

HIGH ISLAND, TEXAS: AN INTRODUCTORY BIRDING TOUR

April 13-17, 2007

Leaders: Brennan Mulrooney and David Wolf

The Upper Texas Coast in spring—it's hard to imagine a more exciting place for a birder. Every year I look forward to the opportunity to return to High Island and the litany of premier birding destinations found along the Upper Coast, and this year did not disappoint. In three-and-a-half days of birding we tallied 25 species of warblers, 27 species of shorebirds, and 204 total species of birds. And this was not birding at break-neck speed; this was an introductory tour. We spent a lot of time talking about the biology of the birds and the habitats in which we found them, as well as the dynamics of migration and how it's affected by the weather. It seems clear that few places in North America can match the diversity of this area in April.

Whenever you find so many birds in so short a time, it's easy for the mind to lose focus and for memories to blur into one another, but for me, several moments during this trip remain crystal-clear. The first such moment came soon after arrival at the famed Boy Scout Woods in High Island. Checking the mulberry trees is usually a productive way to spend your time here, and it was especially true on this day. Just as we were gathering inside the gate and getting our entry patches pinned on, our attention was drawn to a fruiting mulberry by the call of a Houston Audubon volunteer, "Painted Bunting just above the roof!" As we all got on the bird, a stunningly beautiful adult male, we quickly realized that the bird wasn't alone. Also feeding on the red and purple fruits were a parade of other colorful migrants, Orchard and Baltimore orioles, Summer and Scarlet tanagers, Gray Catbirds, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. The longer we watched the more we saw; birds were being called out one after the other. Soon the bright lemony hues of a Yellow-breasted Chat had us riveted again, relishing a nice open look at a bird that often hides in the shadows—heard, but not seen.

While the migrant landbirds are always a show-stopper on this tour, they certainly aren't the only game in town. At one stop on the Bolivar Peninsula we were treated to amazing looks at Clapper Rails as they ran around on the side of the road, in full view, not ten feet from our vans. This went on for probably 10 minutes; we finally had to leave them! But not without good reason, as we knew that here there is always some other spectacular scene right around the corner. Perhaps none is more consistently spectacular than the wading bird rookery at Smith Oaks. Herons and egrets in high breeding condition show off long filamentous breeding plumes and facial skin glowing orange, electric blue, or mint green. The flame birds, Roseate Spoonbills, tending to their nests mere yards away, occasionally stand up to reveal the little pink balls of fluff that are their newly hatched chicks. All this color and life is contrasted by the cold staring eyes of alligators patrolling the waters below, waiting for somebody to make a mistake.

Another attraction of birding this area is that just a short drive inland a whole suite of breeding birds can be seen, including such highly sought species as Prothonotary and Swainson's warblers. One morning, on a quick check of a nearby bayou, we found a glowing male Prothonotary singing out his song across the swamp, while Acadian Flycatchers and Hooded Warblers sang from the shadows. Then on our last day we headed into the Piney Woods where

we had great looks at such breeders as Pine, Prairie, and Yellow-throated warblers, Eastern Bluebird, Barred Owl, and the icing on the cake—a Swainson’s Warbler. This species is one of the hardest North American breeding warblers to add to one’s life list. They have a rather small breeding range, and although they aren’t especially rare within that range, they certainly are difficult to observe. In migration they are practically ghosts, only seldom allowing themselves to be seen. When we heard one singing from a particularly dense patch of wet woods, we knew we were going to have a tough time seeing it. Often in such situations you just get fleeting looks as they fly between hidden song perches, but this time we were amazingly fortunate. We were able to spot it on its perch where it obviously didn’t think we could see it. We sat with scopes on this skulking recluse of a warbler for about five minutes, even getting to watch it belt out its surprisingly loud song several times. What a way to end the trip—a lifer for almost everybody, and a view that will be hard to ever repeat.

