

# South Texas Birding & Nature | Species List

## December 2 – 10, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by: guide and leader James P. Smith

**With participants; Cecelia, Claire, Gene, Kathy, Lee, Linda and Ruth.**

**Summary:** an extra-ordinary avian odyssey through the most bird-rich state in the US. We began our journey in the coastal bend region of Rockport/Fulton before traveling south to focus on the sub-tropical thorn-scrub and wetlands of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Not only were we blessed with nine days of wonderful weather, we just happened to be treated to an incredible array of rare birds; **Cattle Tyrant** (the first US record), **Gray-collared Becard** (3<sup>rd</sup> US record and 1<sup>st</sup> Texas record) and a **Roadside Hawk** (about the 12<sup>th</sup> US record) all came our way amid a selection of lesser rarities such as **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **American Flamingo**, **Golden-crowned Warbler** and **Tropical Parula**. Photogenic **Green Jays**, **Long-billed Thrashers** and **Altamira Orioles** dazzled at the numerous iconic birding centers along the route and we found most of the species closely associated with the Rio Grande Valley. The majestic **Whooping Crane**, one of the world's rarest, shared a meadow with **Sandhill Cranes** at Goose Island setting the precedent for a trip loaded with fantastic birds and wildlife experiences, all of which was shared with our cordial and highly motivated group. Thanks go to Cecelia, Claire, Gene, Kathy, Linda, Lee and Ruth for making this trip so enjoyable and exciting to lead.

**HO = heard well enough to be counted as a heard-only observation**

**LO = leader-only observation**

**I = introduced**

**BIRDS (198) species of which three were heard-only and five were leader-only observations).**

### **Ducks, Geese, and Swans: Anatidae (22)**

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis*— fairly widespread seemingly at home in both natural and artificial wetlands. After a few flyover flocks near Rockport we all enjoyed really good scope views at the Los Fresnos Nature Park.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*— what a great experience to hear flocks of these beauties calling the through mist and low cloud at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>, eventually getting eyes onto a flock of six heading east. Based on what we heard through the mist, the true number was probably close to 100 birds that morning.

**Snow Goose** *Chen caerulescens*— an unexpected bonus when we spied c.130 feeding in a field at Raymondville as we sped south along Route 77.

**Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata* (**I**) — domestic/feral individuals, including some free-flyers popped up at a number of wetland sites throughout the trip. Alas, our vigil for truly wild birds at Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup> came up empty.

**Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*— three flew up river at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup> - great spot and ID by Gene!

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*— a freshwater dabbler seen very well at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> and on the river at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana*— up to 20 noted at South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup> and on the Rio Grande at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Mexican Duck** *Anas diazi* – formerly lumped with Mallard but split in 2020. Very similar to the ‘Texas’ subspecies of Mottled Duck with which it sometimes interbreeds. However, with some caution we identified pairs at South Padre Island birding Center on the 6<sup>th</sup> and Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Mottled Duck** *Anas fulvigula*— this dark ‘Mallard-type’ was noted at least four days though proved especially difficult to see really well. The best views came from Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> and South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors*— commonly encountered at wetlands throughout the trip with especially exquisite views at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> – a photographers delight!

**Cinnamon Teal** *Anas cyanoptera*— a bright male hidden among the Blue-winged Teals at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*— fairly common in shallow wetlands and noted on at least six days with extraordinary numbers (c.500) at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*— an elegant dabbler found in good numbers at various wetland sites on five days.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*—wonderful close views and photo opportunities of hundreds at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Redhead** *Aythya americana*— common to abundant in certain spots such as Charlie’s Pasture/ Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center and South Padre Island, sometimes appearing in great rafts numbering several thousand birds - impressive to say the least!

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* (**LO**) — around a dozen way up river from Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*— found on two dates discreetly hidden among flocks of Redhead.

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*— two sizeable flocks of 35 – 40 at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola*— a couple of rafts numbering around a dozen birds in each were in Corpus Christi bay on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and viewed from Indian Point.

**Hooded Merganser** *Lophodytes cucullatus*— a surprise immature on the San Benito wetlands on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*— noticed on three dates, all of them in saltwater environments with the most (c.10) at South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*— three at Charlie’s Pasture during the flamingo chase on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Guans and Chachalacas: Cracidae (1)**

**Plain Chachalaca** *Ortalis vetula*— this sometimes noisy *cracid* showed well around the feeding stations at Resaca De La Palma, Frontera Audubon Thicket and Bentsen Rio Grande SP, and included a beautiful leucistic individual at the latter site.

### **New World Quail: Odontophoridae (1)**

**Scaled Quail** *Callipepla squamata*— rich reward for the long off-road drive to Ranch Lomitas when we heard and then saw a tight flock of eight moving through the thorn-scrub behind the ranch.

