

THE GREAT TEXAS COASTAL BIRDING TRAIL UPPER TEXAS COAST

The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail (the Trail) has been developed to help birders find the great avian resources along the Texas coast, and to ensure that the Texas coastal birding experience is rich and varied. Private citizens, landholders, conservation groups, businesses, governmental agencies, and communities are working together to build this natural promenade. While Texas is famed for its birds, Texans are known for their hospitality. On the Trail, birders benefit from the union of the two. The Texas Coast is a palette of tanagers, buntings, orioles, warblers, and humningbirds. No wonder travelers converge on Texas to marvel at this colorful array or Texas eclipses all other states in its numbers of bird species—over six hundred! Of these, more than 75% have been seen along the coast The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) jointly sponsor the Trail. Highway enhancement funds allocated to each state through the Intermodal Surface Fransportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) provide financial support for its development. The Upper Texas Coast (UTC) section of the Trail consists of 125 listinct birding sites. Each site is marked with the Trail logo and with a unique site number. Four sites have been enhanced with boardwalks, kiosks, observation plat forms, and/or landscaping. The Trail map informs visitors about birds that may be found at each site, the best season to visit the locations, and contacts for informa tion about food and lodging in the vicinity. The Trail is comprised of fifteen separate loops. Each 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. Sponsoring coastal communities and landholders generously pledge their backing, and invite the Trail and its visitors into their local communities. Local goods-and-service providers-hotels, motels, B&B's, campgrounds, restaurants, auto rental agencies, airlines, bookstores, gift shops, and gas stations-champion the Trail and are the foundation for its future. They need and deserve your support. So, welcome to the Trail! Enjoy a leisurely, relaxed journey as you wend you way along the coast. While you are here, be sure to say "hello" to your fellow birders, and let the local folks know that you are a visiting birdwatcher We are happy you came; we want to make your stay memorable. Thanks for taking the time to drop by, and good birding in Texas! Andrew Sansom **Charles Wes Heald**

GUIDE TO USING THE MAP

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Texas Department of Transportation

Executive Director

Executive Director

The natural beauty and history of Texas are often hidden and subtle. Not all of Texas' nature destinations are as conspicuous as Big Bend National Park or Padre Island National Seashore. This map furnishes information about the Trail locations, including detailed instructions on how to reach each site. Using this map birding 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 Upper Texas Coast that shows the 125 designated sites. Each site is marked with a symbol that points to its location, with the shape of the symbol signifying the following: Circle: The site is open daily, and developed camping is available at the site. **Triangle:** The site is open for day use only. Square: 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

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 fifteen loops, and no loop requires more than a long weekend to leisurely traverse. For birders who wish to visit the Trail over a weekend, try one or two of the loops. Descriptions of the sites are on the back of the map, and include directions to each location, the most productive seasons for visiting, 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 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. Information about traveling Texas highways may be requested from TxDOT

TPWD may be contacted about state parks and wildlife management areas (see addresses and telephone numbers below). The statewide Rare Bird Alert, support ed by the Houston Audubon Society, should be called for the most recent information about unusual birds sighted along the coast. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department **Texas Department of Transportation**

4200 Smith School Road Austin, Texas 78744-3291 Park Reservations: (512) 389-8900 Information: (800) 792-1112 www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Travel and Information Division P.O. Box 5064 Austin, Texas 78763 (800) 452-9292 www.traveltex.com

Audubon Statewide Rare Bird Alert Telephone: (713) 369-9673 www.io.com/~pdhulce/txrba

NOAA Weather Information Beaumont Radio: 162.475 MHz Galveston Radio: 162.550 MHz Houston Radio:162.400 MHz Internet: www.srh.noaa.gov/hgx

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BOLIVAR LOOP continued ▲ UTC 053: HAS EUBANKS WOODS BIRD SANCTUARY **Season: Migrations**

From the Roadside Park, travel north on TX 124 to Weeks Avenue (which may also be reached by returning west from Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary on Winnie Street). Go south on Weeks Avenue to Old Mexico Road, then east on Old Mexico Road to Eubanks Woods Bird Sanctuary. A boardwalk allows access to the woods in wet weather. The oaks in Eubanks Woods are rather young, and therefore migrants are often seen here at eye level (a welcome break from the neck stretching at Smith Oaks). You may continue east on Old Mexico Road to reach the east entrance to Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary. ▲ UTC 054: HAS S.E. GAST RED BAY SANCTUARY **Season: Migrations**

From the Roadside Park, go south on TX 124 to 7th Street. Turn west on 7th Street to S.E. Gast Red Bay Sanctuary. The Gast Sanctuary is perched on the western edge of High Island, and offers both woodland birding and a view of the coastal prairie that surrounds the salt dome (rather than an actual island, High Island is atop a salt dome that lifts above the coastal plain). The small willow-lined pond at the entrance to this sanctuary is a wonderful spot to look for migrants (just sit quietly on the bench and let the birds come to you). ▲ UTC 055: HAS BOY SCOUT WOODS BIRD SANCTUARY **Season: Migrations** From the Roadside Park, travel south on TX 124 to 5th Street (also reached from the Gast Sanctuary by returning to TX 124). Turn east on 5th Street and proceed

to Boy Scout Woods Bird Sanctuary. HAS staffs an information booth and shop in

this sanctuary during the spring. Annual and day passes may be purchased here. interesting migrants may show anywhere in these woods, so be sure to review the sighting sheet that is kept at the information booth. Remember that fall migration (from late August through October) is also an excellent time to bird High Island. The crowds are sparse (compared to spring), and the birding is just as entertaining Continue south on TX 124 from High Island to the coast and TX 87. TX 87 is still passable for a short distance east of High Island, and unusual gulls are often seen along this beach (also scope the pond just to the east of High Island for ducks). However, the road is washed out toward Port Arthur and should not be attempted in any vehicle. **UTC 056: ROLLOVER PASS**

Season: All Seasons From the intersection of TX 124 and TX 87, continue southwest on TX 87 to Rollover Pass. Scaup, mergansers, and occasionally scoters and Oldsquaw are seen in the nearshore waters along this stretch of the coast. Rollover Pass is a man-made channel across Bolivar Peninsula, and this "fish cut" has caused the formation of an extensive tidal flat on the bay (north) side of the peninsula. At low tide, tens of thousands of shorebirds, gulls, and terns will feed and roost here. In addition, the spoil islands in East Bay support significant colonial waterbird rookeries. UTC 057: YACHT BASIN ROAD Season: All Seasons Continue southwest on TX 87 to Yacht Basin Road (0.5 mile west of Rollover Pass). Yacht Basin dead-ends at the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), but

this short drive crosses an interesting coastal marsh. Whimbrels and Long-billed Curlews are often seen on the sand flats in migration, and Clapper Rails, Willets, and Seaside Sparrows breed in the cordgrass marsh. As you drive southwest along TX 87 toward Bolivar Flats, there are several roads that cut back toward the GIWW that are worth checking. Among these are Tuna Drive, Bob's Road, and Crystal Beach Road, Remember, however, that the land bordering these roads is private. BIRD ONLY FROM THE SHOULDER AND PLEASE DO NOT TRESPASS. ▲ UTC 058: HAS BOLIVAR FLATS SHOREBIRD SANCTUARY Season: All Seasons Continue southwest on TX 87 to Loop 108/Rettilon Road. Go south on Rettilon Road to the beach, then turn west and parallel the shoreline (try to stay on the

wet, packed sand) to Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. Park near the poles. Bolivar Flats sits at the base of the North Jetty, which protects the entrance to Galveston Bay. The jetty traps the longshore sediments that are carried southwestward along the coast, and the result is an extensive tidal flat. Tens of thousands of gulls, terns, and shorebirds feed here at low tide, and immense flocks roost here when the tide is high. Several thousand American Avocets spend the winter on the flats, joined by over 100 Piping Plovers. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows winter in the cordgrass, and Peregrine Falcons frequently stoop on the shorebird flocks out on the flats. Do not miss visiting this site. Continue southwest on TX 87 to the North Jetty (1.9 miles from Rettilon

Road). A walk along the jetty at low tide will offer good looks at many of the birds feeding on Bolivar Flats. • UTC 059: FORT TRAVIS SEASHORE PARK Season: Migrations Continue southwest on TX 87 to Fort Travis Seashore Park. Groove-billed Anis have been consistently seen in the thick shrubs around the park entrance. The trees

and shrubs at this location may hold migrants that you have otherwise missed along the coast. Remember that each woodlot along the coast is unique as to its exact mix of trees and shrubs. Migrants that occur along the upper coast in low densities (such as Cape May and Black-throated Blue warblers) are just as likely to appear in one of the minor sites as in the woods at High Island. In addition, species such as Nashville and Yellow warblers prefer scrubbier habitat, and are not frequently seen in the more mature mottes. In other words, be adventuresome

▲ UTC 060: FRENCHTOWN ROAD **Season: All Seasons** Continue southwest on TX 87 to Frenchtown Road (just before you reach the Bolivar ferry landing). Turn north and continue toward Port Bolivar. American Ovstercatchers are often seen along this road at low tide. Continue southwest on TX 87 to the Bolivar ferry landing, and cross to

GALVESTON LOOP

Galveston (the ferry ride is free).

Galveston Island Convention and Visitors Bureau (888) 425-4753, (800) 351-4236 and (409) 763-4311 Email: cvb@phoenix.net www.galvestontourism.com ▲ UTC 061: THE CORPS WOODS AT GALVESTON Season: Migrations **Enhancements: Fencing and trail improvements** After exiting the ferry on the Galveston side of the bay, continue south on TX 87 to TX 168 (0.6 mile). Go north on TX 168 to the Corps Woods at Galveston. This

woodlot is being improved as a birding destination with GTCBT funds including a nature trail, parking area, and observation platform. ▲ UTC 062: BIG REEF AND APPFEL PARK Season: All Seasons Return to TX 87 (Ferry Road), and continue south to Seawall Blvd. Travel northeast on Seawall Blvd. to the dead-end at the east end of Galveston Island. Turn east to reach Big Reef and Appfel Park (also known as East Beach). Big Reef,

an extensive sand spit isolated by the entrance to Galveston Bay, may be reached

BIG THICKET LOOP Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau (409) 880-3749

Email: bmtcvb@beaumontcvb.com www.beaumontcvb.com **Orange Chamber of Commerce** (800) 258-4906 Email: orgcvb@exp.net www.org-tx.com/chamber **Jasper Chamber of Commerce** (409) 384-2762 Email: jaspercc@jas.net www.jaspercoc.org **Kountze Chamber of Commerce** (409) 246-3413 Email: ktz_coc@exp.net

Newton County Chamber of Commerce (409) 379-5527 www.jas.net/~sueowens/city.htm Polk County Chamber of Commerce (409) 327-4929 Email: chamber@livingston.net www.livingston.net/chamber/ Silsbee Chamber of Commerce (409) 385-5562 Email: scc@sat.net **Tyler County Chamber of Commerce** Woodville (409) 283-2632 Hardin County Tourist Bureau (800) 835-0343

www.setx.com/ktzchamber/ LUTC 001: TONY HOUSEMAN SP AND WMA Season: Migrations, Summer

The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail (GTCBT) begins as soon as you enter the state from Louisiana on I-10. Situated barely west of the Sabine River (which ents the border between Texas and Louisiana), Tony Houseman State Park SP) and Wildlife Management Area (WMA) offers birders their first opportunity o sample the pleasures of Texas Pineywoods birding. Access to this site is restricted at this time, but TPWD is planning to develop a nature trail in this area in the near future. Presently, these bottomlands may be entered through the TxDOT Fravel Information Center located on the north service road of I-10. This site contains an extensive boardwalk system that allows access to Blue Elbow Swamp and the surrounding bottomland forest.