ITINERARY:

April 13: After picking up most of the group at the airport in Houston, we made our way along the back roads to Winnie, stopping for birding in Liberty and checking fields for shorebirds along the way. With the weather deteriorating and the prospect of good birding in the days to come we decided not to push it too hard this afternoon. Dinner was at the famous Al-T’s.

April 14: We started the day in High Island at the Boy Scout Woods Sanctuary. Next we started heading down the Bolivar Peninsula, with a stop at Rollover Pass en route to our tasty lunch at the Stingaree. After lunch we continued down the peninsula with birding at Mrs. Johnson’s, Fort Travis and Port Bolivar before heading back to High Island for a late afternoon search of Hooks Woods. Dinner at Hunan where the owner was also the host, waiter, bus boy, and chef!

April 15: We started out early this morning so we could participate in an organized search for Yellow Rail at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. After great success on the walk, we spent the remainder of the morning checking the freshwater impoundments, mudflats and willow thickets of the refuge before returning to Winnie for lunch. After a short post-lunch break, we headed east to Sabine Woods where we had a great migrant showing that entertained us until we had to leave for dinner at the Cajun Wave.

April 16: After a brief morning visit to Taylor Bayou, we headed to the largest of the High Island Sanctuaries, Smith Oaks. The woods were fairly quiet, but the waterbird rookery was spectacular. We made a brief visit to Boy Scout Woods before heading once again down the Bolivar Peninsula with birding at Rollover Pass, Bolivar Flats, Fort Travis, and Yacht Basin Rd. We ended the day back at Boy Scout Woods then had our final dinner back at Al-T’s.

April 17: On this, our final morning, we headed north into the piney woods looking for some of the East Texas breeding species that we had missed on the coast. We had spectacular luck and celebrated with a visit to the unique and memorable Mama Jack’s buffet/gift shop in Kountze before returning to Houston for flights home.

BIRDLIST

Note: Species appearing in underlined print are birds of special note that are either rare, local specialties, or are otherwise generally hard to find. The taxonomic order and nomenclature follows American Ornithologist Union Check-list of North American Birds, 7th edition (including 47th suppl.).

Abbreviations:

ANWR: Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

BSW: Houston Audubon's Boy Scout Woods Sanctuary in High Island

SO: Houston Audubon's Smith Oaks Sanctuary in High Island (the rookery is here)

HW: Texas Ornithological Society's Hooks Woods in High Island

SW: Texas Ornithological Society's Sabine Woods Sanctuary near Sabine Pass

RP: Rollover Pass on the Bolivar Peninsula

MJ: Mrs. Johnson's Property on the Bolivar Peninsula

BF: Bolivar Flats

BP: Bolivar Peninsula

WATERFOWL

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – we saw many, but almost all in flight.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – seen well in the marsh at ANWR

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) - a single bird at ANWR was a surprising straggler, as geese are usually gone by this date.

Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) - another surprise at ANWR, 2 white morphs and 1 dark morph or "Blue Goose"

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) – seen only by David at Taylor Bayou

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) - a pair and two other females at ANWR

Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*) – seen best at ANWR

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) – the most common duck on the tour

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) - several in Shoveler Pond (ANWR) and elsewhere

Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*) - another waterfowl surprise, we found a handsome male in an unlikely spot, a crawfish farm. These "bay ducks" of the genus *Aythya* are usually found in deeper water and Canvasbacks are usually gone by mid-April.

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

NEW WORLD QUAIL

Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) - heard only at ANWR

LOONS

Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) - several migrants were seen flying over the Bolivar Peninsula with their big floppy feet hanging out the back.

GREBES

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) - a few seen in freshwater ponds

PELICANS

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) - RO, BF, and the crawfish farm

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – common along the seashore

CORMORANTS

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – seen almost daily, good comparisons with the following species at SO

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – a common wintering species on the upper Texas coast, we saw several that were still hanging around.

ANHINGAS

Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*) - The only North American member of the family Anhingidae, we had good looks at SO and on the road to High Island.

