/whooping-crane-▲ CTC 051 CONNIE HAGAR COTTAGE SANCTUARY

Continue south on TX 35, and stop at the Connie Hagar Wildlife Sanctuary (en route to the Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary). Search for grebes, pelicans, and waterfowl (particularly Redhead). Continue south on TX 35, staying in the left lane. Pass through the Rockport business district on Loop 70 (Austin St.). Turn right on E. Market to continue on Loop 70; follow to S. Church. Turn left on S. Church, and continue until reaching the Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary at E. First. Turn right on E. First, and enter the sanctuary through the entrance on your right. On this site Connie Hagar and her husband, Jack, owned and operated a small motel, the Rockport Cottages, in the 1930s at a time when Hagar brought national attention to the importance of the Coastal Bend of Texas for birding and bird migration. This sanctuary, established and maintained by the Friends of Connie Hagar, supports migrants that stream through the oak mottes in Rockport. Although small at a little over 6 acres, the sanctuary contains a surprising assortment of habitats. Multitudes of vireos, warblers, grosbeaks, flycatchers, and thrushes may jam the woods during a spring grounding, and the bordering grassy fields are frequently packed with Dickcissels, assorted sparrows, and buntings (Painted included). GPS: 28.00897, -97.05931

▲ CTC 051A: NORTH COVE HARBOR WETLAND SANCTUARY Continue south on Austin Street through downtown Rockport. Turn right on Market Street, turn left on Bronte/Business 35 (at the light), and drive down Bronte/Busine 35 for 1.9 miles. You will see a parking lot on the left with a sign for the sanctuary. This is a 100-acre wetland with an 800-foot boardwalk that has a covered platform at the end. Site is dependent on tides and can be productive after rains, especially in the winter and spring. Shorebirds, wading birds, rails, and sparrows can be found here. From the sanctuary parking lot drive south on TX 35 for 0.4 miles and turn lef into Cove Harbor for additional birding. There is a boat ramp and parking and it is a wonderful site for shorebirds. Take time to scope small islands in the channel as well.

## GPS: 27.997021, -97.072755

▲ CTC 052: NEWBURY PARK HUMMINGBIRD GARDEN When leaving the Connie Hagar Cottage Sanctuary, continue west on E. First to where it dead-ends at TX 35. Turn left (south) on TX 35, and travel to Aransas Pass. Entering on TX 35, continue into Aransas Pass to the intersection of TX 35 and Loop 90 and then veer right on Business 35 to Lamont (when approaching this tersection on Business 35, you may turn left on Lamont and continue straight into Newbury Park). Within this small community park of coastal live oaks, the City of Aransas Pass is a hummingbird garden. Since tens of thousands of hummingbirds pass through Aransas Pass in migration, the hummingbird garden offers a relaxing and intimate place for watching and enjoying the smallest of our migratory birds. Also inspect the oaks in the park for migrant landbirds, particularly during spring

#### GPS: 27.90906, -97.14994 ▲ CTC 053: RANSOM ROAD NAVIGATION DISTRICT PARK From Newberry Park, continue on Harrison Boulevard south to TX 361 toward Ingleside (don't take TX 361 east to Port Aransas yet) and turn left on Ransom Road

Search the wetlands here for rails and shorebirds. Restrooms and picnic facilities are available in the park. GPS: 27.88819, -97.14772 ▲ CTC 054: ARANSAS PASS COMMUNITY PARK Continue south on TX 361 a short distance from Ransom Park to Johnson Avenue. and turn left into the Aransas Pass Community Park (look for the ballparks). This community park offers a view of Redfish Bay from the observation platform. A boardwalk into the adjoining grassy fields and wetlands is being planned, so keep an

eye on this site over the next few years. Restrooms and picnic facilities are available

(look for the sign to the municipal airport). Travel to the end of Ransom Road, and

turn left into Ransom Road Navigation District Park. The channel may be viewed

from the observation platform, so look for loons, grebes, pelicans, and diving ducks

#### GPS: 27.88669, -97.15667 ▲ CTC 055: LIVE OAK PARK Continue on TX 361 to Ingleside and the intersection with FM 1069 (entering

within the park.

Ingleside, TX 361 will swing to the west toward Gregory). Turn left (south) on FM 1069 and continue to Sherry Street and the sign to Live Oak Park. Turn left on Sherry and enter Live Oak Park, Carved out of a dense oak motte, the park is a community facility that provides outdoor recreational opportunities as well as a nature trail and is a small remnant of the extensive oak forest that once covered the coast bordering Redfish Bay. Walk the nature trail and notice the dense red bay understory that dominates this woodland. The deep leaf litter carpeting the forest floor is particularly attractive to thrushes, thrashers, and ground-dwelling warblers such as Worm-eating, Ovenbird, Hooded, and Swainson's (rare) GPS: 27.85383, -97.21606 ▲ CTC 056: ARANSAS PASS WETLANDS

#### Continue on FM 1069 to the intersection with FM 2725, turn left (north) on FM 2725, and travel to the intersection with TX 361. Turn right on TX 361, and continue north to the intersection where TX 361 will swing to the right (east). Turn right and continue

toward Port Aransas. Before crossing the bridge, turn left at the sign into Conn Brown Harbor (left on the dirt road, right on the paved road that proceeds into the harbor). Conn Brown Harbor is best birded in winter; search the waters here for loons, grebes, diving ducks, and pelicans. Return to TX 361, and continue east toward Port Aransas. The stretch of TX 361 between Aransas Pass and Port Aransas is bordered by Redfish Bay and associated wetlands, tidal flats, and sand spits. Stop periodically along this road (the Dale Miller Causeway) and look for waterfowl, shorebirds, loons, grebes, American Oystercatcher, Snowy Plover, and a wide variety of waterbirds. Sooty Tern has been seen feeding over these waters on occasion in summer. The causeway east of the bridge can be decent birding for beach and bay birds. GPS: 27.897743, -97.139096