LUTC 002: BON WIER Season: Summer From the TxDOT Information Center at Blue Elbow Swamp, continue west on I-10 to its intersection with TX 87 (about two miles). Travel north on TX 87 to KERA EAST WMA. KERA EAST is a private wildlife management and recreation area, owned and operated by the Louisiana-Pacific Corporation (LPC). LPC periodically allows entry by reservation, and information may be obtained by calling LPC at 409-384-5422. The longleaf pine forests within this site contain many of the Pineywoods "specialties" such as Brown-headed Nuthatch and Bachman's Sparrow Continue north on TX 87 to FM 1416. Travel east on FM 1416 to US 190 and Bon Wier. Continue east on US 190 to the state line and the bridge that crosses

the Sabine River. About 0.5 mile before the river there is an old section of the highway where parking is available. Swallow-tailed Kites may be seen floating above the woodlands bordering the Sabine River in late spring and summer. ▲ UTC 003: WILD AZALEA CANYONS Season: Spring, Summer From Bon Wier, return west on US 190 to FM 2626, then travel north on FM 2626 intil it merges with TX 87. Continue north on TX 87 to FM 1414, then east on

FM 1414 to Wild Azalea Canyons and Temple-Inland Wilderness Park. The area is owned and maintained by Temple-Inland Forest Products Corporation. Wild Azalea Canyons is noted for its pine forests, rock canyons, and thickets of wild azaleas (the azaleas bloom from mid to late March). Pileated Woodpeckers, Wood Thrushes, Hooded and Swainson's warblers, and Summer Tanagers may be seen in e surrounding pine forests. PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB ANY PLANTS IN HIS SENSITIVE AREA. If staying in the Newton area, contact Hinestead Ranch (409-379-3405) for information about "bed-and-bird" lodging within the 690-acre ranch. If staying in the city of Newton, visit Caney Creek Nature Park (one block east of the courthouse square in Newton), and Sylvan Nature Trail (four miles southeast of Newton on US 190, directly opposite the TxDOT roadside park).

▲ UTC 004: TOLEDO BEND RESERVOIR Season: Spring, Summer Return to FM 1414, and continue north to Burkeville and FM 692. From

Burkeville, travel north on FM 692 to Toledo Bend Reservoir. The forests below the dam are typical of the riparian woodlands in east Texas, and they may be accessed by driving or walking along the sand road on the west side of the river. UTC 005: CHAMPION CANYON RIM WOODLANDS TRAIL Season: Spring, Summer Return south on FM 692 to R255, then continue west on R255 to TX 87. Travel r h on TX 87 to Champion Canyon Rim Woodlands Trail. This unique site is owned and maintained by Champion International Corporation. Champion has constructed a trail around the rim of the canyon, and a number of Pineywoods preeding birds may be easily seen here during a late spring hike. Louisiana Vaterthrushes nest along the creek that flows through the bottom of the canyon. and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed vireos, and Black-

and-white Warblers are among the interesting woodland birds that may be found here. If you continue north on TX 87, you will eventually intersect a Red-cockaded Woodpecker group that straddles the highway near the Newton / Sabine county line. **UTC 006: SAM RAYBURN RESERVOIR** Season: All Seasons Return south on TX 87 to R255, then travel west on R255 to Sam Rayburn Reservoir. Sam Rayburn Reservoir is an expansive body of water, and most of the reservoir is north of the coastal birding trail. However, the U.S. Army Corps of

ers (ACOE) operates a number of recreational sites along the south shor of the lake, including Twin Dikes Park, Overlook Park, Ebenezer Park, and the Sandy Creek Recreation Area. In addition to the normal compliment of woodland birds, Sam Rayburn Reservoir also attracts impressive flocks of waterfowl in migration and winter, as well as a scattering of loons, grebes, gulls, and terns. • UTC 007: ANGELINA NF BOYKIN SPRINGS **RECREATION AREA**

Season: Spring, Summer Continue west on R255 from Sam Rayburn Reservoir to TX 63. Travel northwest on TX 63 to Angelina National Forest (NF) and Boykin Springs Recreation Area. Boykin Springs, as perhaps no other single location in the Pineywoods, offers a rich diversity of woodland birding possibilities. As you enter along Boykin Springs Road (FR 313), you will cross a fire-maintained longleaf pine forest. The luestem grasslands within the forest are the preferred habitat for Bachman's Sparrows. The wetter grasslands attract a few Henslow's Sparrows in winter. Brown-headed Nuthatches may be seen throughout the year in dense pine stands, and Kentucky Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Painted Buntings nest in the yaupon thickets. Listen for Chipping Sparrows here in late spring and summer don't credit all the trilling to Pine Warblers). There are a number of Redcockaded Woodpecker groups in this area. One of the accessible groups has been marked, so look for the signs as you enter along FR 313.

LUTC 008: ANGELINA NF UPLAND ISLAND WILDERNESS, BOUTON LAKE, AND SAWMILL TRAIL Season: Spring, Summer Return to TX 63, and continue northwest (toward Zavalla) to Angelina CR 348. Travel south on CR 348 (also FR 303) to Upland Island Wilderness and Bouton Lake. The drive into Bouton Lake offers wonderful opportunities to access a

y crossing a small bridge located on the east side of the entrance road. Thousands of shorebirds, gulls, and terns roost on this bar. Continue east on the entrance road to Appfel Park (there is a fee to park here), and scope the Gulf near the South Jetty for seabirds.

▲ UTC 063: KEMPNER PARK Season: Migrations

Return to Seawall Blvd., and continue southwest to Broadway. Go west on Broadway to 27th Street, then south on 27th Street to Avenue O. Turn west on Avenue Ó to reach Kempner Park. When the weather conditions are right in spring, migrant landbirds often sweep through these oaks. American Robins have nested here, and White-winged Doves are common in the surrounding neighborhood. ▲ UTC 064: HARBORSIDE WETLANDS OF GALVESTON Season: All Seasons From Kempner Park, go north on 29th Street to Broadway. Go west on Broadway to 51st Street, then north on 51st Street to Harborside Wetlands of Galveston. The City of Galveston is transforming this marsh into a birding destination, and the site will have parking facilities and a nature trail when completed.

▲ UTC 065: OFFATT BAYOU Season: Winter, Spring Return to Broadway; continue west to 61st Street (Spur 342). Go south on 61st Street to Offatt Bayou. Offatt Bayou may be viewed from the parking areas on the west side of 61st Street. Loons, grebes, and diving ducks often crowd into this ayou in winter. Look for Common and Pacific loons (rare), Eared Grebes, and Red-breasted Mergansers from late winter through late spring. ▲ UTC 066: 8-MILE-ROAD AND SPORTSMEN'S ROAD

Season: All Seasons Continue south on 61st Street to Stewart Road; travel west on Stewart Road to 81st Street. Moody Gardens (butterfly gardens, IMAX theatre) may be reached off of 81st Street. The parking lot at Moody Gardens offers another excellent view of Offatt Bayou, so continue your search for loons and grebes from here. Continue west on Stewart Road to 8-Mile-Road. Inspect the ponds along Stewart Road just west of this corner for waterfowl and shorebirds. Go north on 8-Mile-Road to its end at West Galveston Bay and Sportsmen's Road. Inspect the fields along 8-Mile-Road in spring for American Golden-Plovers and Upland Sandpipers. Go west on portmen's Road until it ends. The marshes along Sportsmen's Road extend to the edge of the pavement, and waterbirds (White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Clapper

Rail) may wander to within a few feet of your vehicle. Check West Galveston Bay or Common Loons, Common Goldeneyes, and American Oystercatchers on the shell reefs. You can view North Deer Island from the end of 8-Mile-Road. The National and Houston Audubon Societies jointly own this island. North Deer Island supports one of the most significant colonial waterbird rookeries along the upper Texas coast. ▲ UTC 067: SETTEGAST (NOTTINGHAM RANCH) ROAD

Season: Migrations Continue west on Stewart Road to Settegast Road (also known as Nottingham Ranch Road). The grassy fields along Settegast Road draw American Golden-Plovers, Whimbrels, Long-billed Curlews, and Upland Sandpipers during spring migration. ▲ UTC 068: LAFITTE'S COVE

Season: Migrations Continue west on Stewart Road to Lafitte's Cove. To enter Lafitte's Cove, turn off of Stewart Road onto Eckert Drive at the entrance to the Lafitte's Cove subdivision and drive 0.2 mile to the parking area at the beginning of the nature trail. This grove is a magnet for migrant landbirds, and, with the right weather conditions, can rival High Island. ▲ UTC 069: LAFITTE'S GROVE

Season: Migrations Continue west on Stewart Road to Lafitte's Grove (about 0.1 mile west of the tte's Cove) Park on the payement near the historical marke The oaks here are also attractive to migrant landbirds. Be aware that fall migrants often linger along the immediate coast through Christmas. These small oak mottes, bordering ponds, should be checked throughout the fall and early winter months. UTC 070: GALVESTON ISLAND SP

Season: All Seasons Continue west on Stewart Road to its merger with 13-Mile-Road and the interse tion with FM 3005. Continue west on FM 3005 to PR 66 and Galveston Island SP. This park extends from the beach to the bay. The bay section of the park offers the most birding opportunities, as well as the fewest visitors. Upon entering the park off of FM 3005, check the willow groves that border the park road. Turn west at your first opportunity, and park near the observation tower. This nature trail is worth walking, and the trees across the road should be checked for migrants. The marshes that border the bay abound with ibis, herons, egrets, gulls, and terns. White-tailed Kites and Northern Harriers have nested in the park, and Black Rails often call in the dead of night. A wait until sunset will be rewarded with the sight of Barn Owls beginning their grassland patrols.

▲ UTC 071: SAN LUIS PASS Season: All Seasons Continue west on FM 3005 to the west end of Galveston Island and San Luis Pass. ou may access the flats by exiting FM 3005 immediately before the toll bridge HE SÁND HERE CAN BE EXTREMELY SOFT, SÓ PLEASE BE CARE-JL WHEN DRIVING ON THE FLATS. Only Bolivar Flats can rival the wildlife spectacle that is San Luis Pass. Countless waterbirds pack the sand flats that extend into the bay. Both species of pelican, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Bonaparte's Gulls feed in the swift waters that course through the pass in winter. and staggering numbers of shorebirds may feed on the flats during a tidal shift. Horned Larks and Wilson's Plovers nest in the dunes. Snowy and Piping plovers winter commonly. Least Terns and Black Skimmers often attempt to nest on the driest sand (please, avoid disturbing the birds during nesting season). Over 25,000 Black Terns stage here in late summer (August through early September), and

Magnificent Frigatebirds roost on the pilings in West Bay from late April through

TEXAS CITY LOOP Texas City-LaMarque Chamber of Commerce

(888) 860-1408 and (409) 935-1408

Email: tclmcc@infocom.net

late September.

of the highway.