### **Partridges, Pheasants, and Allies: Phasianidae (1)**

**Wild Turkey** *Meleagris gallopavo*— only seen at one site during the tour but goodness, did we have great views! A social group of nine wandered around Bentsen Rio Grande SP including the patio of the on-site café on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Loons: Gaviidae (1)**

**Common Loon** *Gavia immer*— Goose Island, Fulton Harbor and Indian Point all hosted non-breeding (basic) plumage individuals on the same day, Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Grebes: Podicipedidae (2)**

**Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus*— super views of this diminutive grebe carrying a fish on a small pond at

Hugh Ramsey Nature Park on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and another on the Rio Grande at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*— far more widespread than its smaller cousin, found on at least six dates with the most (15) at South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Cormorants: Phalacrocoracidae (2)**

**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasiliensis*— noted on at least five days including direct comparisons with Double-crested Cormorants at Charlie's Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and along the Rio Grande at Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*— observed daily in a variety of saltwater and freshwater habitats.

### **Anhinga: Anhingidae (1)**

**Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga*— one in flight over Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and we had good views at Los Fresnos Nature Park on the 6<sup>th</sup> as well as tallying around a dozen resting at the edge of the Resaca at Bentsen Rio Grande State Park on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Pelicans: Pelecanidae (2)**

**American White Pelican** *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*— wonderful views of this majestic pelican, highlighted by a large flock of c.300 wheeling and soaring on warm-air thermals over Los Fresnos Nature Park on the 6<sup>th</sup> as well as incredible close-ups at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*— restricted to coastal habitats, we had sensational views at Cos-Way on JFK Blvd near Corpus Christi, at South Padre Island and even resting on the pilings alongside the Port Aransas ferry crossing!

### **Herons and Egrets: Ardeidae (12)**

**American Bittern** *Botaurus lentiginosus (LO)*— one seen leaving a small pond at San Benito wetlands when it flew low across the road and must have landed in a field of knee-high dry grass never to be seen again.

**Least Bittern** *Ixobrychus exilis*— what a treat! Prolonged views of a male hunting from the base of the cattails, kindly pointed out to us by a British couple at the birding center on South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*— seen on most days with a thin scatter of birds in both saltwater and freshwater environments.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*— fairly widespread with the most noted in the first days of the trip between Aransas Bay and Corpus Christi.

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*— similar in distribution to Great Egret but rather scarce.

**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*— a nice range of plumages from dark adults through to blotchy or white immatures. Seen only in coastal areas on four dates.

**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor*— rather more widespread than Little Blue Heron with individuals being seen from Charlie's Pasture through to the Rio Grande at Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Remarkable views from the boardwalk at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens*— perhaps the most animated member of the heron family, we thoroughly enjoyed watching both regular and white morphs ‘dancing’ in the shallows as they chased prey items in the saline flats at Charlie's Pasture, Indian Point and South Padre Island.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*— a single bird found by the Resaca at Los Fresnos Nature Park on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens*— scarce, perhaps reflective of the winter season. Even so, we had extraordinary views of singles from the boardwalks at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center and South Padre Island. Noted on four days.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*— a cosmopolitan species found on at least five days after the first on Goose Island on Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea*— stellar views of this beautiful night-heron at the birding center on South Padre Island, and at Alligator Lake, Estero Llano Grande where as many as 18 were found roosting in the rank vegetation.

### **Ibis and Spoonbills: Threskiornithidae (3)**

**White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus*— easily found at wetland locations and even flying over urban areas on at least six days.

**White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi*— a ‘late-in-the-day’ single at Charlie’s Pasture on the first evening, the only sighting of the tour.

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja* – this majestic wading bird featured on five days of the trip with especially spectacular flocks flying over the ‘crane meadow’ at Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and around 20 (!) near the H.E.B supermarket in Weslaco on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **FLAMINGOS: Phoenicopteridae (1)**

**American Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber*— originating from the Yucatan Peninsula and displaced by Hurricane Idalia, three flamingoes was the prize for our long walk out to Charlie’s pasture on the first afternoon of the tour.

### **New World Vultures: Cathartidae (2)**

**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus*— fairly common though less frequent than Turkey Vulture with sinister looking groups often gathered around roadkill.

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*— daily fare throughout the tour with the most in the San Benito wetlands area on the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup> when about 60 were seen.

### **Osprey: Pandionidae (1)**

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*— common and easily seen in the Rockport/Fulton/Port Aransas area as well as South Padre Island and along certain portions of the Rio Grande.