HERONS, EGRETS, & BITTERNS

American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) – We had a couple of fly-bys and one shockingly bold bird in the middle of the road at ANWR. This species is usually quite secretive and hard to observe.

Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – fantastic looks at ANWR

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) – seen most days

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) – seen daily, we had fantastic looks at birds in high breeding condition, incubating eggs and attending scraggly chicks at SO

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) – a few showing the orange facial skin and feet of high breeding condition at SO

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) – seen most days, some showing neon blue facial skin indicating breeding condition

Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) – same as above

Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*) – great looks at BF

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) – common in drier grassy habitat

Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) – great looks at ANWR and SO

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – several at SO

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – both at Port Bolivar and near Taylor Bayou

IBISES & SPOONBILLS

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) – we saw white adults and brown-and-white immatures

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) – seen best at the crawfish farm

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) – Probably the coolest bird in North America (but then I might be biased). We had spectacular looks at SO where we saw birds courting, nest building, incubating eggs and tending to little pink chicks.

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common throughout.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – Common throughout.

HAWKS, EAGLES, & KITES

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) - fantastic views on the BP

Northern Harrier (*Circus cyanea*) – both males and females seen on the BP

Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) - heard only in the piney woods

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) - migrants seen overhead at several locations

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) – great looks at a couple of perched birds

White-tailed Hawk (*Buteo albicaudatus*) - A recent addition to the breeding avifauna on the BP, we saw them on both of our days there.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – only a couple including one very pale immature

FALCONS & CARACARAS

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) - We saw this handsome and distinctive cousin of the falcons a couple of times on the BP, this species seems to be expanding its range.

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) - just a drive-by look near Sabine Pass

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) – we got a quick look at the “brown streak” on our first morning at BSW

RAILS & COOTS

Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) – This one of the hardest regularly occurring birds in North America to add to one's life list, but a “rail walk” at ANWR is maybe the best way to do it. About 40 birders showed up to march through the marsh and we were rewarded with repeated looks at one that flushed for us.

Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) – Not nearly as much work was required for superb looks at this rail. We had 3 or 4 birds running around in the open right outside our vans on the BP.

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) – a brief look at this large colorful rail at ANWR as we were rallying for the rail walk

Sora (*Porzana carolina*) - several outstanding close looks at this little guy

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) – we had to work at it, but we finally got great looks at two at ANWR

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) – seen most days in freshwater habitat

American Coot (*Fulica Americana*) – same as above

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – fairly common along the shore, several starting to show the black bellies of breeding plumage

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) – we were able to find a few of these dapper little plovers on the BF; dry sand back, non-orange legs

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – breeders on at BF, these guys were rather rambunctious; wet sand back, non-orange legs

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – several at BF; wet sand backs, orange legs

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) – BF is one of the most important wintering areas for this endangered species, we saw several there; dry sand back, orange legs.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) – seen daily

OYSTERCATCHERS

American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) – distant looks at RP and BF

STILTS & AVOCETS

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – small numbers of these distinctive birds were scattered about, maybe seen best at ANWR

American Avocet (*Recurvirostra Americana*) – huge flocks at RP and BF

SANDPIPERS & ALLIES

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) - leader only

Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) - first in High Island, then again at ANWR

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – bill 2X head length, two-toned, and upcurved

Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) – we saw the heavily marked “Eastern Willet” that breeds on the Texas Coast, and the larger, grayer “Western Willet” that winters there and will be off to its breeding grounds in the interior west soon.

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) – bill 1-1.5X head, all black, thin and straight

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) – we saw several of these large “grasspipers” in grassy fields near Winnie on our first afternoon and last morning

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) – we saw many migrating flocks on the wing, and had some good looks at RP and BF

Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*) - good comparisons with the former at RP

Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) – the “Garbled Modwit”, its cinnamon plumage tones and uptuned, pink based bill were distinctive

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) – lots of great looks at these distinctive brightly marked shorebirds

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) – many seen on the BP, still mostly in winter plumage

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) - we found a few in fresh breeding plumage mixed in with the redder, longer billed...