www.tc-lmcc.org ▲ UTC 072: JOHN M. O'QUINN I-45 ESTUARIAL CORRIDOR Season: All Seasons continue to the Bluewater Loop, travel southwest on FM 3005 across San Luis Pass. To continue to Houston and the loops of that region, travel north from Galveston Island on I-45 to TX 146. Exit on TX 146 for Texas City and the John M. O'Quinn I-45 Estuarial Corridor. The marshes that extend from Galveston Bay Virginia Point) north to TX 146 are part of an estuarial corridor being developed by Scenic Galveston. Funds from the 1997 Great Texas Birding Classic were used to assist with this acquisition. In the near future, most of the structures will be removed, and this entire area will be returned to its original wetland state. An observation station is planned near the intersection of I-45 and TX 146, and the marshes themselves can be birded from the service road that borders both sides

of I-45. Herons, egrets, spoonbills, and rails may be seen feeding within a few feet

connects Bouton Lake and Boykin Springs; therefore, it is possible to bird the forest that extends between these two special sites. ▲ UTC 009: CHAMPION WOODLAND TRAIL Season: Spring, Summer Return to TX 63, and continue south on TX 63 to R255. Travel west on R255 to US 69, then south on US 69 a short distance to FM 1745 in Colmesneil. Continue west on FM 1745 to US 287, then north on US 287 to FM 62 and Champion Woodland Trail. The longleaf pines within this forest are among the oldest that will be found along the GTCBT, with some estimated to be in excess of 250 years old. The trail drops down into an impressive lowland hardwood forest, so a morning's walk here provides an opportunity to view a diverse selection of woodland birds. ▲ UTC 010: LPC DOGWOOD TRAIL Season: Spring, Summer Return south on US 287 to Woodville. From Woodville, travel east on US 190 to LPC Dogwood Trail (the dogwoods bloom from mid to late March). The

variety of hardwood and mixed pine/hardwood forests. Louisiana Waterthrushes

nest along the tannin-stained streams that permeate the bottoms. Sawmill Trail

Dogwood Trail offers another opportunity to enjoy the woodland birding that is available only along this section of the GTCBT. Several of the bird species that you commonly see in this area (i.e., along the Big Thicket Loop) will be exceedingly difficult to find between Beaumont and Brownsville. ▲ UTC 011: JASPER STATE FISH HATCHERY Season: All Seasons Continue east on US 190 to FM 1747, then travel north on FM1747 to CR 009 and the Jasper State Fish Hatchery. Situated within the densely forested Pineywoods. he fish hatchery offers an assortment of aquatic habitats that otherwise would not be found here. The various ponds attract an assortment of water birds, and the forests that border the hatchery can be quite good for woodland birding. Look for Eastern Bluebirds perched on power lines and fence posts as you drive through this area. • UTC 012: EAST B.A. STEINHAGEN RESERVOIR

Season: All Seasons Return to FM 1747, then continue south to US 190, Travel east on US 190 to FM 777, then go south on FM 777 to CR 155. Go west on CR 155 to ACOE Sandy Creek Park and East Steinhagen Lake. After visiting this area, return to FM 777 and continue south to ACOE East End Park/Town Bluff. The eastern edge of B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir offers a number of opportunities for woodland birding. These woods often attract numbers of migrants in spring, and most of the Pineywoods breeding birds are present here in summer. UTC 013: MARTIN DIES SP Season: All Seasons Return north to US 190, then turn west on US 190 to PR 48 and the Martin Dies

SP headquarters. Martin Dies SP is divided into three different units (the Hen House Ridge, Walnut Ridge, and Cherokee units), placed both north and south of US 190. Look for Pileated and other woodpeckers throughout the year, and Brown Creepers in winter. There are several rookeries (heron and egret nesting colonies) in and around this reservoir, and Anhingas are commonly seen here. Angelina-Neches Scientific Area and Dam B WMA are situated north of the park, and are only accessible by boat. UTC 014: WEST B.A. STEINHAGEN RESERVOIR

Season: All Seasons Continue west on US 190 to Martin Dies SP Cherokee Unit and West B.A Steinhagen Lake. Listen for Yellow-throated Warblers and Indigo Buntings around the Cherokee Unit in summer. Continue west on US 190 to FM 92, the travel north on FM 92 to ACOE Magnolia Ridge Park. American Redstarts have nested in Magnolia Ridge Park near the Wolf Creek Trail parking area. Return south on FM 92 to US 190, then continue south on FM 92 to CR 4130. Go east on CR 4130 to ACOE Camper's Cove Park. All of these sites offer similar birding rtunities, although local birders believe Camper's Cove Park south to Town Bluff to be the best stretch around the lake for finding migrant landbirds in spring and sparrows in winter. UTC 015: BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE

Season: All Seasons Return to FM 92, then continue south to Spurger and the intersection with FM 1013. Travel west on FM 1013 to US 69/287, then go south on US 69 to Big Thicket National Preserve (BTNP). However, en route from Warren, you may wish to visit Hickory Creek and the Sundew Trail. The Hickory Creek Savannah Unit is located west of US 69 on FM 2827. Continue south on US 69 to FM 420, then east on FM 420 to the BTNP visitors center. BTNP is divided into a number of widely separated units. A complete list (as well as a detailed map) may be obtained at the visitors center. BTNP locations preferred by birders include Cook's Lake, Hickory Creek Savannah, Kirby Nature Trail, Lance Rosier Unit, McQueen's Landing, Pitcher Plant Trail, Turkey Creek Trail, and Village Creek. Pelt Farm B&B (located 1.3 miles west of TX 326 on FM 421 in Hardin County) is a delightful spot to stay while birding the Big Thicket. Contact this B&B at 409-287-3300.

▲ UTC 016: GORE STORE ROAD AND TURKEY CREEK Season: Migrations, Summer Return on FM 420 to US 69, then go north on US 69 approximately 3.5 miles to Gore Store Road and Turkey Creek. Travel east on Gore Store Road to Firetower Road (11.7 miles). The birding along Gore Store Road is renowned, and for many years birders have visited this area to find the Pineywoods specialties. However, extensive timbering in the area has left the pine forests in a perpetual state of early succession. As a result, species such as Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow have become quite difficult to find in this area. Conversely, th and dense v Prairie and Swainson's warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Indigo and Paintee buntings, have become quite common here (look and listen for Prairie Warblers

in young pine plantations). Reaching Firetower Road, travel south. Camp Waluta Road (0.2 mile) is often worth a try (Eastern Towhees apparently nest here). Continue south to FM 418, then east on FM 418 to FM 92. In late spring through early summer, listen for Eastern Screech-Owls, Barred Owls, and Chuck-will's-widows just after dark or immediately before sunrise. ▲ UTC 017: TNCT ROY E. LARSON SANDYLAND SANCTUARY Season: Spring, Summer Travel south on FM 92 to FM 327 in Silsbee, then go west on FM 327 to The Nature Conservancy of Texas (TNCT) Roy E. Larson Sandyland Sanctuary. The nature trail here offers another excellent opportunity to see a representativ

selection of eastern woodland birds, as well as to experience the arid pine sandhills that are largely absent in the BTNP. • UTC 018: VILLAGE CREEK SP Season: Migrations, Summer Return east on FM 327 to FM 92, then continue south on FM 92 to US 96 and Village Creek SP. This relatively new state park is situated along the Neches River, and offers river access (via boat or canoe) to Big Thicket habitats such as cypress/tupelo swamp and baygall. The young pine/hardwood forests within the park host a representative selection of eastern woodland birds.

LUTC 019: TYRRELL PARK AND CATTAIL MARSH Season: All Seasons Continue south on US 96 to I-10 in Beaumont, then travel west on I-10 to Walden Road. Go south on Walden Road (which becomes Tyrrell Park Road), and continue

▲ UTC 073: AMOCO SETTLING PONDS AND SWAN LAKE Season: All Seasons Travel north on TX 146 to Loop 197, then continue north on Loop 197 to the Amoco Settling Ponds and Swan Lake (approximately 1.3 miles from the intersection of TX 146 and Loop 197). The settling ponds to the west may be viewed from the shoulder of Loop 197. The ponds attract waterfowl in the winter, and several species of diving ducks such as Bufflehead, Canvasback, and Redhead are regularly seen here.

▲ UTC 074: TEXAS CITY DIKE Season: Winter Continue north on Loop 197 to 2nd Avenue in Texas City, then go east on 2nd Avenue to Bay Street. Travel north on Bay Street to 8th Avenue and the Texas City Dike. The 5-mile drive to the end of the Texas City Dike is always worthwhile in winter. Loons (Common regularly, Pacific and Red-throated rarely), grebes, diving ducks (Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser), and gulls (Bonaparte's Gull regularly, Black-legged Kittiwake rarely) may be seen during a leisurely drive out the dike. ▲ UTC 075: BAY STREET PARK

Season: Migrations, Winter Enhancements: Hummingbird garden Return to the base of the Texas City Dike, and go north on Skyline Drive. Sprague's Pipits winter in the closely cropped grass on the shoulders of this hurricane levee. Notice the observation tower approximately 0.5 mile north of the base of the dike on Skyline Drive. The lake that may be viewed from this platform often attracts several species of ducks in the winter, including large flocks of Ruddy Ducks. Reaching the northern end of Skyline Drive, turn west and continue to Bay Street and Bay Street Park (Bay Street will eventually circle back to the south, and the park will be located to the east). An extensive hummingbird garden has been developed at this location with funds from the GTCBT. As the plants mature, this site should be very attractive to migrant hummingbirds. In

this garden should be checked throughout the winter months. A series of nature trails wind through the park. UTC 076: TNCT GALVESTON BAY PRESERVE Season: All Seasons Return south on Bay Street to 9th Avenue, then turn west on 9th Avenue (FM 1764) and continue to TX 146. Go north on TX 146 to TNCT Galveston Bay Preserve. This 2,263-acre preserve features rare coastal prairie habitat and one of the last three remaining sites that support wild Attwater Prairie-Chickens. TNCT – Coastal Texas Stewardship Office (512) 972-2559 P.O. Box 163 Collegeport, Texas 77428-0163 Email: txfo@tnc.org

addition, several species of hummingbirds regularly winter along the coast, and

CLEAR LAKE LOOP Friendswood Chamber of Commerce Alvin-Manvel Area Chamber of (281) 482-3329 (281) 331-3944 Email: fwdchamber@iwl.net www.ci.alvin.tx.us/ **Clear Lake NASA Area Convention**

and Visitors Bureau (800) 844-LAKE (5253) and (281) 488-7676 Email: chamber@clearlake.com www.clearlakearea.com

UTC 077: MCHALE PARK Season: All Seasons Proceed north on TX 146 to the Kemah/Seabrook Bridge, and then immediately exit after crossing. Circle back south on Waterfront Drive, across Todville, into McHale Park. McHale Park is a lovely spot from which to view the western shore of Galveston Bay. Flotillas of American White Pelicans fish the nearshore waters in winter, and the adjacent marshes pull in scads of herons and egrets. ▲ UTC 078: HESTER GARDEN PARK Season: Migrations, Winter Exit McHale Park, and go north on Todville to Hester Garden Park. The park, a former nursery, is an undiscovered gem. Until after World War II, most Houston birders traveled to this region of Galveston Bay to look for migrant landbirds.

Hester Garden Park consists of an impressive variety of trees and shrubs. Check

these woods in late fall and winter, since many of these plants are evergreen and are therefore attractive to lingering insectivores. ▲ UTC 079: PINE GULLY PARK Season: Migrations, Winter

Continue north on Todville to Pine Gully Drive, then go east on Pine Gully Drive to Pine Gully Park. This multi-use facility offers another view of Galveston Bay, and the trees within the park are worth inspecting for migrant landbirds. The wetland has been restored within this park, and should be checked for waterbirds. ▲ UTC 080: ROBINSON PARK Season: Migrations As you leave Pine Gully Park, return south on Todville to Red Bluff. Robinson Park is located near the intersection of Todville and Red Bluff. Robinson Park contains approximately 20 acres of old oaks, and a trail connects these woodlands with Pine Gully Park. Robinson Park is another woodlot to check as you are

scouring this edge of Galveston Bay for migrants. ▲ UTC 081: ARMAND BAYOU NATURE CENTER Season: All Seasons From the intersection of Todville and Red Bluff Road, go west on Red Bluff Road to Old 146, then north on Old 146 a short distance back to Red Bluff Road. Continue northwest on Red Bluff Road to Bay Area Blvd., then west on Bay Area Blvd. to Armand Bayou Nature Center (ABNC). Sandwiched between NASA and

he Bayport Industrial District, ABNC is a 2,500-acre wildlife preserve encompassng three distinct ecosystems: wetlands (estuarine bayou), woodlands (hardwood riparian forest), and tall-grass prairie. According to ABNC staff, "the center is the country's largest urban nature preserve." A system of nature trails honeycombs the property, and the center operates a pontoon boat that plies the waters of Armand Bayou. ABNC staff and volunteers have spent countless hours restoring several hundred acres of coastal prairie, and rassland species such as Sedge Wren and Le Conte's Sparrow are not difficult to find here. ABNC staff is available to answer questions about when and where to bird in the Clear Lake area. Armand Bayou Nature Center (281) 474-2551 8500 Bay Area Boulevard Houston, Texas 77258 Email: abnc@ghgcorp.com

www.ghgcorp.com/abnc/ ▲ UTC 082: BAY AREA PARK Season: All Seasons Continue west on Bay Area Blvd. to Bay Area Park. This Harris County park is situated on Armand Bayou, and the parking area near the water offers an unobstructed view. Look for Osprey in migration and winter.