### **Hawks, Eagles, and Kites: Accipitridae (11)**

**White-tailed Kite** *Elanus leucurus*— great views of a pair hunting and quartering above Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and an individual hovering over a meadow in perfect afternoon light near the National Butterfly Center, Mission on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*— harriers were noted on three days, all of them quartering in low lying coastal areas including Mustang Island, Charlie’s Pasture and South Padre Island.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*— one appeared over the Rio Grande at Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Cooper’s Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*— scarce, perhaps surprisingly so after a bold juvenile showed well around buildings at the Cattle Tyrant site in downtown Corpus on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Another was seen stealthily slipping through the neighborhoods of Rockport/Fulton on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Harris’s Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus*— after the first sighting south of Sarita on the 4<sup>th</sup>, we came across this social raptor in singles and small groups throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley especially in the vicinity of Brownsville and Harlingen.

**White-tailed Hawk** *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*— a fabulous trip for observing this handsome and range restricted *buteo* found nowhere else in the US other than SE Texas. Mustang Island easily had the largest concentrations where we multiple pairs perched up on the giant utility poles. Observed on at least five days as far inland as San Benito.

**Gray Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus*— at least two pairs put on quite the show at Bentsen Rio Grande SP on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and appeared to be engaged in courtship behavior. The next day we had another vocal pair along the Rio Grande at Salineño boat ramp.

**Roadside Hawk** *Rupornis magnirostris* – birders who routinely visit Central America will know this species well but with only a dozen US records to date (and all of them from Texas) this was easily one of the rarest species seen on the tour. Fortune came our way as an immature bird put on the most fabulous show at the end of the Ebony Trail, Resaca de La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Apparently it retreated just after our sighting and went unseen for the rest of the day, that's until we returned for a second helping in the evening! Again, it performed admirably before flying off to roost.

**Red-shouldered Hawk** *Buteo lineatus*— after a couple of brief drive-by singles at Sarita and Resaca de La Palma, we had fabulous looks at a bold adult in the parking lot at Bentsen Rio Grande SP on the 8<sup>th</sup> followed by another crisply marked adult at Estero Llano Grande on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Swainson's Hawk** *Buteo swainsoni* — a single immature dark morph spent some time soaring and drifting north in to Texas from Mexico. Very much a ‘scope bird’ and seen only from the famous hawk tower at Bentsen Rio Grande SP on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*— found on most days of the trip, usually perched on fence posts or utility poles. Most were seen on the long travel day between Fulton and Brownsville when we tallied over 20 individuals.

#### **Rails, Coots, and Allies: Rallidae (4)**

**Clapper Rail** *Rallus crepitans*— at least one calling from Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by incredible views of up to three below the boardwalk at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Virginia Rail** *Rallus limicola*— one put in the briefest of appearances below the boardwalk at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata*— super views from the boardwalks at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and South Padre Island birding center on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**American Coot** *Fulica americana*— up to a dozen at various wetlands from Port Aransas to the Rio Grande at Salineño.

#### **Cranes: Gruidae (2)**

**Sandhill Crane** *Antigone canadensis*— up to 26 sharing the same meadow as the Whooping Cranes at Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and a surprise flock of 24 arriving from Mexico and heading north over Bentsen Rio Grande SP on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Whooping Crane** *Grus americana*— after a fabulous lecture from outreach biologist Paityn Bower from the International Crane Foundation we headed over to Goose Island where were treated to immaculate views of as many as 15 Whooping Cranes!

#### **Stilts and Avocets: Recurvirostridae (2)**

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus*— this, perhaps the most elegant of shorebirds was found at Indian Point on the 3rd, Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> and South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana*— small numbers (up to 10) amid the masses of shorebirds on the flats at Charlie’s Pasture and Indian Point, all within the first three days of the trip.

#### **Oystercatchers: Haematopodidae (1)**

**American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus*— fabulous views of two at Sunset Lake, Portland in late afternoon on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Yet another highlight from a brilliant afternoon of shorebirding.

#### **Plovers and Lapwings: Charadriidae (5)**

**Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*— good views of non-breeding plumage birds on the mud flats at Indian Point and Sunset Lake on the 3<sup>rd</sup> plus a distant group on the mudflats at South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Snowy Plover** *Charadrius nivosus*— fabulous comparative views of this scarce plover right alongside

Semipalmated and Piping Plovers at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus*— over 20 observed on the mudflats with other shorebirds at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Piping Plover** *Charadrius melanotos*— sensational views of up to half a dozen at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and distant scope views of a similar number on the tidal flats at South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*— one heard calling from the ‘crane meadow’ at Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and up to a dozen on the saltmarsh flats near Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Sandpipers and Allies: Scolopacidae (17)**

**Long-billed Curlew** *Numenius americanus*— exceptionally good looks at a confiding individual in the ‘crane meadow’ at Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> with more seen on the mud flats at Indian Point, Corpus Christi Bay on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Marbled Godwit** *Limosa fedoa*— noted in the early stages of the tour with exquisite views on the mudflats at Indian Point, Corpus Christi Bay on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*— we could hardly pass up the opportunity to view a species known to have the longest-distance non-stop bird migration, a journey of some 11-days and 13,560-kilometres! The finding of this bird at Sunset Lake, Portland was the grand finale to an exceptional afternoon of shorebirding along the edge of Corpus Christi Bay. This particular bird happened to be (about) the third individual Bar-tailed Godwit to be recorded in Texas.