### MUSTANG ISLAND LOOP

Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce/Tourist Bureau www.portaransas.org (361) 749-5919 or (800) 45-COAST

▲ CTC 057A: PORT ARANSAS NATURE PRESERVE

Continue on TX 361 to the ferry landing. After crossing on the free ferry (enjoy the Bottle-nosed Dolphins and Brown Pelicans during the brief trip), disembark the ferr and turn right on Cut-Off Road. Make an immediate right on Port Street and continue to the Port Aransas Nature Preserve. Three miles of hiking/biking trails pass through coastal prairie, wooded uplands, and tidal saltflats. Viewing towers provide elevated views of saltwater wetlands and a panoramic view of the preserve. The preserve is nome to numerous species of resident waterbirds such as Reddish Egrets, Roseate Spoonbills, American Oystercatchers, and Long-billed Curlews. Bird diversity is highest during spring and fall migrations when neotropical migrant land-birds and shorebirds can be abundant. Many migrating species overwinter here and winter visits can produce Grasshopper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, and Sedge Wrens in the grasslands, while the wetland areas hold good numbers of shorebirds like Marbled Godwits, Dunlin, Piping Plovers, and Long- and Short-billed dowitchers, as well numerous ducks such as Mottled Ducks, Northern Pintails, and American Widgeon Close views of nesting Snowy and Wilson's ployers and Horned Larks in early summer www.cityofportaransas.org/Nature\_Preserve.cfm

### GPS: 27.834015, -97.086399 ▲ CTC 057B: JOAN & SCOTT HOLT PARADISE POND

From the Port Aransas Nature Preserve, return to Cut-Off Road and turn right. Go .02 miles and turn right at the sign for the pond; proceed to parking area. This 2-acre park is a spectacular "migrant-trap" nestled in the city of Port Aransas. The small freshwater pond is surrounded primarily by black willows that provide

feeding and resting habitat for numerous neotropical migrants. The site includes a hummingbird/butterfly garden at the entrance and includes a boardwalk and decks provide easy access to see birds under a mantle of trees. Bird diversity is highest during the spring and fall and the boardwalk provides remarkably close viewing of rous empidonax flycatchers, vireos, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and ountings. The pond's water level varies with rainfall; a full pond during wet periods provides food and shelter for Blue-winged Teal and nesting habitat for Black-bellied Whistling Ducks while drips into two small pools provide great views of bathing www.cityofportaransas.org/Paradise\_Pond.cfm

### GPS: 27.834157, -97.072025

▲ CTC 057: LEONABELLE TURNBULL BIRDING CENTER Turn right to continue on Cut-Off Road and make a hairpin turn onto Ross Ave., which dead-ends at the birding center. This birding facility is a vivid example of what a community can do to attract birds and birders alike. The boardwalk extends into a freshwater marsh associated with the adjoining wastewater treatment plant. Little fresh water is available for much of the year on barrier islands such as Mustang, and these ponds offer a consistent supply of water for a wide variety of wetland species. The boardwalk here allows for close observation of many birds. Walk to the observation platform and look for waterfowl (Black-bellied Whistling-Duck Cinnamon Teal), grebes (Least included), heron and egrets, cormorants, shorebird (such as Black-necked Stilt), and flaming pink Roseate Spoonbills. The parking area and trails to the boardwalk are planted with native species, so be alert for hummingbirds, warblers and other songbirds during migration. Keep your eyes open for the resident American Alligators "Boots" and "Bags!"  $www.city of portar ansas.org/Leonabelle\_Turnbull\_Birding\_Center.cfm$ 

#### GPS: 27.826944, -97.077827 ▲ CTC 058: PORT ARANSAS JETTY

The Port Aransas Jetty is located at the far east end of Cotter Avenue on the beach The jetty extends for several hundred yards into the Gulf, and furnishes an excellent vantage point from which to look for a variety of open water species. Gulls and terns often roost at the base of the jetty, and shorebirds may be seen feeding along the beach. Scan the Gulf, particularly in winter, for species such as Northern Gannet, Bonaparte's Gull, and jaegers, and in summer for Magnificent Frigatebird, Masked and Brown booby (also seen at times perched on rocks of the jetty itself), and Sooty Tern. Day use is free, with a fee for overnight camping. It is possible to ride as an observer on a fishing boat out of Port Aransas. The snapper boats travel out to deep water, and at times (particularly in the fall) a number of pelagic species such as boobies, shearwaters, and jaegers may be seen. Contact the Port Aransas Chamber o Commerce for information about nature birding tours in the bays and offshore. GPS: 27.83242, -97.05569