SABINE LOOP **Bridge City Chamber of Commerce**

water, a scope, and a good pair of hiking shoes.

(409) 735-5671 (800) 235-7822 and (409) 985-7822 Email: chamber@exp.net www.org-tx.com/bc-chamber Email: pacvb@portarthurtexas.com ▲ UTC 020: CLAIBORNE WEST PARK Season: Spring, Summer From the intersection of I-10 and TX 87 (where the Big Thicket Loop begins), continue west on I-10 to FM 1442 (Exit 869). After exiting, remain on the north service road and continue west to the entrance to Claiborne West Park. For those who wish to continue directly to the upper coast (and bypass the Big Thicket Loop), Claiborne West Park offers an opportunity to see an interesting selection of Big Thicket woodland birds. Check this park in migration for landbirds that have over-flown the coast and settled into the interior forests.

to Tyrrell Park and Cattail Marsh. Tyrrell Park is a multi-use facility that retains

However, Common Crows are present as well, so be sure to listen for the charac-

teristic gutteral "croaks" of the Fish Crows. Cattail Marsh is part of the Beaumont

incredible diversity of waterbirds throughout the year. The water levels vary from

compartment to compartment, so shorebirds and waterfowl are constantly shifting

Port Arthur Convention and Visitors

wastewater treatment facilities. This 900-acre constructed wetland attracts an

within this complex. Visitors must walk (rather than drive) the levees, so bring

sufficient habitat to support an interesting selection of eastern breeding birds.

Tyrrell Park is perhaps the best spot along the GTCBT to see Fish Crows.

▲ UTC 021: LOWER NECHES WMA AND BAILEY'S FISH CAMP Season: All Seasons (Winter and early Spring for waterfowl) Travel south on FM 1442 to TX 73/87 (FM 1442 eventually will swing east before intersecting with TX 87). Continue south on TX 73/87 to Lake Street. Travel south on Lake Street to the Lower Neches WMA observation platform and Bailey's Fish Camp. The TPWD observation platform is located approximately 1.5 miles from TX 73/87, and overlooks a broad expanse of coastal marsh. Continue south from e observation platform (the road surface will eventually become shell) to Bailey's Fish Camp and Sabine Lake. Herons, egrets, spoonbills, waterfowl, and shorebirds mass in this area, so be sure to bring a scope. ▲ UTC 022: PLEASURE ISLAND

Season: All Seasons Return on Lake Street to TX 73/87, then travel southwest on TX 73/87 to Groves. Remain on TX 73 when the two roads divide in Groves, and continue southwest to the intersection with TX 82. Travel south on TX 82 across the Gulf Intracoasta Waterway (GIWW). Once across the MLK Bridge, exit on T.B. Ellison Parkway for Pleasure Island. Loons (on the Sabine Lake side of the levee roads), grebes, and waterfowl abound in the winter, so explore. Shorebirds may be present in impressive numbers when suitable habitat (mud flat) is available. Both the

roads and scope the concentrations of ducks, gulls, and terns. ▲ UTC 023: SABINE PASS Season: All Seasons

Return on TX 82 to TX 87, then continue south on TX 87 to Sabine Pass. Watch for cormorants, waterfowl, gulls, and terns as you drive along the south end of Sabine Lake. Before entering Sabine Pass, you will cross the Sabine Pass marshes Least Bitterns, White and White-faced ibis (look for Glossy among the large dark ibis flocks), Roseate Spoonbills, Clapper Rails, Common Yellowthroats, and Seaside Sparrows are all relatively easy to find in this expansive wetland. The resident grackle in this marsh is Boat-tailed (be aware that a small percent-

north and south ends of Pleasure Island are productive, so wander the levee

UTC 024: SABINE PASS BATTLEGROUND SHP AND TEXAS POINT Season: All Seasons (especially Spring migration

age of Boat-tailed Grackles in this area have yellow eyes).

From Sabine Pass, continue east on FM 3322 to the Sabine Pass Battleground State Historical Park (SHP). The park is a minor birding destination along the coast (although restrooms are available), but the trees and shrubs within the site may attract a variety of migrants in spring and fall. Continue east on FM 3322 to South 1st. Turn south on South 1st and continue to the dead-end at the Pilot Station and Texas Point (about 3.5 miles). The road to the Pilot Station is poorly maintained, so be prepared for a rough ride. After the passage of a late cold front in spring, migrant landbirds (vireos, warblers, tanagers, buntings, grosbeaks, and orioles) may dangle from tamarisk twigs like Christmas ornaments. In winter through late spring, the cordgrass marshes that border the road support impressive numbers of Nelson's Sharptailed and Seaside sparrows.

▲ UTC 025: TEXAS POINT NWR Season: All Seasons Return north on South 1st to Quinn, then turn west on Quinn. Continue to the

Season: Migrations

end of Quinn, then veer north on South 8th. South 8th is bordered by the marshes of the Texas Point NWR, and this road provides an excellent spot from which to look and listen for rails, wrens, and sparrows. Continue on South 8th until reaching FM 3322, then turn west and return to Sabine Pass. From Sabine Pass, travel west (signed south) on TX 87 to the Texas Point NWR nature trail (on the south side of TX 87 about 2.4 miles west of Sabine Pass). These stunted woods may hold migrants in migration, and it only takes a minute to check this location as you rush toward Sabine Woods. White-tailed Kites, Painted Buntings, and Orchard Orioles breed in the area. UTC 026: TOS SABINE WOODS

Enhancements: Gate, fencing, parking area Continue west on TX 87 to Texas Ornithological Society (TOS) Sabine Woods (located 4.2 miles from Sabine Pass on the north side of TX 87). A parking area

with entrance gate has been constructed here with GTCBT funds. This isolated stand of live oaks is among the most productive migrant stop-over sites (migrant traps) along the entire Texas coast. During spring migration, the trees and shrubs here attract thousands of migrant landbirds. Hundreds of hummingbirds (mostly Ruby-throated) may swarm the lantana thickets in early fall. • UTC 027: SEA RIM SP Season: All Seasons

Enhancements: Boardwalk Continue west on TX 87 to Sea Rim SP. Enter the Marshlands Unit (north of TX 87) and continue to the boathouse at the end of the entrance road. Cave Swallows (as well as Barn and Cliff swallows) have nested under the eaves of this boathouse for the past several years. Return to TX 87, and continue west for approximately 0.5 mile to the Sea Rim SP headquarters and Beach Unit. The boardwalk east of the headquarters (the Gambusia Trail) offers an excellent spot from which to view a variety of marsh and water birds, especially rails. Leaving the headquarters, continue west on TX 87. The gulf willows, salt cedars, and red mulberries along the southern edge of TX 87 are remarkably attractive to migrant landbirds. A boardwalk is being constructed through this woodland with funds provided by the GTCBT project. The beach may be accessed at a number of points as you continue west on TX 87, and be sure to check the gull and tern flocks.

Season: All Seasons Continue on TX 87 to McFaddin NWR (approximately 12 miles from Sabine Pass).

▲ UTC 028: MCFADDIN NWR

▲ UTC 083: NASSAU BAY PARK Season: All Seasons Continue west on Bay Area Blvd. to Middlebrook Drive, then east on Middlebrook Drive to Space Center Blvd. Go south on Space Center Blvd. to

NASA Road One, then west on NASA Road One to Upper Bay Road. The Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center and Space Center Houston are both located along NASA Road One. Go south on Upper Bay Road to Nassau Bay Park. Although not a major birding destination, this city park offers a respite if you are in the area on business (not every trip to the Texas coast will be for pleasure!). LUTC 084: CHALLENGER 7 MEMORIAL PARK Season: All Seasons Return to NASA Road One, and continue west to I-45 (you will cross TX 3 before you reach I-45). At I-45 NASA Road One becomes Wilson Road; continue west on Wilson Road to West NASA Blvd. Go south on West NASA Blvd. to Challenger 7 Memorial Park. An extensive nature trail and boardwalk has been developed in this park along Clear Creek. Many of the eastern woodland birds can be found here, and White-tailed Hawks nest in the general area.

▲ UTC 085: WALTER HALL COUNTY PARK Season: Migrations, Winter Return to the intersection of TX 3 and NASA Road One, and go south on TX 3 to Walter Hall County Park. This multi-use facility has been developed for a variety of outdoor activities, but birding opportunities do exist along Clear Creek.

LUTC 086: PAUL HOPKINS COMMUNITY PARK Season: Migrations, Winter Continue south on TX 3 to FM 517, then west on FM 517 to Paul Hopkins Community Park. This pocket park has a nature trail along the bayou, and migrant landbirds often pass along this waterway in spring. A number of eastern woodland birds, including Red-shouldered Hawk, nest in this woodland. ▲ UTC 087: ALVIN MUSTANG BAYOU TRAIL Season: Migrations, Winter Proceed west on FM 517 to I-45, then continue west across I-45 to TX 35 in Alvin. Go south on TX 35 to TX 6, then west on TX 6 to BUS 35. Go south on BUS 35 to the Mustang Bayou Trail in Alvin (a trail head is located at the historic railroad depot that is being restored). Alvin is an ideal base from which to explore Brazos

Bend SP (UTC 117). While in the area, check the woodlands along the Mustang

Bayou Trail. Brazos Bend SP may be reached by continuing south on BUS 35 to FM 1462. then west on FM 1462 to FM 762. Proceed north on FM 762 to Brazos Bend SP. **BUFFALO BAYOU LOOP**

www.houston-guide.com UTC 088: SAM HOUSTON PARK Season: Migrations

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From Alvin, return to I-45 and continue north to Houston (or return south to Galveston). The intention of the following loop is to offer several birding sites to visitors who may have traveled to Houston on business. These locations are within walking distance, or a short drive, of downtown Houston and the Texas Medical Cente Begin your downtown Houston birding at Sam Houston Park (across from the Texaco Heritage Plaza at 1100 Bagby). During migration, many landbirds become disoriented as they pass in and around the tall buildings in the downtown area. These confused migrants search out pockets of suitable habitat. This 19-acre park, with its mature oaks and pecans, offers refuge among the skyscrapers.

checking during the spring. UTC 089: BUFFALO BAYOU PARK Season: Migrations, Winter

From Sam Houston Park, go west on Allen Parkway. Buffalo Bayou Park extends from downtown Houston west to Shepherd Drive. Houston is renovating the downtown section of Buffalo Bayou around Allen's Landing, and this entire stretch of the bayou should be increasingly hospitable. A hike-and-bike trail borders the bayou, and the riparian woodlands along the bayou attract migrants. UTC 090: WHITE OAK PARK Season: Migrations, Winter

From the intersection of Allen Parkway and Shepherd, return east toward down-

Fish and Wildlife Foundation, has recently constructed native plant gardens and

freshwater wetlands at this urban site. The oaks around city hall are also worth

town Houston on Memorial Drive. Exit to Houston Avenue, and go north to White Oak Drive. Proceed north on White Oak Drive to White Oak Park. Citizens in this community have cleaned portions of White Oak Bayou here, and in doing so restored a swamp where Yellow-crowned Night-Herons and Green Herons nest. A number of eastern woodland species reside in the park. Stude and Woodland parks (both adjacent to White Oak Park) are also worth a brief visit.