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*— strictly coastal with sightings coming from Fulton Harbor and Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus*— a party of four feeding with other shorebirds near the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>. An unexpected bonus just before we headed south.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* — found along the coast with small numbers at Indian Point and Sunset Lake on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and near the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center the following day.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*— nice views of several at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and perhaps as many as 35 at Indian Point and Sunset Lake on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*— possibly overlooked, however we did have reasonable views at Indian Point and Sunset Lake on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and a fairly large flock mixed with other ‘peeps’ at Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*— about 25 foraging around the Black Skimmer flock at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri*— at least three mixing with a flock of around 35 ‘peeps’ at Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus*— small numbers scattered across the mudflats at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup> including some good, close-range views of several individuals.

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*— excellent close comparative views of one feeding with several Short-billed Dowitchers at Indian Point on the 3rd.

**Wilson’s Snipe** *Gallinago delicata*— a single flying at dusk at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> on the way back from the flamingo chase.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*— a wide scatter of four singles during the tour, most of them at inland sites aside from a well-photographed individual at Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*— seen on five days at inshore and freshwater habitats including the first few at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Willet** *Tringa semipalmata*— two or three confiding individuals at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with others seen at Indian Point and Sunset Lake on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*— two at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and three at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup> ended up being the only sightings for the tour.

### **Gulls and Terns: Laridae (8)**

**Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla*— very common in coastal waters and easily the most abundant gull of the trip but almost absent from the inland hotspots aside from a dozen or so flying up and down the river at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*— quite scarce being noted on five days though we did come across a flock of 45 resting on mudflats at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* — up to 10 seen in the coastal spots during the first three days but apparently absent along the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

**Iceland (Thayer's) Gull** *Larus glaucoides thayeri* – wonderful views of an adult with Herring and Laughing Gulls at Cos-Way along the JFK Blvd near Corpus Christi on the 2nd. Iceland Gulls, *kumlienii* or *thayeri*, are scarce in coastal Texas and this bird was on the way to our hotel in Fulton so we could hardly pass on the opportunity. For gull fanatics this was just about as fine an example of an adult 'Thayer's Gull' that anyone could wish to see.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia*— the largest member of the tern family showed well at sites such as the JFK Blvd wetlands, Indian Point, South Padre Island and inland along the river at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Forster's Tern** *Sterna forsteri*— this delightful *sterna* was found in four coastal spots with some of the best views coming from the boardwalks at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> and South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus*— a close relative of the Caspian Tern, sometimes with opportunities to study them alongside each other at sites such as Indian Point, South Padre Island. Strictly coastal, we did not see this species inland.

**Black Skimmer** *Rynchops niger*— a beautiful flock of around 25 at rest and occasionally wheeling and swirling around at the mudflats at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Pigeons and Doves: Columbidae (7)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*— noticed in built-up areas throughout the trip with 60 – 110 noted on most days.

**Red-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas flavirostris*— we had great fortune with this species along the Rio Grande at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup> with two or three seen in flight and perched up on the Mexico side of the Rio Grande. Very much a range-restricted species in the US being found only in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto (I)* — this well-established introduced species was noted on four days, usually in small groups near habitation.

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca*— a most attractive small dove plentiful around the feeding stations at Resaca de La Palma, Frontera Audubon and the National Butterfly Center in Mission.

**White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi*— a shy ground-dwelling species with a deep, resonant voice most easily seen around feeders at Resaca de La Palma, Frontera Audubon and Benten Rio Grande SP.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaidura asiatica*— seen daily perhaps due to its habitat of perching openly on wires or in leafless trees when the characteristic white wing panel could be seen. Usually found in small numbers but notably common around Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup> when at least 35 were counted.

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*— seen daily though generally unobtrusive, birds often flushing during our walks such as the long beach walk at Indian Point or by the fallow fields at San Benito. Also found around feeders.

### **Cuckoos and Allies: Cuculidae (1)**

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus*— after a very brief single sprinting across the dirt roads near Rancho Lomitas, Gene spotted a much more cooperative bird teed-up on a fence post on "Sparrows nest Street" on the outskirts of Rio Grande City. No tour to Texas would be complete without a roadrunner.....

