
TOS Winter Meeting 2019 – Galveston, TX

I keep thinking that there is no way we can continue to reach the very high bar set by our past meetings, but we've done it again for our winter meeting! The meeting will be January 24 – 27, 2019. We will be headquartered in Galveston, and we have partnered with the Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council to offer many exciting field trips and interesting speakers. Now, you may be thinking, "Oh, I've birded a lot around Galveston, I can sit this one out." It's totally understandable why you might think that, but sitting this one out would be a big mistake! I'm guessing most of your birding in this area has been during spring migration, so you're familiar with those birds and those locations. But, do you know the winter birds and the good winter birding locations? And don't you want to learn about this area from local birders who really know the area? This meeting will be a different experience and one you will not want to miss.

Field trips will provide opportunities to bird favorite locations such as Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar Peninsula, Brazos Bend State Park as well as less well-known locations around Galveston and properties that you can't visit without special arrangements. And as if that is not exciting enough, you also have the opportunity to join Kathy Adams Clark for a photography field trip, work on your shorebird ID skills with Gary Clark, and work on your gull ID skills with Cin-Ty Lee. For our hard-core county listers, you can choose from two Century Club trips on Friday and Saturday. And for our Big Day competitive types, Richard Gibbons will be your guide as you see how many species you can find on the Bolivar Peninsula and learn some tips for future Big Day competitions. How is that for a line-up?

The counties that we'll be visiting are Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin and Liberty. A checklist showing the expected species for these counties in January is available at <https://tinyurl.com/TOSGalvestonChecklist>.

Our headquarters will be The Holiday Inn Resort Galveston On The Beach. Everything, including breakfast, will happen there. Field trips will leave from this location.

We have afternoon presentations scheduled in addition to the evening presentations. On Friday afternoon, you'll get to hear about interesting bird research being done in the area. Your presence will show your support for students and researchers doing important research on our birds. On Saturday afternoon, you can improve your gull ID skills with Cin-Ty Lee as your instructor. Not that anyone needs help ID'ing gulls, right? Please try to work it into your schedule to attend both days!

Some field trips involve a lot of driving to get to the location, so expect really early departure times for those trips. Be prepared to carpool to minimize the number of vehicles and maximize the likelihood of spotting birds along the way. Bring walkie-talkies if you have them. They are especially useful for trips that involve movement between locations or long drive times. Be prepared for cold and wet weather. That means dressing in layers and having rain coats, umbrellas and rubber boots handy if you need them.

Online registration will open in late November or early December. Watch for an email from us letting you know exactly when it will open. I highly recommend you register early since field trips are likely going to fill up. If you find that a field trip that you really want is full, go ahead and

register for your second choice, but then email Judy Kestner and request to be put on the wait list for your first choice. Judy's email is tosmember@yahoo.com. The registration fee will increase on January 10, and registration will close on January 17. Don't wait!

Join me for the fun in Galveston in January!

Shelia Hargis

Hotel Information

Holiday Inn Resort Galveston On The Beach



The Holiday Inn Resort Galveston On The Beach will be the headquarters for the Winter Meeting. All TOS events will be held at the hotel and field trips will depart from its parking areas. The hotel is located at 5002 Seawall Boulevard. Every guest room has a private balcony overlooking the Gulf of Mexico and includes a microwave and mini fridge. The property has a restaurant and lounge and is in easy walking distance to a wide variety of dining options.

The hotel is holding a block of 50 rooms for TOS guests. The blended group rate for a three-night stay beginning Thursday, January 24th is \$129 per night. Reservations may be made by calling the Reservation Department at 800-465-4329 and identifying yourself as being with Texas Ornithological Society. Your confirmation will state that there is a daily parking fee. That fee will be waived at the property level when you check into the hotel. **These rooms will be held only until January 4, 2019.** Any cancellations must be made prior to 6:00 PM on January 22, 2019 to avoid a one-night room charge.

A continental breakfast will be available at the hotel Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings for all TOS Members and field trip leaders from 5:00 AM until 7:00 AM.

Meeting Agenda

All meeting events will be held at The Holiday Inn Resort Galveston On The Beach, 5002 Seawall Blvd, Galveston, TX.

Thursday, January 24

- 3:30-5:30 PM Board Meeting
- 4:00-7:00 PM Registration/T-Shirt sales
- 6:30-7:00 PM Welcome/ Introductions/Announcements
- 7:00-8:00 PM Speakers: Fred Collins & Bob Honig – *Birding Then & Now in Galveston*

Friday, January 25

- 5:00-7:00 AM Continental Breakfast, including hot eggs
- 5:15-8:00 AM Box Lunch Pick-up and Field Trip Departures
- 5:30 AM-5:00 PM Field Trips
- 4:00-7:00 PM Registration
- 4:00-5:00 PM 1st Speaker: Anna Vallery – *Assessment of Shorebird and Wading Bird Populations in Galveston Bay Using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*
2nd Speaker: Amanda D. Hackney – *Is this beach big enough for the both of us? Human Disturbance and Wintering Piping Plover on the Upper Texas Coast*
3rd Speaker: Rachael Glazner – *Comparing Expectations of a Habitat Suitability Model for Wading Birds to Field Observations Acquired Using Drone Technology*
- 6:15-7:00 PM Announcements/Field Trip Reports
- 7:00-8:00 PM Speaker: Glenn Olsen – *Winged Winter Wonders: Who Are They?*