UTC 091: HERMANN PARK / HOUSTON ZOO Season: All Seasons (particularly Winter) Return on Houston Avenue to Memorial Drive. Go east on Memorial Drive to downtown Houston (Memorial will become Rusk Avenue) and Fannin Street. Proceed southwest on Fannin Street to Hermann Park and the Houston Zoological Gardens (1513 N. MacGregor in Hermann Park). The Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Burke Baker Planetarium, the Wortham IMAX Theatre, and the Cockrell Butterfly Center are all located in this complex. Hermann Park borders Rice University and the Texas Medical Center, and is within a short walking distance of both. The Houston Zoological Gardens contain

"tropical bird house resembling Asian jungle with more than 200 exotic birds flying freely through aviary rain forest." More importantly, this zoo supports a world-famous captive-breeding program for endangered birds. In recent years, Attwater Prairie-Chickens have been reared at this location. A number of eastern woodland birds, including Red-headed Woodpecker, may be seen in Hermann Park (particularly around Miller Theatre). During winter, check the lakes in the park for Canvasbacks, Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, and Greater and Lesser Scaup among the domestic waterfowl. UTC 092: RUSS PITTMAN PARK (NATURE

DISCOVERY CENTER) Season: Migrations, Winter Continue southwest on Fannin to Holcombe, then west on Holcombe (which becomes Bellaire) to Newcastle. Go south on Newcastle to Evergreen. Russ Pittman Park is located at the intersection of Newcastle and Evergreen. This urban

maintained by the nature center staff are magnets for wintering hummingbirds. Buff-bellied, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Broad-tailed and Rufous are among the species that have been seen here during the winter months. Nature Discovery Center (713) 667-6550 7112 Newcastle Bellaire, Texas 77402-0777

oasis attracts migrant landbirds during migration, and the hummingbird feeders

McFaddin NWR is managed for waterfowl, and access is limited. However, the gravel road to Clam Lake offers an opportunity to look for a variety of waterfowl n winter (Masked Duck has appeared on the refuge in the past). In addition, there is a trail behind the refuge headquarters (located off of TX 87 across from Clam Lake) that continues to Pond 11 and an observation blind. This blind is used for unting in the fall, but it is available to birders in the spring and summer. TX 87 west of McFaddin is no longer passable (the paved road has been washed out by recurrent storm tides), so there is no longer a direct coastal route to High Island. McFaddin and Texas Point NWRs (409) 971-2909 Email: R2RW_MCF@mail.fws.gov P.O. Box 609

Sabine Pass, Texas 77655 www.sturgeon.irm1.r2.fws.gov/u2/refuges/texas/mcfad.html ▲ UTC 029: J.D. MURPHREE WMA

Season: All Seasons Return on TX 87 to Sabine Pass, then continue north on TX 87 to TX 73. Travel west on TX 73 to J.D. Murphree WMA. Access to this WMA is restricted, although a nature trail has been developed near the headquarters. Boat access to the area may be arranged, however. Late spring and summer are particularly interesting. Least Bitterns are ubiquitous in these marshes. To arrange for a boat ride into the WMA, contact the following: **Texas Marshland Tours** (409) 736-3023 Capt. Jerry Norris

3262 Bell St. Port Arthur, TX 77640 ▲ UTC 030: TAYLOR BAYOU

Season: Spring, Summer Continue west on TX 73 to Jap Road. The rice fields along TX 73 hold thousands of shorebirds in spring, so look for those fields that have been recently flooded. avel north on Jap Road to the South Fork of Taylor Bayou. ALL PROPERTY BORDERING TAYLOR BAYOU IS PRIVATE. PLEASE, DO NOT TRES-PASS. BIRD ONLY ALONG THE MAIN RIGHTS-OF-WAY. Taylor Bayou, and he riparian woodlands that border the stream, represent an isolated sliver of the Big Thicket that has inched toward the coast. Many of the eastern woodland birds that inhabit the Pineywoods are present along the bayou. Swallow-tailed Kites have been seen here during summer, and Northern Parulas, Yellow-throated. Prothonotary, Swainson's, Kentucky, and Hooded warblers all breed in the general vicinity. Go north on Jap Road to the North Fork of Taylor Bayou, then continue north on Jap Road to Patterson Road. Travel west on Patterson Road to Craigen Road, and then go west on Craigen Road back to the North Fork of Taylor Bayou. ontinue north on Craigen Road to TX 124, and then go south on TX 124 to TX 73. Travel west on TX 73 to Winnie.

Liberty-Dayton Area Chamber of

Commerce

TRINITY LOOP Greater Conroe/Lake Conroe Area

Chamber of Commerce

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UTC 031: LAKE CHARLOTTE Season: All Seasons

The next few loops use Winnie as an initial point of reference. From Winnie, continue west on I-10 to FM 563, then travel north on FM 563 to Lake Charlotte Road. Travel west on Lake Charlotte Road to Lake Charlotte (about 1.3 miles). The recreational facilities at Lake Charlotte have yet to be constructed; therefore access to this site is presently restricted. However, permission to visit Lake Charlotte may be obtained by contacting the ACOE Wallisville office at 409-389-2285. The cypress swamp bordering Lake Charlotte is one of the most impressive remaining on the upper Texas coast. Bald Eagles have nested in this area for several years. ▲ UTC 032: LIBERTY Season: All Seasons

Return to FM 563, then continue north on FM 563 to US 90 and Liberty. Liberty is situated on the banks of the Trinity River, one of the great Texas rivers that bisects the state on its dash to the Gulf. Although not a major birding destination in its own right, Liberty does have several parks and sanctuaries that offer a chance to bird the surrounding bottomland forests. In addition, Liberty, with a number of engaging bed-and-breakfast and traditional hotels, is well-situated to serve as a base from which to bird this intriguing region of Texas (Audubon Lodge, located near the intersection of US 90 and FM 1008, offers bed-and-birding accommodations. Contact this lodge at 409-258-9141). To bird Liberty proper, continue west on US 90 (from its intersection with FM 563) to Loop 227 (Main Street). Travel north ring east) on Main Street to Cook Road, then go north on Cook Road to the Liberty Municipal Park. Return to Main Street, and go south to Monta. Travel west on Monta to Bowie. From Bowie, you may continue west to the Liberty Flood Control Levee along the Trinity River, or veer south to the Liberty City Cemetery Additional sites of interest include the Trinity River historic bridge (U.S. 90 at the ity River), and the Liberty ferry landing (Lamar Street at the Trinity River). e Trinity River NWR, presently being established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has its office in Liberty. Although not currently open to the public, it is

▲ UTC 033: SHELDON SP AND WMA Season: Migrations, Winter

anticipated that birding access will be provided in the future.

From Liberty, continue west on US 90 to Sheldon Road. Go north on Sheldon Road to Garrett Road, then west on Garrett Road to Sheldon SP and WMA. Buckhorn Lake (which you will pass as you near the SP) is an excellent spot for Anhingas and Ospreys. Sheldon SP and WMA is most productive in winter, with flocks of waterfowl blanketing the various lakes and ponds. The surrounding weedy fields may hold a variety of sparrows, including Le Conte's. • UTC 034: LAKE HOUSTON SP Season: All Seasons

Return to US 90, then continue east on US 90 to FM 2100. Go north on FM 2100 to FM 1960, then continue north (FM 2100 will eventually veer west and become FM 1485) to Baptist Encampment Road. Travel south on Baptist Encampment Road to Lake Houston SP (situated in the San Jacinto River bottomlands along the upper reach of the lake). Many of the typical eastern woodland birds may be seen along the nature trails that meander through the dense bottomland forests. ▲ UTC 035: BIG CREEK SCENIC AREA

Season: All Seasons (particularly late Spring and Summer) Return to FM 1485, and continue west to US 59. Go north on US 59 to Clevelan and FM 2025, and continue north on FM 2025 to FM 2666. The Sam Houston NF has developed an interpretive site in a Red-cockaded Woodpecker group approximately 0.2 mile south of the intersection of FM 2025 and FM 2666. Travel east on FM 2666 to FR 221, north on FR 221 to FR 217, and then east on FR 217 to Big Creek Scenic Area. Louisiana Waterthrushes nest along Big Creek, and Wormeating Warblers have been found along the nature trails in summer. If you enjoy dragonflies, look for Gray Petaltail (Tachopteryx thoreyi) near the parking area.

LUTC 093: HOUSTON ARBORETUM AND MEMORIAL PARK Season: All Seasons Continue west on Evergreen to Loop 610, then go north on Loop 610 to the Voodway exit. Proceed east on Woodway to the Houston Arboretum and Memorial Park. Nature trails that originate at the Arboretum center eventually

KATY PRAIRIE LOOP

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reach the banks of Buffalo Bayou. These mixed pine/oak woodlands, fenced in by urban sprawl from all directions, still support a diverse population of eastern woodland birds. Pine, Swainson's, Kentucky, and Hooded warblers breed within this park. In late winter, American Woodcocks (a rare breeder on the upper coast) have displayed here. Watch for Mississippi Kites feeding on dragonflies as they skim the treetops along Buffalo Bayou in late August and early September.

> **Sealy Chamber of Commerce** (409) 885-3222 Email: sealycoc@c-com.net www.sealy-tx.com/

▲ UTC 094: HAS EDITH L. MOORE BIRD SANCTUARY Season: All Seasons Return west on Woodway to Loop 610, and go north on the Loop 610 service road to Memorial Drive. Proceed west on Memorial Drive to Wilchester, then south (only 0.1 mile) to the entrance to Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary. This urban nature center contains the HAS offices, and information about their many sancturies (including High Island and Bolivar Flats) may be obtained here. Although situated within a suburban neighborhood, the 17.5 acres of mixed oaks and pines still attract an interesting selection of woodland bi Houston Audubon Society (713) 932-1639 440 Wilchester Blvd

email: gmueller@hern.org ▲ UTC 095: JOSEPH S. AND LUCIE H. CULLINAN PARK Season: All Seasons Continue west on Memorial Drive to the intersection with TX 6. The next two sites are south of this intersection. Go south on TX 6 to the Joseph S. and Lucie H.

Cullinan Park (located on the west side of TX 6 before you reach US 90 in

ugarland). Enter the park, and proceed to the parking area near the boardwalk. The observation platform at the end of the boardwalk offers an excellent view of the surrounding lake. ▲ UTC 096: BARKER RESERVOIR

Season: All Seasons Return north on TX 6 to Briarforest, then park in the lot on the west side of TX 6 for Barker Reservoir. Barker Reservoir may be entered by walking along the road that crosses the levee. Wetlands within the reservoir are being restored, and a variety of waterbirds may be seen here (herons, egrets, waterfowl, shorebirds).

▲ UTC 097: BEAR CREEK PARK Season: All Seasons Return north on TX 6 to I-10. Continue north on TX 6 to Clay Road. Go east on Clay Road to Bear Creek Park. The mature pine/oak woodlands along Bear Creek

are home to a number of eastern woodland birds at their western limit on the Trail. Pine, Swainson's, Kentucky, and Hooded warblers breed here, Golden-crowned Kinglets (not always easy to see along the coast) usually winter, and Rusty Blackbirds are occasionally seen associated with flocks of Common Grackles ▲ UTC 098: LONGENBAUGH WATERFOWL POND Season: Winter, Migrations Return to Clay Road, and proceed west on Clay Road to Katy-Hockley Cutoff. This area, west of Houston, once consisted of little but endless stretches of prairie 'irtually all of the native grassland has been converted to agricultural uses, particularly rice growing. Rice fields are artificial wetlands, and they provide important habitat for waterbirds. The Katy Prairie is one of the country's premie wintering waterfowl regions. Bald Eagles follow the waterfowl to this area, and it is not unusual to see several while birding a winter's day. The plowed rice fields, particularly those recently flooded, are irresistible to migrant shorebirds such as merican Golden-Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, the two species of yellowlegs,

Pectoral Sandpiper, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Look for both species of whistling duck in these same fields in summer. To experience the Katy Prairie, you must wander the back roads. Remember that these lands are private. DO NOT TRESPASS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. Go north on Katy-Hockley Cutoff to Longenbaugh Road and the Longenbaugh Waterfowl Pond. Although waterfowl hunting is common in this area, the Longenbaugh Waterfowl Pond has been established by hunting guides as a refuge for ducks and geese. The numbers of dabblers here in winter can be mind-boggling, and Bald Eagles and Northern Harriers are frequently seen scavenging for dead ducks and geese on the levees.