#### ▲ CTC 059: PORT ARANSAS WETLAND PARK Return on TX 361 S to Cut-Off Road. Continue south on TX 361 for 0.3 miles from

shorebirds during wet periods. This site is ephemeral and during migration the scrubby vegetation and grasses attract a number of migrant landbirds. GPS: 27.82456, -97.07031 CTC 060: MUSTANG ISLAND STATE PARK Mustang Island SP is located on PR 53 (TX 361) approximately 14 miles south of Port Aransas. As you travel south along Mustang Island, cut back to the beach whenever possible to look for gulls, terns, and shorebirds. Glaucous Gulls are seen here with some consistency in early spring. At high tide check along the ng and Snowy ployers, as well as Red Knots, The state park subsumes an entire barrier island ecosystem, encompassing dunes coastal grasslands, marshes, and bayside tidal flats, and sloughs. The beach may

this intersection to the Port Aransas Wetland Park (look for the sign on your right)

The wetland lies on a natural tidal flat along TX 361. The observation platform

verlooks a freshwater basin that may be thick with a variety of waterfowl and

#### perhaps LeConte's Sparrow. Look for nesting Wilson's Plover along the beach and on the tidal flats in summer and Horned Lark among the dunes themselves. Campsites with hookups are provided in the park. (361) 749-5246 www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/mustang-island

be particularly rewarding in winter for gulls, terns, and shorebirds (scan the Gulf

for seabirds), and a walk in the coastal grasslands should uncover Sedge Wren and

As you proceed south along Mustang Island toward Corpus Christi, you will cross

several hurricane wash-over sites. These inlets or passes have been cut through the

island by the scouring action of past tropical storms, and are a relatively common

▲ CTC 061: CORPUS CHRISTI PASS

GPS: 27.67447, -97.17553

phenomenon on coastal barrier islands. Corpus Christi Pass slices across the island south of Mustang Island State Park, and the bayside flats here are the wintering haunts of such species as Piping Ployer and Long-billed Curlew. Search the inlet waters for waterfowl (such as Hooded Merganser) and look for nesting Snowy Plover GPS: 27.65039, -97.19169 **▲ CTC 062: PACKERY CHANNEL** Continue south to Packery Channel which divides the island. The bayside flats at Packery Channel may retain thousands of shorebirds at low tide. Search the flocks fo Marbled Godwit, American Oystercatcher, and Long-billed Curlew. Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, and Snowy Plover often scurry along the edges of the pass, and

## GPS: 27.62361, -97.20969

watch for diving ducks, loons, and grebes in the clear waters of the channel.

■ CTC 063: PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE Continue south on TX 361, and turn left (south) on PR 22 to Padre Island National Seashore. A visit to the pristine Padre Island National Seashore (along with Matagorda Island) is unrivaled among Texas barrier island experiences. Continue along PR 22 to the entrance and visitor's center (approximately 10 miles). Ask for a bird checklist, as well as a map of this 133,000-acre park. The national park extends south for over 80 miles to Port Isabel, and most of the beach is accessible only in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. From the visitor's center, it is possible to drive approximately 5 miles beyond the end of the paved road before encountering sof sand. Peregrine Falcons pass through the park by the hundreds in fall, and migrant landbirds swarm the scrubby vegetation in the spring. Gulls, terns, and shorebirds line the beaches, and a variety of raptors (White-tailed Kite, White-tailed Hawk, erruginous Hawk in winter) may be seen perched on the power poles along PR 22 Also try Bird Basin Road, which can be reached 2.6 miles north of the visitor's center as you leave via the park entrance road (look for the signs on your left as you depart the park). In the marshes along this road you may find gallinules, bitterns, and shorebirds, and nesting colonies of colonial waterbirds (herons, egrets, terns,

Black Skimmer) may be seen by scope from the end of the road.

#### (361) 949-8068 www.nps.gov/pais GPS: 27.49125, -97.27997

GPS: 27.62558, -97.22206

▲ CTC 064: PACKERY CHANNEL PARK Return north on the park entrance road, and turn left (west) on PR 22 toward Corpus Christi. After a short distance turn right into Packery Channel County Park The park offers another view of Packery Channel and the birds normally associated with the area are present here. As you enter the park, however, notice the oak mottes to your right among the private houses. These woods attract landbirds in migration, and birders consider this to be one of their most fruitful spots in spring. Walk along the public roads (do not trespass), and examine the trees for migrants. A number of rarities have been discovered here in the past, including Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Gray Kingbird, and Black-whiskered Vireo.

## CORPUS CHRISTI BAY LOOP

Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau www.VisitCorpusChristiTX.org/birding (361) 881-1888 or (800) 766-BEACH CTC 065: JFK CAUSEWAY WETLANDS From Packery Channel County Park, return to PR 22 and turn right (west) toward

Corpus Christi. After traversing the bridge over the Laguna Madre, the IFK Causeway becomes a rather low crossing that offers opportunities to park and view the bay. With recent upgrades to the causeway, exit Waldron Road, turn left (south) under the freeway turning back toward the island in order to access the lower section of the causeway. The flats along the causeway may be awash with herons, egrets (look for Reddish), pelicans, and shorebirds. Toward the west end of the causeway you will notice an area of beach that is protected for nesting Black Skimmers. The skimmers and their young may be seen here in summer, and also look for nesting Least Terns and Wilson's Plovers.