Saturday, January 26

- 5:00-7:00 AM Continental Breakfast, including hot eggs
- 4:45-7:30 AM Box Lunch Pick-up and Field Trip Departures
- 5:00 AM-5:00 PM Field Trips
- 4:00-5:00 PM Speaker: Cin-Ty Lee – *Know Your Gulls*
- 5:00-6:00 PM Social Time (cash bar will be available)
- 6:00-7:00 PM Dinner/Banquet
- 6:45-7:30 PM Announcements/Field Trip Reports
- 7:30-8:30 PM Keynote Speaker: Richard Gibbons – *How Birds and Citizen Scientists Can Save the World*

Sunday, January 27

- 5:00-7:00 AM Continental Breakfast, including hot eggs
- 5:15-7:30 AM Box Lunch Pick-up and Field Trip Departures
- 5:30 AM-3 PM Field Trips

Registration Information

Registration is online at the Texas Ornithological Society's website, www.texasbirds.org. Registration will open in late November or early December. To receive an email with the exact date, be sure your email address is included in your TOS account information. Once registration opens, there will be directions on the website to assist you.

If you do not have access to the internet, you may call Judy Kestner at 361-387-7329 or Frances Cerbins at 512-372-9039 for assistance with registration. If you don't get an answer, leave a message and Judy or Frances will call you back when they are available. The registration fee increases on January 10, and registration closes on January 17. (Refunds will be given if cancellation occurs before January 17 and no cost has been incurred by TOS. No refunds will be given if cancellation occurs after January 17. If you have to cancel your registration, contact Catherine Winans at catherinewinans@yahoo.com.)

- Registration Fee: \$75 TOS members
 \$100 Non-TOS members (includes a one-year membership)
 \$20 late fee after January 9
- Box lunches: \$15
- Saturday Banquet: \$38

Box Lunches Available Friday, Saturday, and Sunday Mornings

Box lunch selections for each day:

- Smoked Turkey, Provolone Cheese on Wheat Bread, Bag of Chips, Choice of Soda or Bottled Water
- Honey Ham, Cheddar Cheese on White Bread, Bag of Chips, Choice of Soda or Bottled Water
- Portobello Mushroom Wrap, Bag of Chips, Choice of Soda or Bottled Water

All lunches come with pickle, whole fruit, cookie, and assorted condiments.

Saturday Banquet Menu

The sit-down dinner entrée choices:

- Pan Seared Flounder with Lemon Butter
- Roast Beef with Mushroom Demi-Glace
- Eggplant Parmesan

Dinners will include Garden Green Salad with Grape Tomatoes, Cucumbers, and Carrots served with Ranch or Italian Dressing, Green Beans, Oven Roasted Potatoes, Freshly Baked Bread with Butter, New York Cheesecake with Fresh Strawberries, Coffee and Iced Tea.

**If you have dietary restrictions and need more specific information, email Shelia at Shelia.hargis@gmail.com with your questions. Shelia has all sorts of dietary restrictions, so she will be able to relate and get answers to your questions.

Speakers

Thursday Eve

Title: Birding Then & Now in Galveston

Presenters: Fred Collins, Bob Honig

Description: How has Galveston area birding changed in 50 years? Relying on the Houston Ornithology Group's 1967-68 guide entitled "Good Birding Trips," Fred's firsthand perspective, and Bob's analysis of satellite imagery, they will



Fred Collins

explore changes over time at some field trip locations birders may visit during the TOS winter meeting.

Bio: Houston native Fred Collins made his first year list in 1962 and has kept one every year since. He earned a B.S. in Wildlife Science and attended graduate school at Texas A&M, where he studied wintering Wilson's

Snipes. From 1994 to 2002 he served as Director of Russ Pitman Park's Nature Discovery Center. Since 2002 he has been Regional Park Manager for Harris County Precinct 3, where he developed and is currently director of both Kleb Woods Nature Center and Cypress Top Historic Park. He sits on advisory boards for Houston Audubon and the Katy Prairie Conservancy, and he is Compiler of the Cypress Creek, TX CBC. As a member of the Texas State Historical Association and a life member of TOS and the Southwestern Association of Naturalists, Fred continues his passion for birding Texas and learning about the history of both its wildlife and its people. He and his wife live on 100 acres of the Katy Prairie with 4 dogs, 9 horses, 100 free-ranging chickens, and 50



Bob Honig

parrots. While the nest isn't exactly empty, their two sons have long since fledged.

Bio: Bob Honig has spent many years observing and studying natural history, particularly birds, dragonflies, and damselflies. He serves on the Advisory Board of the Katy Prairie Conservancy,

after 25 years on its Board of Directors. He is a past Chairman of the Ornithology Group of Houston's Outdoor Nature Club and a former Compiler of the Buffalo Bayou and Brazos Bend, TX Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). As an environmental consultant he has addressed such diverse issues as endangered species, wetlands, archaeology, recycling, and sustainability. His work has taken him throughout North America and has included environmental surveys in Bolivia and the Algerian Sahara. Bob has led - often with his wife, Maggie - numerous field trips/tours throughout Texas, Glacier National Park, and the Asa Wright Nature Centre in Trinidad and Tobago; and they have been part of Earthwatch expeditions to study Costa Rican caterpillars and their parasitoids, sustainable watershed management in California, and Flammulated Owls in Utah.