### **Owls: Strigidae (2)**

**Eastern Screech-Owl** *Megascops asio*— beautiful views of the McCall's subspecies at the National Butterfly

Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>. This bird was resting in an open cavity right above one of the main walkways. The *mccallii* subspecies is intriguing since it only occurs in a gray morph and the vocal range does not include the descending whinny so characteristic of the Northern subspecies. A resident of south-central Texas and parts of northern Mexico, *maccalli* may yet prove to be a species in its own right.

**Burrowing Owl** *Athene cunicularia*— this perky little owl decided to make its winter home on an upended concrete pipe at the side of a very busy road in San Benito, and we had beautiful views on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Nightjars: Caprimulgidae (1)**

**Common Pauraque** *Nyctidromus albicollis*— remarkable views of single at rest only inches from the footpath by Alligator Lake, Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>. A photogenic individual to say the least and totally unfazed by birder attention.

### **Hummingbirds: Trochilidae (3)**

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** *Archilochus colubris*— one appeared, albeit briefly, at the feeders of Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup> with another at Bentsen Rio Grande SP the following day.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird** *Archilochus alexandri*— an immature showed pretty well at Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>, with even better views of up to three on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Bentsen Rio Grande SP, including a nice male.

**Buff-bellied Hummingbird** *Amazilia yucatanensis*— another key species and, from a US perspective, restricted entirely to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. After a couple of brief individuals at Estero Llano Grande and Hugh Ramsey Nature Park we enjoyed multiple close views around the water features and feeders at the National Butterfly Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Kingfishers: Alcedinidae (3)**

**Ringed Kingfisher** *Megaceryle torquata*— a real beast of a kingfisher, we enjoyed views at least two along the Rio Grande at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*— easily the most widespread of the three kingfisher species and found on at least five days.

**Green Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle americana*— nice scope views of singles at Bentsen Rio Grande SP on the 8<sup>th</sup> and at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>, plus a leader-only sighting from Hugh Ramsey Nature Park on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Woodpeckers: Picidae (3)**

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus varius*— close views of a juvenile around the parking lot at the World Birding Center, South Padre Island on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden-fronted Woodpecker** *Melanerpes aurifrons*— widespread and seemingly at home in urban areas - we even found a pair in the palms by the Cattle Tyrant site in downtown Corpus Christi on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Picoides scalaris*— seen on at least six days though often well-hidden in Live Oaks and/or thorn-scrub thickets. Most easily viewed at the birding centers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley at spots such as Estero Llano Grande.

### **Falcons and Caracaras: Falconidae (5)**

**Crested Caracara** *Caracara cheriway*— after a single at Charlie's Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> this interesting species proved to be increasingly common the further south and west we went. For example, five were foraging in a plowed field close to the Burrowing Owl site in San Benito on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*— found every day on roadside wires or fences but often skittish and difficult to see well. At least 15 counted during the ‘travel day’ from Fulton Harbor to Brownsville on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*— a single bolted past Alligator Lake with stopping. Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Aplomado Falcon** *Falco femoralis*— much desired and highly prized, this species cropped up early in the trip when we had stellar views of a pair in perfect light perched on a utility pole on Mustang Island.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*— unforgettable views of a huge female actively plucking a Feral Rock Pigeon out of the air as we waited patiently for the Cattle Tyrant to appear in downtown Corpus Christi on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Other Peregrines were seen on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Parrots: Psittacidae (4)**

**Red-crowned Parrot** *Amazona viridigenalis*— Oliveira Park in Brownsville set the scene for an impressive pre-roost gathering of this and at least two other species of *Amazona*. They appeared late in the day but once arrived the screeching, squawking flocks was something to behold! Numbers were difficult to estimate but at least 300 parrots were present many of which were Red-crowned.

**Green Parakeet** *Psittacara holochlorus (LO)* — a chance encounter at the El Tigre gas station, Rio Grande City as four flew around screeching just after first light.

**Red-lored Parrot** *Amazona autumnalis (I)* — plentiful in the Oliveira Park parrot roost, Brownsville, most of them being of the yellow-cheeked form helping to separate them from Red-Crowned Parrots. This species is not ABA countable at this time.

**White-fronted Parrot** *Amazona albifrons (I)* — about 30 arrived in Oliveira Park before the main masses of Red-crowned and Red-lored Parrots and they even appeared to keep themselves separate from the two larger species. As with Red-lored Parrot not ABA countable, but nice to see all the same.

#### **Tyrant Flycatchers: Tyrannidae (11)**

**Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet** *Campstostoma imberbe*— a banner day for this feisty little flycatcher at Bentsen Rio Grande State Park on the 8<sup>th</sup>. We saw two very well and heard another in dense mesquite scrub.

