

South Texas Birding & Nature | Species List

November 13 – 21, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Bryan Calk, with guide Robert Gallardo, and participants Mary, Steve, Dennis, Paul, Lisa, Ken, Babs, and Victor



Cattle Tyrant by Bryan Calk

Summary: This trip was truly spectacular from start to finish when it came to birding and photo opportunities. We started off strong by catching up with a few locally exciting birds like the Cattle Tyrant (first for USA), Bar-tailed Godwit, and American Flamingoes (both very rare in Texas). The first half of the tour focused mostly on coastal habitats, where we visited hotspots like Rockport, South Padre Island, and Port Aransas. Some of the highlights in the wetlands included the endangered Whooping Crane, Aplomado Falcon, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Clapper Rails, Least Bittern, and the beautiful Roseate Spoonbills. We birded around Brownsville and the iconic refuges of the Lower Rio Grande Valley like Sabal Palm, Estero Llano Grande State Park, and Edinburg Scenic Wetlands. These beautiful habitats ranged from expansive coastal prairies to dense subtropical thorn forest, and as we explored them, we found Harris's

Hawks, Common Pauraque, Tropical Parula, Green Jays, a Red-crowned Parrot roost, and many more. On our final couple days, we explored the western extent of the valley with stops at Salineño, Falcon State Park, the National Butterfly Center, and more. These drier and scrubbier areas showed us a different variety of species with our only views of birds like Audubon's Oriole, Sprague's Pipit, Scaled Quail, Zone-tailed Hawk, and Eastern Screech-owl. Besides the birds, we encountered an abundance of butterflies, a handful of mammals including the exotic Nilgai and curious Nine-banded Armadillos, and a few reptiles like Blue Spiny Lizard and Brown Anoles.

This species report Ebird link below details the 187 species of birds our group either observed or heard during the tour. If you're new to Ebird, be sure to click on "Show All Details" on the right side of the list as this will expand the report to show you where and when all of the birds were seen and how many. Species list with location details can be found here:

[South Texas Birding & Nature | November 13 – 21, 2023 | Ebird Trip Report](#)

MAMMALS (10 species recorded):

Black-tailed Jackrabbit *Lepus californicus* – A couple hanging out in the lawn in the median at the Corpus Christi airport and one seen by a couple of the group at Rancho Lomitas

Eastern Cottontail *Sylvilagus sp.* — Seen at a few locations during the week including Estero Llano Grande State Park and Rancho Lomitas

Hispid Cotton Rat *Sigmodon hispidus* – One coming to the feeding station at the park host site at Falcon State Park

Mexican Ground Squirrel *Ictidomys mexicanus* – One at the feeding area at Rancho Lomitas
Eastern Fox Squirrel *Sciurus niger*— Seen best at the National Butterfly Center, but also at a couple of other spots
White-tailed Deer *Odocoileus virginianus*— Several seen well in the Rockport Area and Laguna Atascosa NWR
Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*— Seen from the ferry to Port Aransas
Nine-banded Armadillo *Dasypus novemcinctus*—Seen foraging along the road at Laguna Atascosa NWR
Wild Pig *Sus scrofa* – A couple family groups seen walking in the same area as the Nilgai
Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus*—Several seen standing in tall grass beside a pond along the wildlife drive at Laguna Atascosa NWR

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (10 species recorded):

American Alligator *Alligator mississippiensis*— Seen at a few sites early in the week including Lamar, Port Aransas, and South Padre Island
Rio Grande Cooter *Pseudemys gorzugi* – One basking on a rock in the middle of the Rio Grande at Salineño Pond / **Red-eared Slider** *Trachemys scripta*— Seen commonly throughout the week including several basking at South Padre Island and Lola’s Bistro
Texas Spiny Softshell *Apalone spinifera emoryi*— Seen sunning at Lola’s Bistro with the Pond (Red-eared) Sliders
Brown Anole *Anolis sagrei* – One seen especially well at Estero Llano Grande that was flashing his bright orange dewlap – a few seen at other spots
Texas Spotted Whiptail *Aspidoscelis gularis* – A couple seen running around the grassy edges at Resaca de la Palma State Park, Estero Llano Grande State Park, and others
Blue Spiny Lizard *Sceloporus cyanogenys* – Sunning along the walls at Bentsen RGV State Park
Gulf Coast Toad *Incilius valliceps* – One found under a board just off the path along the river trail at Salineño
Western Narrow-mouthed Toad *Gastrophryne olivacea* – One found under a board just off the path along the river trail at Salineño
Gulf Coast Ribbon Snake *Thamnophis proximus orarius* – One at the small garden pond at Sabal Palm Sanctuary

BUTTERFLIES (53 species recorded, compiled by Robert Gallardo):

Papilionidae-Swallowtails

Black Swallowtail *Papilio polyxenes*—A female seen at S. Padre Island Birding Center feeding on mistflower.
Giant Swallowtail *Pterourus rumiko*—One seen at Falcon State Park feeding on Mexican Olive.