Friday Afternoon

Scientific Presentation #1

Title: Assessment of Shorebird and Wading Bird Populations in Galveston Bay Using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

(Authors: Anna Vallery, George Guillen, Mustafa Mokrech)
University of Houston – Clear Lake, The Environmental
Institute of Houston

Presenter: Anna Vallery, Houston Audubon

Description: Galveston Bay is utilized by close to 75% of the U.S. bird species as either a permanent or seasonal habitat, including a variety of shorebirds, wading birds, and migrant waterfowl (Galveston Bay Foundation). Studying these water-dependent birds, specifically in Galveston Bay, can be difficult due to the size and complexity of this estuary and the logistics of surveying intertidal habitat. Traditional methods for surveying shorebird and wading bird populations can disturb foraging birds, causing a surveyor bias in what data is collected. New techniques that utilize Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology, however, have the potential to make conducting large-scale surveys of intertidal areas possible both safely and with less expense and effort than ground surveys and/or manned aerial surveys. Our objectives include exploring the use of UAV technology to survey shorebird and wading bird populations in Galveston Bay and comparing it to conventional survey methods. We also aim to determine best methods of practice for utilizing this technology in future studies of shorebirds and wading birds by assessing disturbance potential. This includes applying new technology, such as Full Motion Video in the ArcGIS platform, for analysis of the collected data.

Bio: Anna Vallery is a Conservation Specialist at Houston Audubon, working as a sanctuary manager, the Natives Nursery manager, with the Bird-Friendly Communities Program, and with Houston Audubon's citizen science efforts. Anna just completed her master's in April, graduating with a degree in Environmental Science – Biology from the University of Houston – Clear Lake. During her time at UHCL, she worked as a Research Assistant with the Environmental Institute of Houston, helping with projects from fisheries and water quality to her own research in avian ecology. Anna's thesis covered foraging preferences of coastal avian species in Bastrop Bay as well as developing methodology for using unmanned aerial vehicles for surveying waterbirds. In her free time, Anna loves traveling and spending time exploring the outdoors with her dogs.

Scientific Presentation #2

Title: Is this beach big enough for the both of us? Human Disturbance and Wintering Piping Plover on the Upper Texas Coast

Presenter: Amanda D. Hackney, Black Cat GIS and Biological Services, Houston, Tx

Description: The Texas coast is vital wintering habitat for a variety of shorebird species. The Piping Plover population is highly dependent on Texas; USFWS estimates that between roughly 40-60% of all Piping Plover migrate through or winter in the state. Utilization of an area by Piping Plover for foraging or roosting is related to disturbance associated with human activity. We are conducting surveys of wintering Piping Plover (PIPL) on Gulf beach owned by the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge on the Bolivar Peninsula. Surveys will be completed from fall 2018 through

late spring 2019. Surveys are conducted along linear Gulf beaches and back-beach habitats. The beach survey route was divided and surveyed into six 1 kilometer transects to capture density of birds and recreational use in each transect. Additionally, detailed habitat maps of the project area were created to examine the effects of habitat mosaics on PIPL use. Expected results will be combined with current data being collected coast-wide and will aid in a standardized analysis to better inform management of this federally threatened species. We expect results will establish additional baseline data in the upper Texas coast which currently lacks the level of detail that exists on plover populations in the Mid and Lower Texas Coast.

Bio: Amanda Hackney teaches Environmental Science at Lee College in Baytown, and runs her consulting business- Black Cat GIS and Biological Services. A native of Nacogdoches, Texas, she majored in Wildlife and Fisheries Science at Louisiana State University. In 2010, she received her Master's degree from Clemson University in Wildlife Biology with research focused on spatially modeling diamondback terrapin nest predation risk. Previously she has been employed by the USFWS Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Fort Worth Zoo Education Department, and Audubon Texas as their Coastal Program Manager and later as Senior Coastal Conservation Biologist. Ms. Hackney has over 10 years of experience in the natural resources and GIS fields; focusing on coastal waterbirds, coastal restoration projects, conservation education programs, GIS analyses of colonial waterbird rookeries and coastal erosion. Amanda is happiest outdoors, preferably on a horse or on the water.

Scientific Presentation #3

Title: Comparing Expectations of a Habitat Suitability Model for Wading Birds to Field Observations Acquired Using Drone Technology

Presenter: Rachael Glazner, Ph.D. Candidate, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Texas A&M University

Description: Coastal wetlands serve as important foraging habitats for wading birds. Various factors can affect the quality of these habitats, including the development of roads and buildings near the wetland, distance of the wetland to the bird's nest, as well as size and fragmentation of the wetland. A habitat suitability model was created to investigate how these factors affect the quality of four foraging habitats found in Galveston County, Texas. The results of this model were then compared to field observations collected using an unmanned aerial vehicle. Differences between expected and observed observations are discussed, as well as suggestions for future surveys and models.

Bio: Rachael Glazner is a Ph.D. Candidate in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Texas A&M University. Her research interests include understanding the effects of vegetation type on predator-prey interactions on the Texas coast. She is originally from New Hampshire, where she received a B.S. in Biology from Plymouth State University. Her experience with bird-related science includes studying wading bird foraging habitats in Galveston County, as well

as briefly serving as a Coastal Bird Intern for the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, where she assisted with surveys of shorebirds in Port Aransas, Texas. Rachael has enjoyed birding across the country, from spotting puffins on the coast of Alaska to watching her favorite bird in Texas, the Roseate Spoonbill. She is very excited for the opportunity to share her love of birds with the TOS community!

Friday Eve

Title: Winged Winter Wonders: Who Are They?

Presenter: Glenn Olsen

Description: The upper Texas coast is world renowned for the amazing spring migration of songbirds and shorebirds. What is less known and under-appreciated is how fantastic the upper coast is for winter birding! We will explore what makes the upper Texas coast a great winter birding location and discuss some of the sought after birds that “may” be seen during our meeting.