▲ UTC 099: WARREN LAKE Season: Winter Continue north on Katy-Hockley Cutoff to Jack Road. Go west on Jack Road to Warren Ranch Road, then north on Warren Ranch Road to Warren Lake. Warren Lake is a major goose roosting site. Sunrise and sunset are especially favorable

viewing times (as the geese flocks may be seen arriving or departing). Look for the smaller Ross' Goose scattered in flocks of Snows. ▲ UTC 100: KPC NELSON FARM PRESERVE

Season: Winter Return on Katy-Hockley Cutoff to Sharp Road, then go west on Sharp Road to the Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) Nelson Farm Preserve. The KPC recently acquired this property and is restoring the depressional wetlands that once honey combed this region. The organization has constructed a blind along Sharp Road that allows birders to view one of these wetland enhancement projects. The isolated stand of pines adjacent to the Nelson Farm Preserve, known among local birders as Barn Owl Woods, may hold a number of interesting winter species (such as Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden-crowned Kinglet). Great Horned and Barn owls reside in these pines. **Katy Prairie Conservancy** (281) 391-7116 722 Oak Road, Suite 230 Katy, Texas 77494

▲ UTC 101: HARPER'S CHURCH ROAD Season: Winter The next stretch of this loop will wind you through some of the most productive

www.neosoft.com/~kpc

fields and pastures in this region. Continue west on Sharp Road (which becomes a gravel road in Waller County) to Pattison Road, then south on Pattison Road to Morrison Road. Proceed east on Morrison Road to FM 2855, then south on FM 2855 to FM 529. Finally, go west on FM 529 (be patient as FM 529 is briefly diver ed to FM 362) to Stefka, then north on Stefka to Harper's Church Road. Harper's Church Road continues west to the Brazos River. The bottomland forests along this road offer some of the best woodland birding in this region. Look for eastern

Bewick's Wren and Harris's Sparrows in the thickets, Eastern Bluebirds on the

▲ UTC 036: W.G. JONES SF Season: All Seasons From Cleveland, go west on TX 105 to Loop 336 near Conroe. Go south on Loop 336 to I-45, then continue south on I-45 to FM 1488. Travel west on FM 1488 to W.G. Jones State Forest (SF). The Texas Forest Service (who maintains this location) reported 18 groups of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in this forest in 1997. The office of the Texas Forest Service is open daily 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and an information packet containing a bird checklist and a detailed map of the woodpecker clusters may be obtained there. Please, do not disturb these birds by playing tapes or knocking on the painted cavity trees.

▲ UTC 037: MERCER ARBORETUM AND BOTANICAL GARDENS Season: All Seasons Return to I-45, and continue south to FM 1960. Go east on FM 1960 to Aldine-Westfield Road, then north on Aldine-Westfield to Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, Although primarily an urban nature center and botanical garden, Mercer Arboretum offers an opportunity to see many of the eastern

woodland birds fairly close to Houston. ▲ UTC 038: JESSE H. JONES NATURE CENTER Season: All Seasons Return to FM 1960, and continue east on FM 1960 to Kenswick. Go north on Kenswick to Jesse H. Jones Nature Center. Like Mercer Arboretum, Jesse H. Jones is an urban nature center that provides Houstonians with a chance to get away from the city. Visitors should note that Jones SF, Mercer Arboretum, and Jesse Jones Nature Center are all located within an easy drive of George Bush nternational Airport Return to FM 1960, and continue east. If you wish to bird the south shore of Lake Houston, travel south on US 59, then east on Beltway 8 to reach Alexander Deussen County Park. Otherwise, continue traveling east on FM 1960 to US 90

SAN JACINTO LOOP **Baytown Chamber of Commerce**

and TX 146 in Davton. Go south on TX 146 to I-10.

(281) 422-8359 www.ci.baytown.tx.us/index.html ▲ UTC 039: BAYTOWN NATURE CENTER Season: All Seasons From the intersection of TX 146 and I-10, go west on I-10 to Crosby-Lynchburg Road and Spur 330. Go east on Spur 330 to Bayway Drive, south on Bayway Drive to Shreck, and then west on Shreck to Baytown Nature Center. This interpretive center, still in development, encompasses a former housing subdivision abandoned because of land subsidence. With the dwellings now removed, the area s metamorphosing into a mosaic of uplands and wetlands.

▲ UTC 040: EDDIE V. GRAY GOOSE CREEK WETLANDS EDUCATION CENTER Season: All Seasons Return to Bayway, and continue south to Market Street and the Goose Creek Wetland Center (281-420-7128). Recently opened, the Goose Creek Wetland Center staff is available to direct birders to local areas of interest. Look for Black-crowned Night-Herons and various shorebirds in the wetlands behind

the center. ▲ UTC 041: SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND/ MONUMENT SHP Season: Migrations, Winter From Baytown, go south on TX 146 (which can be reached by returning east on Market Street from the Goose Creek Wetland Center) to TX 225. Atkinson Island WMA is located in the bay to the east, but is only accessible by boat. Go east on TX 225 to TX 134 (Battleground Road), and then travel north on TX 134 to PR

1836 and the San Jacinto Battleground/Monument SHP. Local birders recommend

ANAHUAC LOOP Anahuac Area Chamber of

(409) 267-4190 **Chambers County Office of Economic** Development (409) 267-8225 or 267-8228 (409) 296-2231 Email: nitebird@pernet.net www.winnietexas.com http://meredith@co.chambers.tx.us • UTC 042: WHITE MEMORIAL PARK Season: Migrations, Summer From San Jacinto Battleground/Monument SHP, travel north on TX 146 to I-10.

Memorial Park, located on Turtle Bayou, hosts an impressive selection of eastern woodland birds. Hairy Woodpeckers and Brown-headed Nuthatches are seen infrequently, and Pine, Swainson's, and Hooded warblers nest here as well as in the surrounding forests. Prothonotary Warblers are often seen along Turtle Bayou in ▲ UTC 043: WALLISVILLE RESERVOIR Season: All Seasons Return to I-10, and continue west to the Trinity River. Cross the Trinity River bridge, and exit immediately. Turn back east toward the river on the service road and continue under the bridge to the Wallisville Reservoir West Levee. The levee is 4 miles in length, and is accessible only by foot. To obtain permission to visit this area, contact the ACOE Wallisville office at 409-389-2285.

Continue west on the service road to the I-10 E access ramp. Go east on I-10, across the Trinity River, to Exit 806 (approximately 1 mile). Loop back west on the service road to the Trinity River and the Trinity River Mouth Waterbird Rookery (immediately to the south). The rookery may be viewed from the service road, Look for Anhingas, White Ibis, Little Blue Herons, and Roseate Spoonbills in this area. Continue east on I-10 to Levee Road (approximately 1.1 miles) and the Wallisville Reservoir East Levee. The East Levee is being developed as a public access point for the reservoir. Another interesting area is the Horseshoe Ponds Trail. Continue east from Exit 807 at Wallisville, cross under the freeway, then return west on the north service road for approximately 0.5 mile. ▲ UTC 044: ANAHUAC PUMPING STATION Season: All Seasons

From the Wallisville Reservoir East Levee, go south on Levee Road to Wallisville-Turtle Bayou Road. Turn east on Wallisville-Turtle Bayou Road to FM 563 (the woods along Wallisville-Turtle Bayou Road can be excellent in spring). Go south on FM 563 to TX 61, then west on TX 61 to the Anahuac Pumping Station. The Chambers-Liberty Counties Navigation District has developed a nature trail along the levee that impounds Lake Anahuac. Public parking is available at the beginning of the levee, and foot traffic is allowed during daylight hours. The trail is pordered by woodlands, fresh and brackish marshes, and the open waters of Trinity Bay and Lake Anahuac.

power lines, and a variety of woodland birds (Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, (ellow-rumped Warbler) in the pecan forests near the river. The huisache thickets in this area (particularly those near Monaville) host Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, eastern Bewick's Wren, and Palm Warbler in winter. • UTC 102: STEPHEN F. AUSTIN SP Season: Migrations, Winter Return to FM 529 from Harper's Church Road. Go west on FM 529 to FM 331, then south on FM 331 to Stephen F. Austin SP (look for the signs directing you to the park). The habitat in this state park is similar to that found along Harper's Church Road (Brazos River bottomland forest Return to FM 331, and continue south to TX 36. Go south on TX 36 to I-10. From this intersection, either proceed back to Houston via I-10 or continue south

BLUEWATER LOOP Southern Brazoria County Visitors and Convention Bureau (800) WET-GULF and (409) 265-2508 www.brazosport.cc.tx.us/~sbcvcb

Attwater Prairie-Chicken NWR (CTC 004).

O UTC 103: SAN LUIS PASS COUNTY PARK Season: All Seasons From Galveston, cross San Luis Pass on the toll bridge and continue southwest on the Bluewater Highway (Brazoria CR 257). Immediately after crossing the bridge,

Scope the nearshore waters in summer and fall for Magnificent Frigatebirds. UTC 104: CHRISTMAS BAY Season: All Seasons Continue southwest on the Bluewater Highway to Christmas Bay and the

often crowd this bay in winter, and Wilson's Plovers and Horned Larks nest in the dunes along the shore. It is possible to drive the beach the entire distance between here and Surfside (although a beach pass is required in Surfside), and gulls, terns, and shorebirds congregate in this area (Red Knots are often seen along this beach in migration). The nearshore waters are often jammed with Brown Pelicans diving amongst the schools of menhaden, and rafts of seaducks may drift close enough to the shore to allow a close inspection. UTC 105: BLUEWATER HIGHWAY Season: All Seasons

Continue southwest on Bluewater Highway to TX 332 in Surfside. The bay may be accessed by driving to the Swan Lake Boat Ramp or the Lazy Palms Boat Ramp. In summer, Willets light on the power lines along this stretch of the Bluewater Highway to blurt their "Pee-Willet" calls. Falcons (Peregrine, Merlin, and American Kestrel) are commonly seen along the beach in migration and winter. Look for Yellow-headed Blackbird among the blackbird flocks along this road during migration. Bobolinks have also been seen in late spring in fields of spiderwort.

UTC 106: SURFSIDE JETTY PARK Season: Winter From the intersection of the Bluewater Highway and TX 332 in Surfside, continue southwest across TX 332 on Fort Velasco Drive to Parkview Road. Go south on Parkview Road to Surfside Jetty Park. The jetty has been recently expanded, and the walk to the end can now be accomplished with secure footing. Northern Gannets may be seen in winter from the jetty, and scoters and mergansers may drift into these relatively calm waters to feed (the scoters are rare). Inspect the flocks of gulls that feed behind the shrimp boats for jaegers.

COASTAL PLAINS LOOP Alvin-Manvel Area Chamber of Commerce

(281) 331-3944 www.ci.alvin.tx.us/ ▲ UTC 107: VILLAGE OF OYSTER CREEK MUNICIPAL PARK Season: Migrations From Surfside (the anchor for the remaining loops), travel west on TX 332 to FM 523, then go north on FM 523 to Village of Oyster Creek Municipal Park. These woodlands, situated along Oyster Creek, are worth checking for migrants as you travel toward Brazoria NWR. Red-shouldered Hawks are often seen perched on the power poles around the parking area. Look for Belted Kingfishers along Ovster Creek.