#### ▲ CTC 066: REDHEAD POND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA Continue west on the JFK Causeway (which becomes South Padre Island Drive west of the Laguna Madre) and enter Flour Bluff. Exit Waldron Road, turn left (south) under

GPS: 27.6395, -97.24647

he freeway and return to Laguna Shores Road. Turn right and continue south on Laguna Shores to Redhead Pond WMA. Do not park on Laguna Shores Rd. Redhead Pond's observation platform affords a protected view of the waterfowl that winter in the ponds. Redhead is particularly common, but a number of duck species (as well as grebes and Black-crowned Night-Herons) winter here. Watch for Common Goldeneve and Hooded Merganser, two species that may be difficult to see elsewhere along the coast. GPS: 27.63956, -97.28731 △ CTC 067: SOUTH TEXAS BOTANICAL GARDENS & NATURE CENTER Return to Laguna Shores Road, and turn right (south). Continue to the intersection

Center on your right. The center boasts an impressive assortment of South Texas

lined Bird and Butterfly Trail, and a reed-lined Gator Lake which can be observed

tower. The nature trails, which at some locations border Oso Creek, offer a glimpse

from both the Palapa Grande (an open-air, thatched-roof gazebo) and a birding

habitats, including wildflower fields, nature trails through virgin mesquite, an herb-

#### with Yorktown Boulevard, and turn right (west) again. Travel on Yorktown Boulevard to the intersection with S. Staples Street, and turn left (south). Continue on S. Staples across Oso Creek to the entrance to the South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature

end of Wesley Seale Dam. Park and walk down to the river below the dam. Look for bitterns, Common Yellowthroat, and Marsh Wren in the marsh, and similar birds in the woodlands as those seen at the previous two sites. Return to TX 359 and listen for Great Kiskadee and Green Jay in the woods along the river. Turn right on TX 359 and proceed west to Sandia. Turn left (south) on FM 70 in Sandia, and continue until making an abrupt right. Drive for a short distance (approximately 2.5 miles) and turn left on CR 58. This road will eventually curve to the left, and continue straight

### (361) 852-2100 GPS: 27.65228, -97.40617

and border plantings with native trees.

▲ CTC 068: OSO BAY PARK Travel north on Staples Street and turn right (east) on South Padre Island Drive Continue to the Ennis Joslin Road exit. Turn left (north) on Ennis Joslin Rd. and continue along Oso Bay. Stop at the first small park on your right, and scan Oso Bay for pelicans, waterfowl, and shorebirds. This site (as well as sites CTC 069 and CTC 070) are best birded on a falling tide, so be sure to check the tide tables that are published in the local newspaper. Thousands of waterbirds pack these shallow waters, and a sunset here in winter should be unforgettable. GPS: 27.70347, -97.33614

of South Texas scrub birding, with species such as Groove-billed Ani, Long-billed

Thrasher, Curve-billed Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, and Olive Sparrow relatively easy to see

here. At the lake and creek search for waterbirds, including Least Grebe (also look

for Couch's Kingbird in the trees that border the lake). Additionally, the center has 10

formal gardens and floral exhibits and has planted more bird attractors in individual

www.stxbot.org

garden areas, such as the Butterfly Garden/Butterfly House, Hummingbird Garden,

### ▲ CTC 069: HANS A. SUTER WILDLIFE REFUGE

Continue north on Ennis Joslin Rd. for a short distance to Hans A. Suter Wildlife Refuse (on the right). The boardwalk here provides access to the lagoon, and be sure to check the tidal pools bordering the boardwalk for rails and shorebirds. The short nature trail that connects the parking lot with the boardwalk may be teeming with landbirds in migration, so don't be so quick to rush to the lagoon. The waterbird display at Hans Suter is staggering, so check the tides and be prepared to spend an hour or two relishing the show. GPS: 27.70822, -97.33817 ▲ CTC 070: TEXAS A&M – CORPUS CHRISTI NATURE TRAIL

#### Drive and take the first entrance into the campus. The guard at the security kiosk can give you parking instructions. As you walk the nature trail that follows the Oso Bay shoreline, inspect the tidal flats here for Piping and Snowy plover, and watch for

and the angle of the sun for determining which vantage point to choose.

The third site from which to view Oso Bay is the nature trail at Texas A&M

University – Corpus Christi, Continue north on Ennis Joslin Rd.to its merger with

Alameda Street and veer right as Alameda ends at Ocean Drive. Turn right on Ocean

flocks of Roseate Spoonbills in the shallow waters of Oso Bay itself. Each of these

three sites (CTC 068-070) offers a different view of Oso Bay, so watch both the tide

▲ CTC 071: BLUCHER PARK Exiting Texas A&M – Corpus Christi, turn west on Ocean Drive and travel into downtown Corpus Christi. Ocean Drive becomes Shoreline Drive as you enter the waterfront area, and continues north to the downtown business district. Blucher Park is located on Carrizo Street, next to the Central Library. Turn left on Cooper's Alley and continue up the hill. Take a left on S. Tancahua St., followed by a right on Kinney St., and a right on Carrizo St. This densely wooded park with a small creek flowing through its center attracts migrating landbirds. Stroll through the park and check every nook and cranny for flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, and warblers. An information kiosk is located at the corner of Blucher and Carrizo streets showcasing the birds

### GPS: 27.79158, -97.40003

GPS: 27.71733, -97.3285

△ CTC 072: TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM Return to Shoreline Drive, and continue north on I-37. Take TX 35 / US 181 north across the high bridge over the turning basin toward Portland, and exit at Surfside. The aquarium is located on Corpus Christi Beach to your right. Although dedicated to the conservation of the oceans, the aquarium considers seabirds to be an integra part of the marine ecosystem as well. A bird rehabilitation center is operated out of the aquarium, and a number of injured and orphaned birds (such as pelicans) are kept on display. The aquarium also offers a rather extensive environmental education program, and information on area birds and birding is always available here. Follow the signs from the aquarium to US 181 north and stay on the frontage road until you reach the wetlands adjacent to the south end of the Nueces Bay Causeway. You'll have access to both Nueces and Corpus Christi bays. Peregrine Falcons, Brown Pelicans, Snowy and Piping plovers and all of the bay ducks can be seen here. Shorebirds are best viewed from the south frontage road. (361) 881-1200 or (800) 477-GULF www.texasstateaquarium.org

and habitat of the park along with an interpretive map and two Chimney Swift towers.