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) – their reddish crowns and long tapered bills helped us to separate them from the semis

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) – their yellow legs set them apart from the other peeps

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) – some were getting the distinctive black belly patch of breeding plumage

Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*) – we managed to find a few of the long lanky sandpipers with their tails in the air at ANWR

Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) – we noted that this species hadn't gotten as far along into breeding plumage as the following and that clue helped us key in on differences in size, shape, and other plumage patterns

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – good comparisons with the puzzlingly similar Short billed at Fort Travis

GULLS & TERNS

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) - This is the common and characteristic summer time gull of the Texas coast. Most were looking quite sharp with their black hoods and reddish bills.

Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) - This daintier version of the former was only seen in flight over ANWR. They showed much more white in the wingtips than Laughing Gulls. They winter in South America and breed in our northern prairie marshes, only passing through Texas in migration.

Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*) - a few offshore at RP

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) - many around RP

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) - immatures around RP and several adults at BF

Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) - great looks at RP

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) - displaying their distinctive feeding behavior over dry or flooded inland fields

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) - several seen around the Stingaree

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) - we picked out several molting birds at BF

Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) - many around RP and the Stingaree

Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maxima*) - the most common of the terns on the upper Texas coast, their size and carrot orange bills are distinctive

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) - their black bills were dipped in mustard

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*) - we saw them sprawled out flat on their bellies at RP

PIGEONS & DOVES

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) – seen daily

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) - seen daily, this introduced species is rapidly colonizing the southern and western US

Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) – Seen daily

Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) – common in High Island and local on the BP

CUCKOOS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) – one seen by some in High Island

TYPICAL OWLS

Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) – one gave us a brief scope view north of Kountze

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) - quite a surprise to find one still hanging around in April, we had great looks at ANWR as one foraged over the marsh

NIGHTJARS & ALLIES

Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) - a few seen in flight and one roosting bird scoped at BSW

SWIFTS

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) – these flying cigars were seen daily

HUMMINGBIRDS

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilocus colubris*) – the only eastern hummingbird

KINGFISHERS

Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) - a few seen here and there

WOODPECKERS

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) – only a few along the coast, more common inland

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) - we had great looks at BSW

Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) – seen most days

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) - these mega-woodpeckers are always a thrill to see, we had a couple of brief glimpses inland

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) - we only heard its distinctive call

Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) – good close up views at “the willows” at ANWR; silent empids (members of the genus *Empidonax*) are very difficult to ID, but the Acadian with its very long wings, large bill, and rich green upperparts is fairly distinctive

Great-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – seen best in a roadside ditch at ANWR

Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) – seen daily

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – many seen throughout

SHRIKES

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – seen daily, it was fun to hear its song, reminding us that this formidable predator is one of our “songbirds”

VIREOS

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*) – seen and heard well, it is one of the most persistent singers in the southeast

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*) – seen at both BSW and SW

Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) - good looks at SO

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) – surprisingly common, especially at SW, it looks like a kinder, gentler, (smaller) version of the following

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) – fairly common migrant on the coast and a common breeder inland

CROWS & JAYS

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) – common throughout

American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) – common inland

Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*) - we made a point to listen to the distinctly different sounds made by these crows along Sabine Pass

SWALLOWS

Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) – seen daily; larger than the swallows with more measured wing beats

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – their bright white underparts were distinctive

Northern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – only a few seen, brown above with dusky throats

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) fairly common, a small swallow with a dark chest band

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – a buffy-rumped swallow with a dark head

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) - at least two seen, probably best in the rail prairie at ANWR, a buffy -rumped swallow with a dark cap; this species is expanding its range

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) – common, seen daily

CHICKADEES & TITMICE

Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) – a couple at SO and several inland

Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*) – seen well on our last morning

WRENS

Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) – mostly heard, but seen by some at BSW

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) - one seen along the road to High Is on our first morning was a newly arrived migrant