**Least Flycatcher** *Empidonax minimus (HO)* — two or three calling giving ‘whit’ notes off the Ebony trail at Resaca De La Palma on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*— nice views of one foraging above a drain at Estero Llano Grande on the 7<sup>th</sup> and another (briefly) by the cattle pond at Rancho Lomitas on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Eastern Phoebe** *Sayornis phoebe*— quite widespread though thinly distributed and noted on seven days after the first at the Big Tree on Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*— a flurry of sightings on Dec 6<sup>th</sup> after Gene spotted the first across the street from Los Fresnos Nature Park with others found at South Padre Island and San Bentio Wetlands – not too shabby!

**Brown-crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tyrannulus (HO)* — a single delivering its unique call notes at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>. This species did appear in the local RBA at the time of our visit.

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus*— a spectacular flycatcher synonymous with the tropics and a key element to our time in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. We saw and heard them each day after the first at Resaca de La Palma especially at Los Fresnos Nature Park with about 10 performing on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus*— quite a few individuals confirmed by diagnostic calls at; South Padre Island, San Benito Wetlands, Oliveira Park in Brownsville, the National Butterfly Center and even by the annex at the Alamo Inn!

**Couch’s Kingbird** *Tyrannus couchii*— a party of four seen and heard calling in a sleepy Fulton neighborhood on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. We would have stopped for better views but had an appointment with Whooping Cranes about five minutes up the road!

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** *Tyrannus forficatus*— first spotted by Gene, we enjoyed prolonged scope views of an individual replete with long tail feathers, foraging in and over a meadow at San Benito wetlands on the 6<sup>th</sup>. And there was a brief roadside sighting in Mission after we returned from the National Butterfly Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Cattle Tyrant** *Machetornis rixosa* — a tyrant chase in Corpus Christi on the first afternoon was not to be missed. After all we were so close and getting to the ‘hotspot’ involved the smallest of detours. It was truly worth it. After an anxious wait, Kathy suddenly spotted the tyrant perched on a street light after which the bird dropped down to a dumpster and duly began wolfing down flies with gusto. It was something to behold. The first Cattle

Tyrant ever to be recorded in the US snapping up flies from the top of a dumpster seemingly unconcerned by an audience of thrilled birders surrounding it. Just ten minutes' drive from the Corpus Christi airport, the Cattle Tyrant kick-started the tour in the most fabulous manner.

### **Becards and Tityras: Tityridae (2)**

**Rose-throated Becard** *Pachyramphus aglaiae*— a most sought-after species, a female showed very well though rather briefly close to the main Visitor Center at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Gray-collared Becard** *Pachyramphus major*— a ‘mega’ in truest sense of the word. Originally found in late November it was more than lucky to have this bird (a first-year male) hanging around into early December and overlapping with our tour dates. It wasn’t easy to track down and near pandemonium ensued when a cry of “BIRD!!” came from behind the main Visitor Center at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The becard was moving around with a small feeding flock somewhat awkwardly hidden behind the main birding blinds at the center. Despite the crush of bodies and the genuine enthusiasm of fellow birders, most of our party got to see the becard. Thought to be an altitudinal migrant, it’s an uncommon bird anywhere, even in its native range of Mexico and north Central America. This particular individual was the first for Texas and only the third in the US, the other two records coming from Southern Arizona.

### **Shrikes: Laniidae (1)**

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*— excellent views at Charlie’s Pasture in the early portion of the trip as well as others at Port Aransas and Mustang Island. Puzzlingly scarce or absent during our time in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

### **Vireos: Vireonidae (2)**

**White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus*— very much a denizen of dense thickets and thorn-scrub and devilishly difficult to see. Eventually we had reasonable views at a number of locales along the Lower Rio Grande. Far more often heard than seen though.

**Blue-headed Vireo** *Vireo solitarius*— super views of one around the water features at the National Butterfly Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Crows and Jays: Corvidae (1)**

**Green Jay** *Cyanocorax yncas*— a group of these stunning jays came early in the trip as far north as Robstown! Ruth came across a feeding flock right behind the Nueces Café and from that moment on this beauty proved to be a daily feature of our time in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

### **Chickadees and Titmice: Paridae (1)**

**Black-crested Titmouse** *Baeolophus atricristatus*— this amazing titmouse proved to be quite common amid feeding flocks from the Sarita Rest Area southwards. Found at least five days especially around feeders.

### **Penduline Tits: Remizidae (1)**

**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps*— heard at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup> and two seen very well at Bentsen Rio Grande Valley on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Wrens: Troglodytidae (6)**

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon*— widespread though far more often heard than seen. Noted on at least seven days.

**Winter Wren** *Troglodytes hiemalis (LO)* — one heard calling the classic ‘double chip’ notes at Hugh Ramsey Park Nature Park near Harlingen on the 5<sup>th</sup>. It was close to grebe pond but by the time we’d gathered as a group the little devil had fallen.