#### ▲ CTC 073: INDIAN POINT / SUNSET LAKE Continue north on TX 35 / US 181 toward Portland, and exit Indian Point Pier. Indian

GPS: 27.815299, -97.392061

beach, and search the bay for gulls and terns. Also in the immediate area is Sunset Lake (look for loons, grebes, and diving ducks here). There is a pedestrian-only trail as well. The salt cedars along the walkway are worth checking in migration for landbirds. GPS: 27.85497, -97.35442 ▲ CTC 074: FRED JONES NATURE SANCTUARY Return to TX 35 / US 181 and continue north to Portland, Exit at Moore Avenue (FM 893), and turn left (west). Travel on FM 893 west approximately 6.5 miles to

the four-way traffic stop. Turn left (south) on CR 69E (Koonce Loop Rd.) and go

0.5 miles to the sanctuary on the left. Park only on the sanctuary side (east) of

the road. This sanctuary is well worth the sidetrip during migration. Situated on

blackbrush acacia, brasil, agarita, Texas olive), this tiny site is an oasis in the middle

Point is located to your immediate right on Corpus Christi Bay as you exit (follow the

for observing waterbirds. Look for various shorebirds on the tidal flats and along the

signs). With a boardwalk surrounding marshes, Indian Point is an exceptional spo

#### of miles and miles of barren agricultural fields. Landbirds crossing the bay are naturally drawn to this spot, and the selection of vireos and warblers here in spring may be sizable. Donations are requested.

GPS: 27.87975, -97.40989 O CTC 075: NUECES RIVER PARK (LABONTE PARK) Continue west on FM 893 to FM 1074. Turn right on FM 1074 (eventually north) and continue to the intersection with FM 631. Turn left (west) on FM 631, and continue to the intersection with US 77 in Odem. Turn left (south) on US 77, and return to I-37. Take I-37 east toward Corpus Christi, and exit at Nueces River Park. The riparian woodlands along the river here attract migrant landbirds in spring, and kingfishers (Belted) often perch on low-slung branches over the water.

Continue east on I-37 and exit at Violet Road. Turn right (south) on Violet, and

(Groove-billed Ani, Pyrrhuloxia, Olive Sparrow). Walk along the creek and look for

a variety of sparrows in winter (Swamp, Lincoln's), and listen in late spring for the

#### continue to the intersection with Leopard Street. Turn right (west) on Leopard, and drive a short distance to the Hilltop Community Center (on your left). The nature trail here traverses native brush habitat, so search for migrants as well as for residents

▲ CTC 076: HILLTOP COMMUNITY CENTER

GPS: 27.88933, -97.62744

incessant "chick three beers" song of the White-eyed Vireo. GPS: 27.84839, -97.59108 ▲ CTC 076A: TULE LAKE Leaving Hilltop exit right onto Leopard Street then left on Violet Road. Exit right onto I-37 and travel on I-37 south to Southern Mineral Road exit. Exit and cross I-37 on Southern Minerals Road to Upriver Road. Turn left on Upriver Road to Tul-Lake, approximately 0.5 miles on right side of Up River Rd. Park off road alongside two covered overlooks that provide an excellent view of this small fresh water lake nestled between the Corpus Christi Ship Channel and heavy oil industry traffic.

#### Shorebirds, ducks, pelicans, spoonbills, egrets, herons, gulls, terns, rails, and in summer months, wood storks are a frequent sighting. GPS: 27.819173, -97.50499

Return to I-37 and head north; continue on I-37 north to Sharpsburg Rd. Take Sharpsburg Exit, at bottom of hill, take right at Up River Road and take driveway at immediate intersection with Sharpsburg which will lead to parking for the pond. Take the driveway on the left side of the major drainage ditch to reach the best ponds. Used by the water department as settlement ponds, this collection of lakes and pools provides habitat for a rich assortment of waterfowl (Black-bellied Whistling-Duck). Look for Least Grebe here as well as Least Bitterns in the summer The willows that line the ponds attract migrants (as well as White-winged Doves and Great Kiskadee), and Groove-billed Ani is often seen here in the low scrub. Excellent warblers in spring and fall and check for raptors during migration

## GPS: 27.861644, -97.613397

▲ CTC 078: HAZEL BAZEMORE COUNTY PARK Continue west on Up River Road (which becomes FM 624 at US 77) to the sign marking the entrance to Hazel Bazemore County Park (off CR 69). This park is renowned for its hawk migration in September and October. Tens of thousands (at times perhaps hundreds of thousands) of Broad-winged Hawks, Swainson's Hawks Mississippi Kites, and accipiters pass along the Nueces River and through the park each year, and birders from around the world travel here to witness the display. Hawks will migrate on the first cold fronts of the fall (arriving this far south in late September and early October), so watch the weather reports. The nature trail here is also worth checking for Olive Sparrow, Groove-billed Ani, and Long-billed Thrasher, and search the ponds for rails and waterfowl. GPS: 27.85731, -97.64389