Some of these birds may be common wintering species and usually seen while others may be more difficult to find, although common. Still others are irregular, such as the Tundra Swan and Pacific Loon but we need to be alert for one as they are rare and few in number but possible. The Pacific Loon can easily be overlooked or mistaken as a common loon, especially at a distance. Then, there are others, such as the mythical Black Rail that require persistence, determination and a lot of luck to get a glimpse of these rare birds. This presentation will share details of the habitat, occurrence, and behavior of these and several other exciting birds where winter on the upper coast offers an excellent and



Glenn Olsen

frequently an unrivaled opportunity to see them in Texas.

Bio: Glenn leads natural history and birding tours with GOBirding Ecotours to the hottest birding locations in the U.S., exotic locales such as the Galapagos Islands, the Amazon Rainforest, Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Honduras. His tours

include aspects of the culture, ecology and natural history of the region. Glenn’s classes at Rice University’s Glasscock School of Continuing Studies encompass the identification of birds, gardening for birds, butterflies and pollinators, sustainable landscaping, native plants and other nature related subjects. At Houston Audubon his classes focus on the identification of the many birds found in Texas. Glenn has completed the Master Naturalist course and gives classes for the program.

He has served on the board of Houston Audubon as Vice President of Education and as President of both the Houston Chapter and the statewide organization of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Glenn has led field trips and/or given presentations for the Texas Ornithological Society, Houston Audubon, Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, Galveston FeatherFest, Rockport HummerBird Festival, the

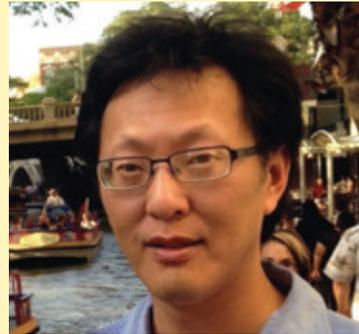
Native Plant Society of Texas, WildScapes Workshops, the Katy Prairie Conservancy, Houston Arboretum, and others. Contact Glenn at h.glenn.olsen@gmail.com or 832-517-2478.

Saturday Afternoon

Title: Know Your Gulls

Presenter: Cin-Ty Lee

Description: This presentation will focus on the basics of gull identification, with an emphasis on the gulls of the Gulf Coast.



Cin-Ty Lee

Pair this presentation with Cin-Ty Lee’s Wintering Gulls field trip on Sunday for the perfect combo!

Bio: Cin-Ty Lee is a professor of geology at Rice University. He has been birding for thirty years and has written numerous identification articles, such as on pewees, dowitchers, orioles and

pipits. He teaches ornithology at Rice University. He has been birding in Texas for 16 years and regularly leads bird walks for beginners and experts.

Saturday Night Keynote

Title: How Birds and Citizen Scientists Can Save the World

Presenter: Richard Gibbons

Description: Birds have long served as harbingers for humanity. Many of our most important environmental laws were influenced by the decline of birds. Amateur birdwatchers continue to gather data for the two most important bird monitoring projects, the Christmas Bird Count and the Breeding Bird Survey. Now, new projects exploring migration, population trends, and so much more are taking advantage of the groundbreaking eBird program and new technologies. In these changing times, citizen scientists are sharing their passion for nature and gathering the data to inform meaningful management practices and policies. Ultimately, public opinion will be the driver of the societal changes needed to meet the challenges of an ever more populated planet and a rapidly changing climate. Bird species will ebb and flow with a changing climate and an enthusiastic group of amateurs and scientists will have the tools and data to develop compelling cases to move toward sustainability.



Richard Gibbons

Bio: Richard Gibbons is the Conservation Director for Houston Audubon and a Research Associate of the LSU Museum of Natural Science. He has worked as an ornithologist for more than two decades along the

Gulf Coast and throughout the Americas. Richard works with

the Houston Audubon team to manage and restore habitat in Houston Audubon’s 17 nature sanctuaries, including the famed High Island and Bolivar Flats sanctuaries. Richard develops and manages monitoring programs and advocates for birds and conservation in Houston Audubon’s 11-county service area.

Prior to moving to Houston six years ago, Richard worked at Louisiana State University’s Museum of Natural Science coordinating citizen science projects while earning his PhD studying birds, wetlands, and climate change in Peru’s high Andes.