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) - we saw a few on the rail prairie, but heard many

Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*) – heard only in freshwater marshes

KINGLETS

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*) – we saw several in the High Is and SW

OLD WORLD WARBLERS

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliopitila caerulea*) - we saw a few of these tiny balls of fluff

THRUSHES

Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) - we saw a perched male north of Kountze

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) – they arrived about midway through our trip

Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) - we saw several at BSW; large, rusty above and heavily spotted below

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) - only at our secret spot

MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) – common at BSW

Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) – seen daily

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) – good looks at SW

STARLINGS

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – seen daily

WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) - feeding on mulberrys at SW

WOOD WARBLERS: We saw 25 species in three and a half days of birding, which was rather phenomenal this early in migration. We were certainly aided by a strong cold front that brought rather strong north winds with it. This also kept our temperatures deliciously cool.

Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) – seen best bathing in the afternoon at SW

Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – best in the Bottle Brush Tree at BSW

Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) - uncommon at the coast, probably brought there by the north winds

Northern Parula (*Parula americana*) – several at most woods

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) – seen best at SW

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) - at Mrs. Johnson's and SW

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) - the northern most wintering warbler, we saw a few that were still on their way north

Black-throated Green-Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) – many good looks at this sharp bird

Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*) - only a brief look in High Island early on our first morning, a stunning male that whet our appetites for more

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) - another early migrant that was still straggling through, also seen on territory north of Kountze

Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) – after a poor look at a dull female, we had great looks at a handsome male on Gore Store Rd

Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*) - great looks across the street from the Pine Warbler

Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) - This declining species is always a prized bird, most people saw a male briefly at Mrs. Johnson's.

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) – good looks at males and females of this distinctive warbler that acts like a nuthatch

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) - very flashy, we saw several
Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) – seen best at SW
Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – this subtle, furtive bird was elusive, but seen by most
Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) – hard to beat the looks we had north of Kountze, repeated scope views of a perched singing male, Thanks Fred!
Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) - great, up close looks at this unique warbler that struts around like a miniature chicken
Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*) – excellent repeat views of several birds showing the variety of looks you get from this species, allowing comparison with...
Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) - a very early migrant, we were lucky to still find one at SW
Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*) – superb views of a bathing bird at SW
Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) – seen or heard most days
Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) – one of our most common migrants
Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*) – a good show at BSW, then a singing bird along Gore Store Rd

TANAGERS

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – males and females, most days
Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) – many stunning males, only a few females

SPARROWS & ALLIES

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – seen most days
Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) - most got good looks at ANWR
Seaside Sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus*) – we kicked up a few at ANWR
Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) – good looks for some at The Willows
White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) – seen best at SW

SALTATORS, CARDINALS & ALLIES

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – seen daily
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – great looks at males and females in the mulberry trees at BSW
Blue Grosbeak (*Passerina caerulea*) - good looks at a male at SW
Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) – repeated views of stunning males
Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) – one very cooperative male in a mulberry at BSW
Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) - heard only on our first morning

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES & ALLIES

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) – common throughout
Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) – best along the road to BF
Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) – mostly seen inland; short tail
Boat-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus major*) – common around the marshes; dark eyes
Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – common in parking lots; yellow eyes
Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) – seen most days
Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) – loving the Bottle Brush tree at BSW
Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) – several spectacular orange and black males

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in cities and towns throughout

MAMMALS

Nine-banded Armadillo (*Dasyppus novemcinctus*) - we actually saw one alive, in the daytime!

Swamp Rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*)

Eastern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

River Otter (*Lutra canadensis*) - we were very fortunate to see one of these uncommon carnivores swimming right alongside the road in ANWR

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) - a few seen behind a shrimp trawler off RP

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) several at ANWR

Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

Garter Snake (*Thamnophis* sp.)

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta*)

Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

FISH

Longnose Gar (*Lepisosteus osseus*)

BUTTERFLIES

Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*)

Sulphur sp.

Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos*)

Hackberry Emperor (*Asterocampa celtis*)

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)