## BRUSH COUNTRY LOOP

THE CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

▲ CTC 079: WESLEY SEALE DAM AND

Proceed west on FM 624 to the intersection with FM 666, then turn right (north) on FM 666 and continue to Mathis and the intersection with TX 359. Turn left (southwest) on TX 359, and proceed to Park Road 25. Turn right, and after a short distance (0.1 miles), park at the entrance to the City of Corpus Christi Wildlife Sanctuary. The nature trail entrance is to your left. The trail enters a rather dense elm-hackberry forest where a number of tropical species may be found. Continue on Park Road 2 north for 0.5 miles, and park at the north end of Wesley Seale Dam (on your left). Walk along the dam to the Nueces River. The pools at the base of the dam often attract vaterfowl (Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon), and for several years Black Phoebes have wintered along the rocks here. When reaching the dam walk the trails into the woods that extend along the river. Watch for Osprev flying down the river from the dam, and always look and listen for migrant landbirds in the trees.

derably more humid), and scrub species such as Curve-billed Thrasher, Greater

#### ● CTC 080: LAKE CORPUS CHRISTI STATE PARK Returning to Park Road 25, travel north for 0.8 miles to the entrance to the park. The park is generally dry chaparral (unlike the woodlands below the dam, which are

GPS: 28.04183, -97.85994

spring for singing Cassin's Sparrow. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks are usually found on the lake, and in winter a number of additional waterfowl species may appear. (361) 547-2635 www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lake-corpus-christi GPS: 28.05819, -97.86636 ▲ CTC 081: FORT LIPANTITLAN STATE HISTORIC SITE Return on Park Road 25 to the intersection with TX 359, turn right (southwest) and continue across the Nueces River. Immediately after crossing turn right at the sign for Camp Shawondasse, and continue approximately 0.5 miles to the south

Roadrunner, and Pyrrhuloxia are quite common. Check the dry grassy areas in late

## along the way). Continue on FM 534 until reaching I-37, then turn north on the freeway summer, and Audubon's and Bullock's orioles in the mesquite. Pauraque may be heard

BIRDING TRAIL

#### north of the city), turn left (east) on FM 3376 (Commerce Road). Proceed to North Texas Boulevard (1.5 miles), turn left (north) and continue 0.5 miles to Lake Findley, Lake Findley has been developed into a multi-purpose facility. Considerable brush remains on adjacent land and the scrub bordering the entrance road may offer rewarding birding. A number of South Texas species are resident here, including Least Grebe (look along the banks of the lake), Groove-billed Ani, Great Kiskadee and Green Jay. Sprague's Pipit winters in the short grass fields, and Grasshopper

#### Park is located on TX 44 between Agua Dulce and Banquette (watch for the signs) This small wooded park, situated on Agua Dulce Creek, may be lively in migration Depending upon the weather, check for a variety of migrant landbirds attracted to this isolated site (most of the surrounding habitat has been converted to cotton

Proceed east from Alice on TX 44 back toward Corpus Christi, Sablatura Nature

to the entrance to Fort Lipantitlan State Historic Site (at the end of CR 101). Search

the ancient mesquites and surrounding brush for Greater Roadrunner, Curve-billed

■ CTC 081A: KNOLLE FARM & RANCH: BED, BARN & BREAKFAST

Return to FM 70 and turn right, heading back to Sandia. At the 90-degree turn in

the road where FM 90 heads back to town, the farm and ranch will be on your

right. A number of paths lead to wetlands, river and lake spots (with canoes and

Head down FM 70 / CR 103 about 2.5 miles to where it curves to the left; continue

straight ahead on CR 360 toward the Nueces River. This narrow lane winds through

and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in the summer. From Sandia continue southwest on

Dinero. Travel a short distance and turn right on the road marked "Pernitas Point"

(approximately 5 miles). Bordering this road are excellent tracts of dry chaparral

throated Sparrow, and House Finch inhabit the brush and open slopes. Buff-bellied

Hummingbird and Groove-billed Ani may be seen around residences in the community

of Pernitas Point. Return to FM 534, and continue to Dinero (look for Harris's Hawk

toward San Antonio. Exit I-37 at TX 72, and proceed west to Three Rivers. Continue

west on TX 72 from Three Rivers to Choke Canyon State Park. Both the Calliham and

South Shore units of this park offer exemplary birding opportunities. In the Calliham

Unit, look for Wild Turkey around the campsites, Bell's Vireo nesting in the brush in

at dawn and dusk, and Olive Sparrows abound in the thickets. Look for nesting Cave

perched around the lake. A variety of hummingbirds have been seen here in winter

(361) 786-3868 www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/choke-canyon

around flowering tree tobacco (including Anna's).

GPS: 28.46733, -98.24364

▲ CTC 083: LAKE FINDLEY

Sparrow breeds in the taller grasslands.

make your way to Kingsville from Choke Canyon.