Field Trips

Number	Field Trip & Description	County	Difficulty	Hours	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge & Rollover Pass Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, located on the mainland side of East Galveston Bay, is an important winter stopover for a variety of waterfowl, sparrows, and raptors. The 37,000-acre coastal refuge contains vast expanses of brackish and fresh water marsh, flooded soil units and prairie bordering the Bay – welcoming habitat to a wide range of migratory and resident coastal specialty birds. We will enjoy the excellent viewing available on park roads, trails and boardwalks. Potential sightings include Seaside Sparrow, Nelson’s Sparrow, Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, Osprey, Crested Caracara, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, various teal and other ducks, both cormorants, Boat-tailed Grackle, a variety of rails, herons and egrets and thousands of Snow and White-fronted Geese. On the return trip, we will stop at Rollover Pass and bird the Bay. Sightings should include several species of gulls, terns, shorebirds, herons and egrets as well as both species of pelicans and cormorants. Potential sightings include American Oystercatcher, Black Skimmer, Black-bellied Plover and Clapper Rail.	Chambers	Easy	5:30am-3:00pm	X	X	X
2	Birds of Moody Gardens Join Moody Gardens biologists on a guided walking tour of the 240-acre Moody Gardens complex, inside and out. On the grounds, likely sightings include Peregrine Falcon, Common Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, Spotted Sandpiper, Neotropic and Double-crested Cormorants, and a variety of small shorebirds, herons and egrets. Gain access to the Rainforest and Aquarium exhibits where you’ll encounter more than 50 species of tropical Rainforest birds and 7 species of penguins. We’ll then take a short drive to the 170-acre Moody Gardens Golf Course, driving carts to four of the more scenic and birdy habitats the course has to offer. Potential sightings include Osprey, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, Long-billed Curlew, and Sandhill Crane. (Note: Breakfast ends at 7:00am.)	Galveston	Easy	7:30am-2:00pm	X	X	X
3	Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, Surfside, Bryan Beach & Quintana. The trip begins early traveling west along the Seawall (Hwy 3005) and over the San Luis Pass Bridge. This is the beginning of the Blue Water Highway and continues on to Surfside and Freeport. Following a rest stop, we’ll continue on to the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge (BNWR), which is designated as an Internationally Significant Shorebird site. BNWR contains more water than land within its 44,000+ acres including bay waters, salt water marshes, fresh and salt water estuaries, mud flats, ponds, and winding bayous. These provide ideal wintering grounds for raptors, shorebirds, and thousands of migratory waterfowl. Once in the Refuge, we will enjoy the boardwalk and trails before taking the auto tour with frequent stops at birdy areas. Potential sightings include Common Yellowthroat, Seaside and Swamp Sparrows, Osprey, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, Crested Caracara, possibly Snow, Ross’s and White-fronted Geese, Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged, Green-winged and possibly Cinnamon Teal, Northern Pintail, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Gallinule, Sora, Clapper Rail and American Bittern. On the return, we will stop at the jetties, Quintana, and Bryan Beach. Although Quintana is best known as a birding magnet during spring migration, it can also be worth visiting in other seasons including winter. With habitat ranging from brackish and salt water wetlands to scrubby uplands and dunes, to beaches and bays, a wide variety of species can be seen. Potential sightings include several duck species, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Brown and White Pelicans, Neotropic and Double-crested Cormorants, Caspian, Royal and Forster’s Terns, Least and Western Sandpipers, Piping, Snowy, Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, Dunlin, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Horned Lark, and a variety of herons and egrets. The beach and jetties offer chances for rare gulls and an opportunity to study wintering gulls, terns, shorebirds, and various ducks.	Brazoria	Easy	6:30am- mid-afternoon	X	X	X

4	<p>Bolivar Sampler - Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary (BFSS), Horseshoe Marsh, Rollover Pass. Bolivar is one of our favorite coastal hotspots! This well-known Peninsula features various habitats including sand flats, coastal prairies, jetties, tidal sloughs and wooded lots, as well as historic Fort Travis. We will explore French Town Road north of the ferry landing to bird Horseshoe Marsh. Following the Bolivar Loop, we will cross Hwy 87 to Fort Travis and the surrounding marshes. Leaving Fort Travis, we will follow the feeder road that will take us to the south jetty, the western boundary of the BFSS. A short walk on the jetty provides excellent views of hundreds of feeding shorebirds. Returning to Hwy 87, a short drive takes us to Retillon Road, the beach, and BFSS, designated a Globally Important Bird Area. It's known as one of the finest migratory locations in North America for shorebirds, terns, herons, and egrets. It is a designated habitat for the protection of endangered Piping Plover. Potential sightings include up to five species of plovers, several species of terns, at least five species of gulls, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, Crested Caracara, White-tailed Kite, Marbled Godwit, dowitchers, Long-billed Curlew, Red Knot, Marsh Wren, and Seaside Sparrow. Leaving Bolivar Flats, we will continue our birding adventure east to Rollover Pass. Side trips will be made looking for wintering sparrows, ducks, hawks, rare gulls, terns and shorebirds. Likely trip birds include White-tailed Kite, Crested Caracara, Red-tailed Hawk, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Brown and White Pelicans, Neotropic and Double-crested Cormorants, Bonaparte's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Dunlin, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Least and Western Sandpiper, Piping, Snowy, Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plovers, Horned Lark and a variety of herons and egrets.</p>	Galveston	Easy/Moderate	6:30am- mid-afternoon	X	X	X
5	<p>Brazos Bend State Park. This beautiful state park is nearly 4,800 acres along the Brazos River, and contains land in the floodplain, with magnificent moss-covered and vine-draped live oak woodlands surrounding fresh water marshes and tall grass prairie. This diverse habitat is a haven for migratory waterfowl, wading birds, and raptors. We'll hike along the trails through oak woodlands and around the lakes, and visit the observation tower. Potential sightings include Common Gallinule, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Neotropic and Double-crested Cormorants, American Bittern, Belted Kingfisher, Black Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Vermilion Flycatcher, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Yellowthroat, Boat-tailed Grackle, Swamp Sparrow, Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Anhinga, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, and a variety of wintering sparrows, egrets and herons.</p>	Fort Bend	Easy	5:45am- mid-afternoon	X		
6	<p>Galveston's Sampler - East Beach to 61st Street . Galveston is renowned for its many birding hotspots. This trip will explore the city from the tip on the east end of the Seawall to the 61st Street Bridge over Offats Bayou. We will begin at the east end of the Seawall with a drive down Boddeker Drive to the East End flats. This accreting beach is bordered by the Houston Ship Channel, South jetty, and the Gulf of Mexico. A portion of this area is a designated Piping Plover habitat. This extensive shoreline of beaches, sand flats, coastal marshes, ponds, lagoons, and sand dunes provide habitat for over 50 species of wintering and resident birds. The water's edge can be active with peeps, plovers, Reddish Egret, herons, Willet, Dunlin, dowitchers, Ruddy Turnstone, pelicans, terns and gulls. Nelson's and Seaside Sparrows may be found hiding in the marsh areas. More easily seen are Savannah Sparrow, Horned Lark, Piping and Snowy Plovers. On the west side of Boddeker Drive is the 686-acre East End Lagoon Nature Preserve (EELNP) owned by the city of Galveston. The small ponds on the south side of the Seawall and the EELNP are home to Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Harrier, rails, ducks, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, and herons. Leaving the east end of the Seawall, a short trip takes us to Corp Woods where we can see wintering songbirds, sparrows, herons, hawks, and Common Grackle. Following a rest stop at the ferry landing, other possible hotspots are Pelican Island, 51st Street ponds, and Kempner Park. This is an urban park with picnic tables, a resident pair of Red-shouldered Hawks, a Cooper's Hawk, a Downy Woodpecker and occasional winter songbirds. Our last stop will be the 61st Street Jamail Park and Boat Ramp to look for loons and Bonaparte's Gull. Our local leaders know these hotspots well and will consider tide, weather, and what was seen during the Christmas Bird Count and by local scouts prior to the meeting. Targets: Galveston's own city bird, the Reddish Egret and the resident Mottled Duck. If there are rare gulls, uncommon sparrows, or wintering songbirds, your leaders will find them on this trip!</p>	Galveston	Easy	7:00am- mid-afternoon	X	X	X
7	<p>Galveston's West End Sampler - 61st Street to Jamaica Beach. Explore the west end of the Island on this fast-paced adventure. This trip includes many of the Island's favorite hotspots – 61st Street Jamail Park and Boat Ramp, Moody Garden retention ponds and coastal marshes on Offats Bayou, old Sea Arama property south of the airport, Beach Pocket Parks 1 and 2, ponds at 7 ½ Mile Road, 8 Mile Road and Sportsman Road, Settegast Road, and if time permits, Lafitte's Cove Nature Preserve and the Galveston Island State Park. These ever-popular birding areas include a variety of habitats – Offats Bayou, West Galveston Bay, coastal wetlands, brackish estuaries, ponds, beaches and bays, agricultural fields, and manicured golf courses. Expected species to be seen include up to a dozen species of waterfowl, a dozen species of shorebirds, a dozen species of gulls and terns, half a dozen species each of raptors and herons/egrets. Species of note may include Bonaparte's Gull, White-tailed Kite, American Avocet, Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Redhead Duck, Clapper Rail, Black Skimmer, Roseate Spoonbill, American Oystercatcher, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, Sandhill Crane, and Wilson's Snipe. Our local leaders know these birding spots well and will consider the weather, tides, and whatever they have seen on the Christmas Bird Count or scouting just prior to the meeting to decide what to view and where to go. This trip is not fixed rigidly in advance but is more of a birding adventure. You'll go where the birds are!</p>	Galveston	Easy	7:00am- mid-afternoon		X	X