**Sedge Wren** *Cistothorus platensis*— one heard ‘chattering’ from the undergrowth at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and another similarly vocal bird in coastal scrub at Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The latter showed very well to the group.

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*— two or three individuals seen from the boardwalk at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> and another heard in the cattails by the river at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Carolina Wren** *Thryothorus ludovicianus*— rather tricky to see well with the exception of about four at Los Fresnos Nature Park vocalizing right in front of the group on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Bewick’s Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii (HO)*— one singing (but not showing) around the entrance gate to Salineño Wildlife Preserve on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Gnatcatchers: Polioptilidae (1)**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea*— most often in mixed feeding flocks amid thickets and thorn-scrub in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

#### **Kinglets: Ret ahd stogulidae (2)**

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus satrapa*— one, perhaps two, feeding around the Amber Grove picnic area at Bentsen Rio Grande State Park on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*— this feisty little sprite was seen and heard almost daily in a variety of habitats ranging from Live Oak woods to thickets and thorn-scrub with up to a dozen noted on some days.

#### **Thrushes: Turdidae (1)**

**Clay-colored Thrush** *Turdus grayi*— the one and only thrush species seen on the tour. Though not especially rare, most birds were shy and furtive but Resaca de La Palma, Frontera Audubon and Hugh Ramsey Nature Park were all good places to catch up with this Rio Grande specialty.

#### **Mockingbirds and Thrashers: Mimidae (4)**

**Gray Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis*— the cat-like mews calls betrayed the presence of a single at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre*— the first at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park on the 5<sup>th</sup> was followed by others at Estero Llano Grande and Rancho Lomitas.

**Long-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma longirostre*— one of the specialties of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and a species that showed particularly well on this trip with daily sightings after our first at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Most often heard singing from dense thickets and scrub.

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos*— though never really numerous we came across this widespread species on every day of the tour where it appeared equally at home in urban and rural areas.

#### **Starlings and Mynas: Sturnidae (1)**

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*— difficult to miss in urban areas but also found mixed with some of the blackbird flocks in spots such as Goose Island and Progresso.

#### **Pipits and Wagtails: Motacillidae (1)**

**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*— though far from satisfactory in terms of views, one called as it flew north over Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **New World Warblers: Parulidae (11)**

**Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilla varia*— patience was required (and rewarded!) at the water features of Resaca De La Palma and the National Butterfly Center. Both proved to be key spots for seeing this tiny feathered Zebra.

**Tennessee Warbler** *Leiothlypis peregrine* - a brief appearance from a single at the birding blind at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Oreothlypis celata*— a wonderful sequence of daily sightings after Gene spotted the first near The Big Tree on Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Almost prolific around the feeders and water features at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Nashville Warbler** *Oreothlypis ruficapilla*— another warbler attracted to the water features at both Resaca De La Palma and the National Butterfly Center where we saw the species very well on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas*— yellowthroats were found on just two days of the trip though we did have good views of up to five from the boardwalk at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Tropical Parula** *Setophaga pityayumi*— a pair of closely associated with an exceptionally fast moving feeding flock at Los Fresnos Nature Park on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Claire spotted the male first and from that moment on we did our best to track them eventually securing decent views.

**Pine Warbler** *Setophaga pinus*— a handsome cooperative male popped into view with a small feeding flock at Estero Llano Grande on the final morning of the tour.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*— plentiful in a variety of habitats and seen on most days of the trip.

**Black-throated Green Warbler** *Setophaga virens*— nice views of a single feeding over the pathway at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*— a nice sequence of sightings four days in a row, all of them in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, including about five at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden-crowned Warbler** *Basileuterus culicivorus* — we really hit the jackpot with this bright but decidedly skulking warbler with reasonable views at Hugh Ramsey Nature Park on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and point-blank views at Frontera Audubon Thicket on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Not especially easy to see in its Central American breeding range so to have two individuals within one Texas tour was almost too good to be true!

### **New World Sparrows: Emberizidae (7)**

**Cassin's Sparrow** *Peucaea cassinii*— prolonged views of one perched up in a small, spindly mesquite near Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Olive Sparrow** *Arremonops rufivirgatus*— very much a key species for a visit to the Lower Rio Grande, we had fine views of this furtive sparrow at several nature parks and birding centers on at least three dates.

**Vesper Sparrow** *Pooecetes gramineus*— by pure chance we stumbled across a small feeding flock along the approach road to Rancho Lomitas on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*— scarce with a tiny handful seen in saltmarsh habitat at Charlie's Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Indian Point on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. However, we did have good views of one perched on a fence near the National Butterfly Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia (LO)* — one appeared briefly in overgrown grasses by the famed Cattle Tyrant dumpster on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>. At that point it was hard to imagine it would be the only Song Sparrow of the trip!