**Kingsville Visitor Center** 

www.kingsvilletexas.com

(361) 592-8516 or (800) 333-5032

**▲ CTC 084: JOHN J. SABLATURA NATURE PARK** 

GPS: 27.788213, -98.064909

GPS: 27.797021, -97.822952

Swallows in summer under the eaves of the picnic shelters and Vermilion Flycatchers

habitat, and species such as Lesser Nighthawk, Verdin, Cassin's Sparrow, Black-

TX 359 to the intersection with FM 534. Turn right on FM 534 and head north toward

esque Nueces bottomland country, and eventually curves back northwest to

FM 1540. Turn left on FM 1540, and continue to the intersection with FM 70. Turn right

and return to Sandia. As you drive these backroads look for Lark Bunting and a wealth

of sparrows and Sandhill Cranes feeding in the pastures in the winter. Crested Caracara

herons, geese, Sandhill Cranes, ducks, Wood Storks, and more

● CTC 082: CHOKE CANYON STATE PARK

kayaks available), and South Texas brushlands offering views of Lark Buntings, Lark

Sparrows, Green Javs, Eastern Bluebirds, Vermilion Flycatchers, Roseate Spoonbills,

www.knolle.com

(361) 547-2635 www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lipantitlan

winter along the barbed-wire fences near the entrance.

GPS: 27.964682, -97.817753

(361) 547-2546

GPS: 27.974164, -97.824454

Thrasher, Vermilion Flycatcher, and Lark Sparrow. Eastern Bluebirds may be found in

KINGSVILLE LOOP

**Bishop Chamber of Commerce** 

www.bishoptx.com

(361) 584-2214

### ▲ CTC 085: BISHOP CITY PARK Continue east on TX 44 to the intersection with US 77, turn right (south) and proceed

intersection with Jovce, Bishop City Park is located on your left (look for the ballfields) The City of Bishop is constructing a 0.8-mile nature trail along Caretta Creek, and this greenbelt will connect with Bishop Park at its southeast corner. When finished, the trail will cross the existing creek, and four observation platforms for birding are planned as well. At present there is a 0.6-mile hiking trail around a 9.1-acre lake at the park, and birds such as Vermilion Flycatcher should be regular here in winter. Species seen around the Bishop Park development include Least Grebe, Harris's Hawk, White-tailed Hawk, Groove-billed Ani, Paurague, Great Kiskadee, Green Jay, Long-billed Thrasher, Pyrrhuloxia, Olive Sparrow, Hooded Oriole, and Lesser Goldfinch. GPS: 27.58081, -97.80547

Continue south on Business 77 to Kingsville. Turn right (west) on TX 141, and

a rather sizable pool at this juncture with TX 141, and the surrounding trees and

continue west to the crossing with Santa Gertrudis Creek, Santa Gertrudis Creek forms

brush draw a variety of South Texas species such as Great Kiskadee, Couch's Kingbird,

Green Jay, Pyrrhuloxia, and Audubon's Oriole. In an otherwise arid landscape, this

lush oasis also attracts landbirds as they migrate north in spring. Look for Lark

toward Kingsville. When arriving in Bishop continue on Business 77 until reaching the

#### Bunting flocks in winter along the shoulder of TX 141 as you return toward Kingsville. and be vigilant for White-tailed Kite. White-tailed Hawk, and Harris's Hawk.

▲ CTC 086: SANTA GERTRUDIS CREEK

GPS: 27.53278, -97.95081 CTC 087: KING RANCH Return east to Kingsville on TX 141. As you approach Kingsville you will see the entrance to the Santa Gertrudis division of the King Ranch (approximately 3.5 mile west of US 77) and the King Ranch Visitor Center. The King Ranch offers birding and wildlife tours and private tours. You will explore habitats from wetland to grassland looking for birds such as Least Grebe, White-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara, Vermilion Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, Green Jay, Olive Sparrow, and more. A number of South Texas specialties, extremely rare anywhere in the United States, are relatively common on the ranch. As you leave the King Ranch, continue east on TX 141 to University Boulevard and the Texas A&M – Kingsville campus, Hooded Oriole reside

on the campus, so drive around and look for nests in the scattered palm trees.

#### (361) 592-8055 GPS: 27.52286, -97.89678

▲ CTC 088: DICK KLEBERG PARK Return on TX 141 to the intersection with Business 77. Proceed south on Business 77 to the intersection with Escondido and Dick Kleberg Park (turn left on Escondido to reach the entrance to the park). Walk the trail along the lake in winter to see Vermilion Flycatcher, a variety of waterfowl (including Black-bellied Whistling-Duck Lark Sparrow, and in summer look under the bridge at the north end of the lake for nesting Cave Swallows. Resident species here include Golden-fronted and Ladderbacked woodpeckers, Green Jay, Great Kiskadee, and Curve-billed and Long-billed thrashers. Check the short grass fields for both pipits (Sprague's is uncommon). GPS: 27.47561, -97.86681

▲ CTC 089: SANTA GERTRUDIS CREEK BIRD SANCTUARY

Leaving Dick Kleberg Park, turn right (east) on Escondido. Proceed to the

intersection with FM 1717 (Escondido will veer left on Brahma Blvd. before the

intersection), turn right and cross US 77, and continue to the Santa Gertrudis Creek

Bird Sanctuary (to your left). Walk the levee to view the extensive marsh and its

inhabitants: Least Grebe, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Purple Gallinule (summer)

www.king-ranch.com

#### Marsh and Sedge wrens, and a variety of herons and egrets. King, Sora, and Virginia rails winter here (listen for their calling in late winter and early spring). Look for Great Kiskadee and Green Jay in the surrounding mesquite woodlands. Cave Swallows

GPS: 27.37467, -97.70792

nest in summer in the culverts under FM 1717.