8	<p>Galveston Island State Park & Lafitte’s Cove Nature Preserve. Galveston Island State Park is the last undeveloped land on the Island that allows public access to both beach and bay waters. It protects 2,000 acres of unique, upper Gulf Coast barrier island eco-system, featuring beaches, prairies, wetlands, and lagoons. This important habitat is crucial to the life cycles of many ocean species of invertebrates, fish, reptiles, mammals, and more than 300 species of birds. Potential sightings include Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Merlin, White Pelican, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mottled Duck, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Pied-billed Grebe, Clapper Rail, Long-billed Curlew, Wilson’s Snipe, and a variety of “peeps,” terns, herons, and egrets. The 32-acre Lafitte’s Cove Nature Preserve is owned by the city of Galveston. A small lake is on the southern edge of the forest and a boardwalk over freshwater marsh to the south leads into the large oak mott. Lafitte’s Cove becomes a crossroad for enormous numbers of birds throughout the year. Winter time lacks the warblers and other songbird migrants but has many waterbirds and a few interesting land birds over winter. The boardwalks provide excellent viewing and photography of waterfowl including Mottled Duck, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, and Blue and Green-winged Teal. Wintering land birds on the property may include Blue-headed Vireo, kinglets, sparrow, wrens, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush, and wintering warblers like Yellow-rumped, Wilson’s, and Common Yellowthroat. The Preserve is home to a pair of breeding Great Horned Owls.</p>	Galveston	Easy/Moderate	6:45am- mid-afternoon	X	X	X
9	<p>Greet the Dawn at Virginia Point - The John M. O’Quinn I-45 Estuary Corridor and Virginia Point Preserve. This location is not normally publicly accessible. Virginia Point is a historic peninsula located across Galveston Bay comprising the wonderful 3,000 acres of mainland bay margin which SCENIC GALVESTON, Inc. (SG) has acquired for permanent conservation protection. Visitors coming into or out of Galveston on I-45 (the O’Quinn Estuary Corridor) see the results of this non-profit’s work on both flanks, and those areas are open to the public. Our trip will begin at a freshwater pond located off a private road into northern Virginia Point. Over coffee, you will appreciate the dawn songs (including rails, and sometimes Black Rail), then watch flyovers until the sun comes up. We should see/hear 30-40 species before leaving the pond site. We will then explore a primitive trail in the Virginia Point Prairie. This has freshwater adjacencies and a very productive oak motte at the end. It’s a mile or so one way and can be shortened at any juncture. Please note the trail, while mowed, is a strenuous and uneven walk. Thereafter, time and tide permitting, we will head through the O’Quinn Corridor, with birding/rest stop(s) at SG’s Reitan Point pavilion and productive mud flats in the I-45 marshes, to the open bay shoreline of Virginia Point, where SG constructed a living shoreline breakwater project in 2016 and began a new saltmarsh planting in 2018. Apart from the birdy breakwaters, this shoreline walk has good views into a managed SG coastal salt prairie with attendant winter grassland species. Mud shoes or rubber boots are ideal. Expected specialty birds include Seaside, Nelson’s, LeConte’s and other wintering prairie sparrows; two to three species of rails with a possibility of hearing a Black Rail. Virginia Point also hosts nesting White-tail Kite and Great Kiskadee; winter raptor here can be excellent. The Virginia Point mainland sector of the Galveston Christmas Bird Count averages 100 coastal species; this trip will largely duplicate SG’s typical CBC run, with same leaders. The trip will be adapted to ‘day-of’ field conditions, and may contain some off-agenda surprises.</p>	Galveston	Moderate	5:45am- mid-afternoon	X		X
10	<p>Nature Conservancy’s Texas City Prairie Preserve. The Nature Conservancy’s Texas City Prairie Preserve is 2,303 acres of coastal prairie at the intersection of urban expanse and rural beauty. The coastal grasslands found here are vital to the natural resilience of the Gulf Coast. Prairies and marshlands act as a natural buffer during storms and hurricanes, absorbing and dispersing water from storm surges and floods. The sponge-like qualities of the prairie are also important for filtering the freshwater that flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Normally, only 40 acres of this preserve are open to the public. With the permission of preserve staff, we will bird through grassland prairie and wetlands, on to the large dike that protects Texas City. The wetlands support migratory and year-round populations of waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds and the preserve provides a home for wintering and migrating grassland songbirds. Birds such as the Brown Pelican, White Ibis, Peregrine Falcon, White-tailed Hawk, Forster’s Tern, and Seaside Sparrow routinely inhabit the preserve. Various species of ducks, gulls, herons, egrets, terns, raptors, shorebirds, and flycatchers can also be viewed here. While traveling through the preserve you will also see many of our native plants include big and little bluestem, yellow indiagrass, switchgrass, eastern gammagrass, gulf cordgrass and the rare coastal gayfeather. Targets: American & Sprague’s Pipits, Seaside Sparrow, Marsh Wren, American Oystercatcher, Common Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, White-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, wintering waterfowl, and Monk Parakeet.</p>	Galveston	Moderate	5:45am- mid-afternoon	X	X	
11	<p>Dawn Patrol at the Sweetwater Preserve Plus Surrounding Hotspots. The trip will begin on Galveston Bay Foundation’s Sweetwater Preserve with unforgettable views of 100-200 Sandhill Cranes taking flight from their protected marsh roost. Watch them as they awake, stretch, dance, stroll, vocalize and take flight in groups as small as three and as large as 20-30. They will be joined by flights of hundreds of local marsh birds. Roseate Spoonbill, ibis, herons, ducks, grebes, rails, sparrows, cormorants, hawks, Osprey, and sandpipers along with the Sandhill Cranes will demonstrate the diversity and beauty of winter marsh birds, bay ducks and American Oystercatcher. From there we will bird the leader’s favorite hotspots including freshwater ponds, coastal marshes, bay waters and the beach. We will see a number of species of ducks and hawks, White-tailed Kite, and get closer looks at sandpipers, gulls, terns and American Oystercatcher. The areas we will visit provide habitat for terns, gulls, Piping, Snowy and Black-bellied Plovers, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, and Long-billed Curlew.</p>	Galveston	Easy	6:15am- mid-afternoon		X	X