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni*— one showed very well at the feeders and water features of the National Butterfly Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Swamp Sparrow** *Melospiza georgiana*— though tricky to get good views of we found them at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> and by the Resaca at Los Fresnos Nature Park on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Allies: Cardinalidae (4)**

**Western Tanager** — Gene first spotted one perched high and distantly off the Ebony Trail at Reseca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Numbers were difficult to assess in what may have been a pre-roost gathering due to distance but photos revealed at least three, perhaps as many as five individuals including two males. This species was mentioned almost daily in the local RBA.

**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra*— a single first heard and then seen (briefly) at Salineño boat ramp on the 9<sup>th</sup>

**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis*— frequent throughout the trip, most of them favoring thickets and thorn-scrub.

**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea*— one seen and heard all-too-briefly over the parking lot at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Orioles and Blackbirds: Icteridae (9)**

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*— a commonly encountered *icterid* found in a variety of habitats ranging from wetlands to interior feeders such as those at Frontera Audubon in Weslaco.

**Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna*— found around grasslands or at the edge of saltmarsh at least five days including about a dozen in the fields by San Benito wetlands on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*— close views of a fairly large flock mixed with other blackbirds at the Sarita Rest Area on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Grackle** *Quiscalus quiscula*— one perched up in the Live Oaks at the Sarita Rest Area on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Uncommon in southern Texas and a really great spot by Kathy!

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus*— ubiquitous. Seen in numbers everyday though scarce west of Rio Grande City. A spectacular roost of several thousand developed close to home directly across the highway from our lodging at the Courtyard Marriott in Brownsville.

**Bronzed Cowbird** *Molothrus aeneus*— two males strutting around on a roadside curb at the Sarita Rest Area on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater*— found on just two dates; about five with Red-winged Blackbirds on Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and at least one with Brewer's Blackbirds at the Sarita Rest Area on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Altamira Oriole** *Icterus gularis*— impossible to tire of these stunners, the largest and arguably the brightest of the orioles in the Rio Grande Valley. A wonderful sequence of daily sightings after the first half-dozen or so at Resaca de la Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Audubon's Oriole** *Icterus graduacauda*— the deliberate, fluty song of this species was heard so well at Salineño on the 9<sup>th</sup> it seemed imperceptible that actual views would be missed and yet, despite giving it our best, we never managed to see one.

### **Finches: Fringillidae (2)**

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*— small numbers found around the entrance to Bensten Rio Grande SP on the 8<sup>th</sup> and close to the annex building of the Alamo Inn on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria*— about three including a dapper male, all coming to the water features on a hot afternoon at the National Butterfly Center on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Old World Sparrows: Passeridae (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*— no trip to Texas would be complete without good old *Passer domesticus*. They were found daily from Corpus Christi onwards where they shared the palms and parking lots of downtown with none other than one **Cattle Tyrant**.

### **MAMMALS (7 species recorded):**

**Eastern Cottontail** *Sylvilagus floridanus*—seen at Estero Llano Grande State Park, Bentsen and Rancho Lomitas.

**Eastern Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus niger* — found near the oaks and feeders at the preserves in the Lower Rio Grande as well as in the Live Oak neighborhoods around Rockport/Fulton.

**Collared Peccary** *Tayassu tajacu*— just the one seen, near the parking lot at Resaca De La Palma on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus*— some close individuals by the road at Goose Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> though not seen thereafter.

**Bottlenose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus*— in the shallows off Goose Island and Fulton Harbor and even at the ferry crossing in Port Aransas!

**Northern Racoons** *Procyon lotor* – a small family group raided the feeders at Resaca de La Palma late on the 5<sup>th</sup>.  
**Coyote** *Canis latrans* – not seen but howling groups most certainly heard at Charlie’s Pasture on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Salineno on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (5 species recorded):**

**American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis*— Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center hosted a sleepy female of monstrous proportions on the 4<sup>th</sup> with others seen at South Padre Island and Estero Llano Grande.

**Red-eared Slider** *Trachemys scripta*—seen at several bodies of water during the week.

**Texas Spiny Lizard** *Sceloporus olivaceus*— quite plentiful at Bentsen Rio Grande SP.

**Brown Anole** *Anolis sagrei*— one observed at close range at Los Fresnos Nature Park on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Spotted Whiptail** *Aspidoscelis gularis*— at Ranch Lomitas on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**BUTTERFLIES**

**Monarch, Viceroy, Queen, Mexican Yellow, Painted Lady, Pygmy Blue, Southern Dogface** and **American Snout** were among the species identified, most of them in the Rio Grande Valley especially, perhaps quite naturally at the National Butterfly Center in Mission.