GPS: 27.46519, -97.83089 OCTC 091: DRUM POINT Return north on US 77 to the intersection with FM 772 (1 mile). Proceed east on FM 772, and watch for Common Ground-Dove, Groove-billed Ani, the two thrashers Pyrrhuloxia, and Painted Bunting (in summer) along the fencerows. Continue on FM 772 as it winds though the brush country to the intersection with CR 2250 E, then turn left (east) and continue to the intersection with CR 1132. Turn left and proceed north down the bluff to where the payement ends and the caliche begins (be extremely careful on this road during rain). Drum Point overlooks Cavo del Grullo (a segment of Baffin Bay); continue along the unpaved road for approximately 1 mile to look for herons, egrets (Reddish), pelicans, waterfowl (including Bufflehead and Lesser Scaup), and shorebirds. Wilson's Plover and Least Tern nest here in summer. In migration (April, September) millions of swallows and martins stream along the bluff.

#### (CR 1132 will veer south before reaching the town). Veer south on FM 628, eventually angling left to Arana Creek and Kaufer-Hubert Memorial Park (watch fo the signs). As you enter the park search the wetlands and mudflats at the mouth of Vattmann Creek for herons, egrets, and shorebirds (Wilson's Plover nest commonly here, Semipalmated, Snowy, and Piping occur in winter, and species such as Stilt,

Return to CR 2250 E, turn left (east) and proceed to Loyola Beach and FM 628

Pectoral, and White-rumped sandpipers may appear in spring). The ponds inside

CTC 092: KAUFER-HUBERT MEMORIAL PARK

the park may contain flocks of waterfowl (Greater Scaup, Black Scoter, and Surf Scoter have appeared in the past), and look in the brushy areas around the park for Common Ground-Dove, Green Jay, and Olive Sparrow. Camping facilities (including RV and trailer hook-ups) are available in the park. GPS: 27.31889, -97.68614 ▲ CTC 093: RIVERA FISHING PIER Retrace your path to FM 628, and turn south toward Riviera Beach. After a short distance FM 628 will turn right (west) to the intersection with FM 1526. Turn left (south) on FM 1526 and proceed to FM 771, then turn left (east) and continue to

Riviera Beach and the Rivera Fishing Pier. The fishing pier overlooks the mouth of

in Riviera Beach often lure Green Jays to feeders. Look for Groove-billed Ani in the

the Laguna Salada. Scan the waters for grebes, pelicans, and waterfowl. Residents

for the Louise Trant Bird Sanctuary just north of the intersection. This marsh is maintained by the Audubon Outdoor Club of Corpus Christi. Soras winter in this pond, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds may frequent the cattails in spring. Among the rarities that have appeared here are Red-billed Pigeon and Masked Duck.

thick brush along the road.

GPS: 27.28736, -97.66397

poles or soaring over the fields. Red-tailed Hawk is resident, and Ferruginous Hawk and American Kestrel are common in winter. Also look for flocks of Lark Buntings along the shoulder during winter. GPS: 27.28383, -97.82789



GREAT TEXAS COASTAL

**TEXAS** CENTRAL



In 1996, TPWD became the first state to outdoors and view wildlife.

**SWAROVSKI** 

CREDITS: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Special thanks to Clifford Shackelford (TPWD), Brent Ortego (TPWD), and Clay Taylor (Swarovski

available at the Texas State Publications Clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries. PWD MP W7000-273A (8/13)

TPWD receives federal assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies. TPWD is therefore subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination for 1972, in addition to state anti-discrimination laws. TPWD will comply with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any TPWD program, activity or event, you may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203, Attention: Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access.

Far West Texas Wildlife Trail Panhandle Plains Wildlife Trail Heart of Texas Wildlife Trail - West Heart of Texas Wildlife Trail - East Lower Texas Coast - Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail Central Texas Coast - Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail

sections of the map for free, find out where to get butterflies, bats, pronghorns, and more! Download

DISCOVER THE WILDLIFE OF TEXAS!



# From Three Rivers, travel south on TX 281 to Alice, Entering Alice on US 281 (still **TSAO2** fields). A bit of brush remains immediately adjacent to the park, so search the scrub for representative chaparral birds. Sablatura Park is always worth a short stop as you

## Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail -**Central Texas Coast**

launch a birding and wildlife viewing trail. Today the Great Texas Wildlife Trail is a nine-map series that highlights 980 sites in which Texans and visitors can recreate



Optik North America) for text review. In accordance with Texas State Depository Law, this publication is

©1996 TPWD; 2nd Edition 2002;

Prairies and Pineywoods Wildlife Trail - West Prairies and Pineywoods Wildlife Trail - East

Order all 9 maps for a special price! www.tpwd.texas.gov/wildlifetrails. a map for any region, or order your maps online at

Upper Texas Coast - Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail

wildlife-viewing spots in the state to observe birds, over 980 sites, these maps will guide you to the best Get all 9 Great Texas Wildlife Trail maps today. With

▲ CTC 094: LOUISE TRANT BIRD SANCTUARY Return on FM 771 west to Riviera. Travel north on US 77 for 0.1 miles, and watch

GPS: 27.30164, -97.81583

A CTC 095: HAWK ALLEY Before continuing south to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, proceed west on TX 285 toward Falfurrias. Kingsville birders have named this stretch of highway "Hawk Alley," and an assortment of raptors (White-tailed Hawk, Harris's Hawk, Crested Caracara are residents, Mississippi Kite, Broad-winged Hawk, and Swainson's Hawk migrate through this region by the hundreds of thousands) may be seen perched on power