12	Texas City Dike and Surrounding Ponds & Marshes. This is your opportunity to explore “the other side” of Galveston Bay. We head over the causeway to explore birding areas on the Mainland side of Galveston Bay in the Tiki Island, Texas City, and La Marque areas. Birding locations will include freshwater ponds that provide easy observation of wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. We then continue to the Texas City Dike, one of the world’s longest man-made piers, extending over five miles into East Galveston Bay. Recreational areas along the Dike and Skyline Drive provide excellent vantage points to see birds in a true marine environment. Potential sightings include Peregrine Falcon, Cooper’s, Sharp-shinned and Red-shouldered Hawks, Common Loon, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Eared Grebe, Black Skimmer, Lesser Black-backed, Bonaparte’s and other gulls, Caspian, Royal, Forster’s (and possibly other?) Terns, Long-billed Curlew, Snowy, Piping, Semipalmated, and Black-bellied Plovers, Least and Western Sandpipers, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, Loggerhead Shrike, Vermillion Flycatcher, Savannah Sparrow, American Pipit and a variety of herons and egrets.	Galveston	Easy	6:45am- mid-afternoon	X	X	X
13	Practice with a Pro Photo Field Trip with Kathy Adams Clark. Practice your bird photography skills at Appfel East Beach Park. Kathy Adams Clark, professional nature photographer, will be on hand to answer questions about techniques and equipment. Subjects will include Laughing, Ring-billed, and Herring Gulls with the possibility of Bonaparte’s and other rare wintering gulls. Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Western Sandpiper, and other shorebirds probable. Bring camera with lens in the range of 300mm to 600mm. Tripod and flash are helpful but not required. Prepare for some walking but no major hikes are planned. Come dressed for the weather.	Galveston	Easy	8:00am-11:30am	X		
14	Winter Shorebird Identification. Practice your shorebird identification skills at Appfel East Beach Park. Naturalist Gary Clark will be your guide on this trip to offer tips on identification. Sightings will include Laughing, Ring-billed, and Herring Gulls with the possibility of Bonaparte’s and other rare wintering gulls. Black-bellied Plover, Willet, Western Sandpiper, and other shorebirds probable. Larks and sparrows are possible in the dunes. Spotting scope and tripod are helpful but not required. Prepare for some walking in sand and along the shoreline. Come dressed for the weather. (Note: Breakfast ends at 7:00am.)	Galveston	Easy	7:30am-1:00pm	X		
15	Bolivar Big Day with Richard Gibbons. Experience the excitement of a big day on the Bolivar Peninsula with Richard Gibbons, Houston Audubon’s Conservation Director. Richard has regularly birded the Bolivar Peninsula for the last six years directing monitoring and land management projects such as the Beach-nesting Bird program, coastal bird surveys, Houston Audubon field trips, and helping with area Christmas Bird Counts. This will be a fast-paced day of birding as we will try to find more than 80 species of birds! Key to a successful day is to quickly identify the easily found species and search for the secretive and difficult to find uncommon species, e.g. Nelson’s and LeConte’s sparrows. For a species to be counted, two birders other than the leader must see the bird. Richard will try to have each new bird seen by as many participants as time permits. The trip count will begin and end on the Bolivar-Galveston ferry. Some of the areas to be covered are described and expected species are detailed in the Bolivar Sampler. The trip will begin at the ferry landing, and explore north and south sides of Hwy 87 at Bolivar. This includes Horseshoe Marsh, Ft. Travis, North Jetty, city of Port Bolivar, Rettilon Road, Bolivar Beach, and Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. Returning to Hwy 87, the trip will continue east to Crystal Beach and Rollover Pass. Famous (Bob’s Road) and not so famous side roads will be taken to bird the adjacent ponds, saltmarshes, and agricultural fields. Hwy 87 runs through diverse habitats, from golf courses and oilfields, to saltmarshes and agricultural fields. This birdy habitat is interspersed between Intracoastal Waterway, development, and Gulf beaches. Richard is an experienced field trip leader. He will not just call out the names of the birds spotted, but will explain the key points he uses to identify the bird as well as try to locate the bird for others. Keep in mind, it’s a big day so set expectations accordingly! He will share his love of shorebirds and what Houston Audubon is doing to protect the coastal habitat. Be prepared to walk in wet and uneven areas.	Galveston	Easy/Moderate	6:30am-mid-afternoon		X	
16	Wintering Gulls with Cin-Ty Lee. This field trip will focus on finding and identifying gulls along the Upper Texas Coast. Possible destinations are East Beach, Texas City Dike, and the Bolivar Peninsula. Join this field trip if you want to find a rarity or if you want to get a brief crash course on gull identification. Cin-Ty Lee’s Saturday afternoon presentation, Know Your Gulls, is the perfect combo for this trip!	Galveston	Easy	7:00am-mid-afternoon			X
17	Brazoria County Century Club Trip. Century Club trips are fast paced outings trying to maximize the number of species within the county. Not much time for lingering looks so prepare to move briskly from spot to spot. Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding. We will start at dawn at Bobcat Woods at San Bernard NWR looking for wintering passerines and water birds at the nearby Wolfweed Moist Soil Unit and Reservoir. After checking other parts of the refuge we move to Quintana to look for saltwater shorebirds and gulls. We will likely then make a quick check of Surfside on our way to Brazoria NWR to look for more ducks and shorebirds. Expectations include Snow, Ross’s, & White-fronted Goose, Sandhill Crane, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Nelson’s Sparrow (will take a little luck), and hopefully some wintering rarities found on the CBC.	Brazoria	Easy	5:30am-5:00pm	X		