UTC 108: BRAZORIA NWR Season: All Seasons Travel north on FM 523 to CR 227, then east on CR 227 to Brazoria NWR. The refuge consists of nearly 50,000 acres of coastal grassland, bluestem prairie, mud

Brazoria NWR) overlooking Teal Pond allows close views of the waterfowl (geese, Sandhill Cranes) congregations there. Also, walk the nature trail across Big Slough, behind the visitor's pavillion. The refuge hosts open houses throughout the year on the first full weekend of each month from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the third weekends from November through April. Otherwise, access to the refuge is restricted. In addition to the remarkable diversity of waterbirds and waterfowl that reside here, this refuge contains over 5,000 acres of native bluestem prairie. In this grassland look for Sedge Wrens and Le Conte's, Henslow's, and Grasshopper sparrows. White-tailed Kites and White-tailed Hawks frequent the prairies in winter. The tidal flats at low tide often overflow with shorebirds. In fact, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network recently designated the Brazoria Refuge Complex as an internationally significant shorebird site. Brazoria and San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges (409) 849-7771 1212 North Velasco, Suite 200 Angleton, Texas 77515 Email: R2RW_BRZ@mail.fws.gov http://sturgeon.irm1.r2.fws.gov:80/u2/refuges/texas/brazoria.html

▲ UTC 109: AMOCO (CHOCOLATE BAYOU) NATURE TRAIL Season: All Seasons Continue northeast on CR 227 to FM 2004 (look for Crested Caracaras along this road). Go northeast on FM 2004 to the Amoco (Chocolate Bayou) Nature Trail. The grasslands in this area (along CR 227 and FM 2004) support an impressive diversity of raptors. In addition, be sure to inspect the flooded rice fields in spring for American Golden-Plovers, Whimbrels, and Buff-breasted Sandpipers. Whitetailed Hawks have nested in previous years in the prairie across FM 2004 from the Amoco plant. To access the nature trail, park on the west side of FM 2004 near the

the south end of the park. Wood Storks are often present in late summer and fall, and Hooded Mergansers and Greater Scaup have been seen during winter.

> Wallisville Heritage Park (409) 389-2252 wallisvilleheritagepark@juno.com Winnie Area Chamber of Commerce

then go east on I-10 to TX 61. Traveling from Winnie, go west on I-10 to TX 61 Exit 813). Go south on TX 61 a short distance to White Memorial Park. White

on TX 36 to FM 3013 and join the central coastal section of the GTCBT at the

exit west for San Luis Pass County Park. This county park offers another view of San Luis Pass, and the sand flats here are often littered with small flocks of gulls and terns. Northern Gannets often venture into the swift waters of San Luis Pass to fish.

Christmas Bay Scenic View (3.2 miles from San Luis Pass). Rafts of Redheads

flats, fresh and salt water marshes, and a bewildering assortment of potholes, lakes, and streams. The new observation platform (constructed by the Friends of the

Mustang Bayou bridge. Amoco has developed this area for wildlife watching, and the woods here (along Mustang Bayou) attract landbirds during migration.

UTC 045: FORT ANAHUAC PARK Season: Migrations Return east on TX 61 to South Main, then go south on South Main to Fort Anahuac Park. The trees in this city park, bordering Lake Anahuac, should be checked during migrations for landbirds.

• UTC 046: DOUBLE BAYOU PARK Season: Migrations Continue south on TX 61 to Eagle Ferry Road, and go east on Eagle Ferry Road to Double Bayou Park. During migrations (particularly during the spring), no park or sanctuary is too insignificant to discount in a search for migrant landbirds. Migrants can appear ANYWHERE, so take a chance! Double Bayou Park is another small tract that should be inspected as you travel toward the more

famous migrant traps such as High Island. ▲ UTC 047: SMITH POINT AND JAMES H. ROBBINS MEMORIAL PARK Season: All Seasons

Continue east on Eagle Ferry Road to FM 562. Go south on FM 562 to its intersection with FM 1985, then veer west to continue on FM 562 to Smith Point Road in Smith Point. Smith Point is one of the most isolated and undeveloped coastal peninsulas left along the Texas coast. The marshes and open grasslands along FM 562 are productive throughout the year. Travel west on Smith Point Road to Hawkins Camp Road, then go north on Hawkins Camp to James H. Robbins Memorial Park. Robbins Park, with its observation platform, offers an unobstruct ed view of Trinity Bay. Look for Magnificent Frigatebirds in summer and fall, both species of pelican, and an assortment of gulls and terns. The oak mottes (isolated stands of trees) along Hawkins Camp Road attract migrant landbirds in spring and fall. The Spoonbill RV Park, situated on Trinity Bay off Hawkins Camp Road, caters to birders (409-267-4190).

▲ UTC 048: CANDY ABSHIER WMA Season: Migrations (especially Fall), Winter Return on Hawkins Camp Road to Smith Point Road, then return west to the

Candy Abshier WMA (look for the GTCBT sign marking the entrance road). Candy Abshier WMA is famous for the daily hawk watches that are conducted here from early August to November. These watches are sponsored by the Gul Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO), the Houston Ornithology Group, and Hawk Watch International (contact the GCBO at 713-789-GCBO for information). No autumn trip to the Texas coast is complete without joining one of these coastal hawk watches for a day. In addition to the tens of thousands of Mississippi Kites. Broad-winged Hawks Swainson's Hawks falcons and accipiters that are seen annually, unusual species such as Swallow-tailed Kite are often reported from these watches. The oaks in Candy Abshier WMA attract migrant landbirds, and Henslow's Sparrows have wintered in the grassy fields near the observation platform.

▲ UTC 049: ANAHUAC NWR (MAIN ENTRANCE) Season: All Seasons Return east on Smith Point Road / FM 562 to the intersection of FM 562 and FM 1985. Continue east on FM 1985 to Anahuac NWR (Main Entrance). Anahua

NWR is one of the premier waterfowl refuges on the Texas coast. Greater Whitefronted and Snow goose flocks (with a few Ross' mixed in) crowd the marshes and wet fields throughout the winter. After entering the refuge, travel the first levee to the west toward Shoveler Pond. The willows to the north of the levee are excellent for migrants in spring and fall (check these trees in late August for Empidonax Flycatchers). Continue around Shoveler Pond. Least Bitterns (in summer), American Bitterns (in winter and migration), and Marsh Wrens (in summer) are common in these cattail marshes. Check the open waters of Shoveler Pond for Canvasbacks and Redheads (Masked Ducks have bred here in the past). Common Moorhens and Purple Gallinules are abundant breeders in the marshes that border the tour loop, and American Alligators and Nutria abound. After returning to the main entrance road, continue south toward Trinity Bay. Shorteared Owls patrol these coastal prairies in the winter and spring (look around sunset). Sprague's Pipits winter along the road east of Crossover Road. Finally, the seemingly endless marshes in Anahuac are home to all of the regular rails in the U.S.—Clappers, Kings, Virginias, and Soras are all regularly seen from the tour loop. Yellow Rails demand a bit of effort, and hikes into the Yellow Rail Prairie (dragging a rope to flush the rails) are periodically scheduled (contact the refuge

at 409-267-3337 for information). UTC 050: ANAHUAC NWR (EAST BAY BAYOU TRACT) Season: Migrations, Winter Continue east on FM 1985 to the Anahuac NWR (East Bay Bayou Tract). Refuge personnel, assisted by the Friends of Anahuac Refuge, have developed a 1.5-mile nature trail along the east side of East Bay Bayou. The woods along the bayou offer another excellent opportunity to look for landbirds in migration. In addition, the refuge maintains a series of wet fields for shorebirds near the entrance to this tract (along FM 1985). Hudsonian Godwits, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and White-rumped Sandpipers are regularly seen here in spring. Continue east on FM 1985 to TX 124. The rice fields along FM 1985 often teem with shorebirds during spring migration. A late spring morning spent in this area (to see the freshwater shorebirds), combined with an afternoon at Bolivar Flats (to see the saltwater species), should yield between 30 and 35 different shorebird species. From the intersection of FM 1985 and TX 124, go south on TX 124 to High Island and the Bolivar Loop.

BOLIVAR LOOP Bolivar Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

800) 386-7863 Email: cofcbolivar@yahoo.com www.crystalbeach.com/chamber.html and www.crystalbeach.com/mainfrm.html

▲ UTC 051: TXDOT HIGH ISLAND ROADSIDE PARK Season: Migrations Enhancements: Landscaping, nature trail, information kiosk Entering High Island, first stop at the TxDOT High Island Roadside Park bordering TX 124. This rest stop has been landscaped with funds from the GTCBT. n addition, an information kiosk has been installed that includes a map of the various Houston Audubon Society (HAS) High Island sanctuaries. Orient your-

self, for the directions to the other sanctuaries use this park as a reference point. Before leaving, however, be sure to bird the trees in and around the park. ▲ UTC 052: HAS SMITH OAKS BIRD SANCTUARY Season: Migrations From the Roadside Park, go north on TX 124 to Weeks Avenue. Turn south on Weeks Avenue to Winnie Street (look for the Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary sign). Go east on Winnie Street to Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary. Please purchase an annual or day pass before entering (the funds are used to maintain the Society's 2,000-acre sanctuary system). Spring migration in Smith Oaks is one of the most

remarkable wildlife spectacles in the world. Vireos, warblers, tanagers, orioles, and buntings swarm these trees as they complete their non-stop journey across the Gulf of Mexico. Be sure to check the heron rookery in Claybottom Pond on the north side of Smith Oaks for close looks at egrets, herons, and spoonbills. Bring insect repellant and wear a long-sleeved shirt to dissuade the mosquitoes.

▲ UTC 110: AMOCO WETLANDS TRAIL Season: All Seasons

Continue northeast on FM 2004 to FM 2917, then go northwest on FM 2917 to the Amoco Wetlands Trail (1.1 miles from FM 2004). The ponds may be reached by walking the road (look for the GTCBT sign) to an observation platform. The road first passes through a sizable prairie (listen for Sedge Wrens in spring), eventually reaching the wetlands and pond. American Bitterns and Green Herons are often seen here, and migrant shorebirds often drop into the shallow wetlands during

migrations. **UTC 111: SOLUTIA PRAIRIE** Season: Migrations, Winter

Before leaving Chocolate Bayou, continue northwest on FM 2917 to the Solutia Prairie (2 miles from FM 2004). Solutia has restored a significant tract of coastal prairie at this location, and Sedge Wrens and Le Conte's Sparrows may be seen (or at least heard) here Return on FM 2004 to FM 523, then go south on TX 523 to TX 332.

BRAZORIA LOOP Brazosport Convention and Visitors Council (888) 477-2505 and

Email: bcvc@tgn.net (409) 265-2505 www.tourtexas.com/brazosport/ and www.brazosport.org/index.html

▲ UTC 112: BRAZOSPORT NATURE CENTER AND PLANETARIUM (NCAP) NATURE TRAIL Season: Migrations, Winter The Brazosport Area, consisting of the communities of Clute, Freeport, Jones Creek, Lake Jackson, and Oyster Creek, is situated along the Texas coast at the mouth of the Brazos River. The woodlands that border the river, in combination

with the surrounding mosaic of coastal grasslands, marshes, swamps, beach, and open Gulf waters, attract an astounding variety and density of birds. The Freeport Christmas Bird Count (CBC), conducted in late December, has frequently led the nation in the number of species seen. The Migration Celebration, held every year in spring, offers an opportunity to visit this remarkable area with the guidance and able assistance of local experts. Contact the Brazosport Convention and Visitors Council for information about this annual festival From the intersection of FM 523 and TX 332, travel west on TX 332 to BUS 288. Go north on BUS 288 to College Blvd., then west on College Blvd. to Brazosport College. Enter the first (east) entrance, and park at the Brazosport

Arts and Sciences Center (where the NCAP is housed). The trail, which begins across from the NCAP, traverses a river bottom woodland community that is typical of the woodlands in this area. This particular woodland is now on the banks of Oyster Creek (formerly the bed of the Brazos River). A copy of the "Trail Guide to a River Bottom Woodland" may be obtained in the nature center. Brazosport Center for the Arts & Sciences (409) 265-3376 400 College Drive tgn.net/~snark/ncap/ncap2.html Lake Jackson, Texas 77566 Return to the intersection of BUS 288 and TX 332, then continue south on

BUS 288 to Dow Chemical. A shell parking lot within the plant has been comman deered by a colony (about 1500 adults) of Black Skimmers (as well as Least and Gull-billed terns), and since 1968 Dow Chemical has protected this site for the benefit of the birds. Dow Chemical conducts tours of this colony during nesting season. The site (inside the plant) is viewable weekly each Wednesday on a 2:00 p.m. company bus tour of the whole plant. Reservations are required; call 409-238-2323. The bus tours start at the Dow Chemical administrative building, which is about 0.8 mile south of the intersection of TX 332 and BUS 288. In addition, Dow Chemical hosts an annual open house on a late June Saturday in which the public is bused in to the colony during the open house day. The tour starts at the levee gate (normally closed to the public) on FM 523 that is about 0.6 mile outh of the TX 332/FM523 intersection. Reservations are not required; call Dow Chemical for information about the exact date of the next open house.