18	<p>Fort Bend County Century Club Trip. Century Club trips are fast paced outings trying to maximize the number of species within the county. Not much time for lingering looks so prepare to move briskly from spot to spot. Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding. We will start at first light at the 40-Acre Lake Tower at Brazos Bend SP looking for waders and blackbirds leaving the roost. After working other areas of the park for wintering passerines, we will move to Davis Estates Road for ducks and gulls. We will finish working prairie areas and farm fields for shorebirds and geese. Expectations will include Canvasback, American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, Pileated Woodpecker, Vermilion Flycatcher, LeConte's Sparrow (tricky to get good views) and hopefully some staked goodies. (Note: You will have to furnish your own breakfast.)</p>	Fort Bend	Easy	5:00am-5:00pm		X	
19	<p>Hardin County Century Club Trip. Century Club trips are fast paced outings trying to maximize the number of species within the county. Not much time for lingering looks so prepare to move briskly from spot to spot. Extensive driving to/from sites, and roadside birding. We'll be driving about 2 hours before first birding stop. We'll explore regional water holes, towns, forest and open habitats as we attempt to get 60-80 species in Hardin County. With some diligence we might get Hairy Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Winter Wren and Henslow's Sparrow.</p>	Hardin	Easy	5:30am-5:00pm	X		
20	<p>Liberty County Century Club Trip. Century Club trips are fast paced outings trying to maximize the number of species within the county. Not much time for long looks so prepare to move briskly from spot to spot. Extensive driving to/from sites and roadside birding. We'll be driving about 1.5 hours before first birding stop. We'll explore regional water holes, towns, forests and open habitats as we attempt to get 60-80 species in Liberty County. With some luck we may find Wood Duck, Fish Crow, Red-headed Woodpecker, White-tailed Kite, and Dark-eyed Junco.</p>	Liberty	Easy	6:00am-4:00pm		X	