▲ UTC 113: SEA CENTER TEXAS Season: All Seasons Continue west on TX 332 to Plantation Drive in Lake Jackson, then go south on Plantation Drive to Sea Center Texas. TPWD, Dow North America, and the Gulf Coast Conservation Association have developed this marine education center and aquarium. The fish hatchery at this location has the capacity to produce 20 million fingerlings annually, primarily red drum and spotted seatrout, for release into Texas coastal waters. Although the focus of Sea Center Texas is upon the marine ecosystem, two wetlands (a 3.78-acre freshwater marsh, and a 1.31-acre saltwater marsh) have been created that are attractive to waterbirds. The complex includes

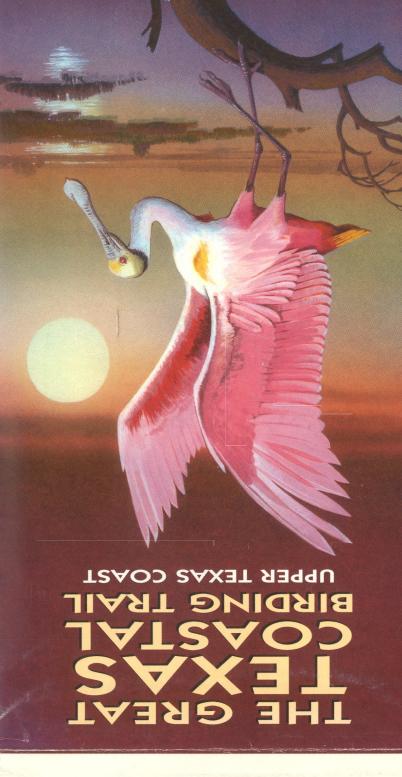
a boardwalk, indoor aquaria and an outdoor interpretive building. (409) 292-0100 Sea Center Texas **300 Medical Drive** Lake Jackson, TX 77566 ▲ UTC 114: DOW CENTENNIAL BOTTOMLANDS PARK Season: Migrations, Winter Continue west on TX 332 to Oak Drive, then go south on Oak Drive to MacLean Park and the entrance to Dow Centennial Bottomlands Park. Dow Chemical

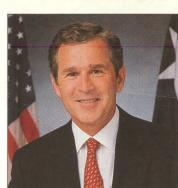
donated this 240-acre tract to Lake Jackson to commemorate the company's 100th anniversary. The sanctuary, with its extensive bottomland forests, is dedicated as a nature sanctuary. The bottomland forests along the Brazos River (known as the Columbia Bottomlands) are one of the most important migratory vectors for landbirds in the United States. Millions of migrants pass through these woodlands each spring as they complete their trans-Gulf migratory journeys, although birders may detect only a miniscule ripple of this avian tidal wave. ▲ UTC 115: LAKE JACKSON WILDERNESS PARK Season: Migrations, Winter Continue west on TX 332 to Lake Jackson Wilderness Park (approximately 1.5

miles west of Oak Drive). An unpaved road penetrates the dense thickets and allows entry into this fascinating bottomland forest. Wood Ducks are often seen feeding on duckweed in the stagnant pools. These evergreen bottomlands remain lush throughout the winter (it rarely freezes here), and each winter a number of neotropical migrants, birds that otherwise would have continued to the tropical forests of Central and South America, stay on in these insect-rich woods. ▲ UTC 116: BRAZOS RIVER COUNTY PARK Season: All Seasons Go west on TX 332 to TX 521, then continue north on TX 521 to TX 35. Continue north on TX 521 to CR 30 (approximately 5 miles north of TX 35), then go west

on CR 30 to Planter's Point. Enter Planter's Point, and follow Colony Lane to Brazos River County Park. The ponds along Colony Lane attract numbers of Wood Ducks (these ponds are often covered in duckweed), and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons usually hunt for frogs and snakes along the shoreline. Enter the park, and walk the boardwalk along the river. Mississippi Kites nest around this park, so keep watching the treetops during the summer. Early mornings here are often punctuated with the staccato calls of Pileated Woodpeckers. • UTC 117: BRAZOS BEND SP

Season: All Seasons Return to FM 521, and continue north to FM 1462. Go west on FM 1462 to TX 762, then north on TX 762 to PR 72 and Brazos Bend SP. Brazos Bend SP is located approximately 28 miles south of Houston in Fort Bend County. The park covers 4,897 acres, with an eastern boundary of 3.2 miles fronting on the Brazos River. Although dominated by the Brazos River floodplain, Brazos Bend is a





I am proud to welcome citizens and visitors to enjoy the diverse natural esources of our great state. The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail is the first of its kind in the United States. It promises to guide you on a fun and educational tour of the Texas coast and its diverse avian wildlife While Texas boasts numerous state parks, wildlife management areas, federal refuges and forests, the vast majority of our lands are privately owned. Outstanding conservation efforts are taking place on millions of acres of private and owned by Texans who are good stewards of our state's natural resources. Whether you want to see a Green Jay, a Whooping Crane or a Brown Pelican, chances are excellent that you will see one in Texas, home of one of the most diverse bird populations in North America. After you have traveled the 500 miles of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail, I hope you will continue your birdwatching in other regions of our great state. You never know what awaits you!





hodge-podge of coastal prairies, swales, oxbow lakes, freshwater marshes, and ense riparian woodlands. Big Creek cuts diagonally across the park, and Elm, Pilant, and 40-Acre lakes offer extensive open-water habitat. From the parking area at Elm Lake (look for Vermilion Flycatcher in winter in the rattlebean thickets along the shore), hike to the observation platform located between Pilan and 40-Acre lakes. Purple Gallinules and Least Bitterns nest in the marshes here, and Prothonotary Warblers breed in the willows along the levee. Few dusks pass without a raucous chorus of Barred Owls shattering the evening's quiet. (409) 553-5101 **Brazos Bend State Park** 21901 FM 762 Needville, TX 77461

Texas Department of Transportation TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Leaving Brazos Bend SP, continue north on TX 762 to Davis Estates Road pproximately 2.1 miles from PR 72). This road, much of it unpaved, is favored by local birders for its tendency to lure unusual species. Golden Eagles and Tundra Swans have occurred here in the past, and Wood Storks are often seen in the shallow ponds that border the road. ▲ UTC 118: MANOR AND EAGLE NEST LAKE Season: All Seasons

Return to FM 1462, and continue east 0.8 mile to Cow Creek Road. Travel south on Cow Creek Road (becoming CR 25 at the county line) to Manor and Eagle Nest lakes. This pleasant route carries you through miles of grazing lands that often contain Sandhill Cranes in the winter. Crested Caracaras are occasionally seen in the fields along CR 25, and Ferruginous Hawks have been reported from this area in the past. Of the two lakes, Manor Lake is the most interesting to birders. The extensive marshes here draw an impressive diversity of waterbirds including Least Bitterns, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, Purple Gallinules, and Common Moorhens. Listen for the gurgling songs of Marsh Wrens in late spring and summer. Bald Eagles nest in the area, and often drift over these lakes in search of dead fish

Departing Manor Lake, check CR 27 to the east. Eastern Bluebirds are often seen in the pecan woodlands along this gravel road, and Pileated Woodpeckers are unusually common near the river. ▲ UTC 119: VARNER-HOGG PLANTATION SHP **Season: Migrations** Continue south on CR 25 to TX 35, then go west on TX 35 to FM 2852. Travel north on FM 2852 to Varner-Hogg Plantation SHP. Chiefly managed as a historical

site, this state park offers limited birding opportunities. However, the park supports a healthy population of Eastern Bluebirds, and the woodlands here should be inspected in spring for migrants. ▲ UTC 120: HANSON RIVERSIDE COUNTY PARK Season: Migrations, Winter

Continue west on TX 35 through West Columbia to Hanson Riverside County Park. Check the woodlands in spring for migrants and eastern woodland birds. Return east on TX 35 to TX 36, then proceed south to the intersection of TX 36 and FM 1495 in Quintana.

SAN BERNARD LOOP ▲ UTC 121: QUINTANA NEOTROPICAL BIRD SANCTUARY Season: Migrations From Surfside, go west on TX 332 to FM 523. Continue west on FM 523 to FM 1495, then south on FM 1495 to TX 36 (see the previous loop). Continue

south on FM 1495 across the GIWW to CR 723 (Lamar Street). Turn left on CR 723 to proceed 2.1 miles to the Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. This small grove of salt cedars has become a birding hotspot in a very short period of time. Yellow-green Vireos brought this area notoriety in the spring of 1998, not to be eclipsed by the King Eider (discovered during the 1998 Great Texas Birding Classic) that beached nearby. • UTC 122: QUINTANA BEACH COUNTY PARK Season: All Seasons

Continue on CR 723 (Lamar Street) to Fifth Street, then go south on Fifth Street to Quintana Beach County Park. The Quintana Jetty may be accessed from this rk, and the species listed for the Surfside Jetty (UTC 106) occur here as well. Walk the jetty and scope the offshore waters for gulls, terns, and an occasional jaeger or gannet. ▲ UTC 123: BRYAN BEACH

Season: All Seasons Return to FM 1495, and turn south on CR 750. Proceed south to the beach, and drive southwest along the beach until reaching the mouth of the Brazos River and the Bryan Beach Unit of the Peach Point WMA. The unit is undeveloped, yet, in some ways, this unspoiled condition adds to the appeal of this location. Flocks of waterbirds crowd the sand flats at the mouth of the river, and gangs of American Avocets often swirl through the shallow waters here. Piping and Snowy plovers chase the water's edge, and Merlins eye them while perched on the driftwood that litters the dunes.

▲ UTC 124: PEACH POINT WMA Season: Migrations, Winter Return to the intersection of FM 1495 and TX 36, and continue northwest on TX 36 to the TPWD Peach Point WMA. Most of this 10,311-acre management area consists of either coastal prairie or coastal marshes that are inaccessible to the public. However, nature trails have been developed that provide visitors with he opportunity to explore an oak/hackberry motte and adjacent grasslands. The Live Oak Loop and the Jones Creek Trail may be accessed 0.2 mile from TX 36 (the trailhead is situated in a small picnic area). In addition, the WMA owns a tract (about 40 acres) of live oak woods behind the Jones Creek municipal building on Stephen F. Austin Drive that is open to the public year-round. This tract is situated near the Little Ridge entrance to the WMA, and is under lease to Jones Creek to be developed into a city park. Many of the lingering neotropical migrants that have been recorded on the

Freeport CBC were found in the live oak woodlands in Jones Creek. Peach Point WMA (409) 244-7697 **County Courthouse, Room 101** Bay City, TX 77414 ▲ UTC 125: SAN BERNARD NWR Season: All Seasons Continue northwest on TX 36 to FM 2611, then west on FM 2611 to FM 2918. roceed south on FM 2918 to CR 306, then west on CR 306 to San Bernard NWR. The 27,414-acre refuge is located in Brazoria and Matagorda counties,

12 miles west of Freeport. The refuge includes coastal prairie, both salt and fresh water marshes, freshwater lakes, and scattered woodlands. Although all of the refuge is worth exploring (at least the parts that are accessible), try the 3-mile Moccasin Pond auto loop and Scissor-tail Trail if pressed for time. Also try walking the Bobcat Woods Trail, an elevated boardwalk that offers an excellent view of Cocklebur Slough. Return to TX 36, and continue west to FM 521 and the beginning of the central coastal portion of the GTCBT. San Bernard NWR Email: R2RW_SNB@mail.fws.gov http://sturgeon.irm1.r2.fws.gov:80/u2/refuges/texas/sanbern.html

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