Pieridae-Sulphurs

Dainty Sulphur *Nathalis iole*—A few seen at Falcon State Park.
Lyside Sulphur *Kricogonia lyside*—A few seen at S. Padre Island Birding Center. Large numbers seen at most inland sites, often with swarms feeding on Coma blossoms.
Little Yellow *Pyrisitia lisa*—Small numbers seen in coastal areas. More common inland and seen daily at most sites.
Sleepy Orange *Abaeis nicippe*—Only one seen at the Nat’l Butterfly Center.
Cloudless Sulphur *Phoebis sennae*—Small numbers seen at various coastal sites. It was more common inland and seen daily at most sites.
Large Orange Sulphur *Phoebis agarithe*— Small numbers seen at various coastal sites. It was more common inland and seen daily at most sites.
Checkered White *Pontia protodice*—One seen by some in the Lamar Peninsula area.
Great Southern White *Ascia monuste*—A coastal species. Seen around Lamar Peninsula, Port Aransas Nature Reserve, and the S. Padre Island Birding Center.
Southern Dogface *Zerene cesonia*—A few seen at Falcon State Park and the Nat’l Butterfly Center.

Nymphalidae-Brushfoots

American Snout *Libytheana carinenta*—Only a few seen at sites along the coastline. Common to abundant inland at most sites. Feeding on mistflower and Coma trees.

Soldier *Danaus eresimus*—A few seen in the back gardens at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Queen *Danaus gilippus*—A few seen at sites along the coastline. More common and abundant at inland sites.

Monarch *Danaus plexippus*—Small numbers seen along the coastline as well as inland sites.

Gulf Fritillary *Agraulis vanillae*—The only species of longwing observed. A few seen at S. Padre Island Birding Center and the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Mexican Fritillary *Euptoieta hegesia*—One seen at the Estero Llano Grande State Park.

Variegated Fritillary *Euptoieta claudia*—Only one seen at Falcon State Park.

Hackberry Emperor *Asterocampa celtis*—Primarily seen at the National Butterfly Center. Identification confusion with *A. leilia* made it difficult to ascertain numbers.

Empress Leilia *Asterocampa leilia*—Identified from photos at Salineño and the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Tawny Emperor *Asterocampa clyton*—Small numbers seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center, feeding primarily on the peanut butter feeders.

Mexican Bluewing *Myscelia ethusa*—A few seen at Resaca de la Palma, Sabal Palms Sanctuary, and the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*—Many seen at Big Tree park. Smaller numbers seen at Falcon State Park and the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*—One seen at Falcon State Park and two at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Question Mark *Polygonia interrogationis*—One seen on a peanut butter feeder at the National Butterfly Center.

White Peacock *Anartia jatrophae*—One seen at the S. Padre Island Birding Center, Edinburgh World Birding Center, and several at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Northern Buckeye *Junonia coenia*—One seen at the Big Tree park on Goose Island.

Theona Checkerspot *Chlosyne theona*—One seen at Falcon State Park.

Bordered Patch *Chlosyne lacinia*—Two seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Phaon Crescent *Phyciodes phaon*—Fairly common at most inland sites. Common at the Nat'l Butterfly Center where seen feeding on mistflower.

Pearl Crescent *Phyciodes tharos*—Only one seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Riodinidae-Metalmarks

Fatal Metalmark *Calephelis nemesis*—Seen primarily at inland sites, often feeding on mistflower.

Red-bordered Metalmark *Caria ino*—A few seen, including one at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Lycaenidae-Gossamerwings

Gray Hairstreak *Strymon melinus*—Two seen at the Port Aransas Nature Reserve. Many seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak *Strymon istapa*— Many seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Western Pygmy-Blue *Brephidium exilis*—Individuals seen at the Port Aransas Nature Reserve, Falcon State Park, and several at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Ceraunus Blue *Hemiargus ceraunus*—Fairly common at most inland sites, frequently seen feeding on mistflowers.

Reakirt's Blue *Echinargus isola*—Two seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Hesperiidae-Skippers

Long-tailed Skipper *Urbanus proteus*—One seen at Resaca de la Palma.

Brown Longtail *Spicauda procne*—A few seen only at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Northern Sicklewings *Eantis tamenund*—Seen at the S. Padre Island birding center and Resaca de la Palma.

Funeral Duskywing *Gesta funeralis*—One photographed by Lisa at Falcon State Park.

Common Checkered-Skipper *Burnsius communis*—Seen at Big Tree on Goose Island and many at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Tropical Checkered-Skipper *Burnsius oileus*—A few seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Laviana White-Skipper *Heliopetes laviana*—Seen at Estero Llano Grande State Park, Edinburgh World Birding Center, and the Nat'l Butterfly Center. Fairly common throughout.

Fiery Skipper *Hylephila phyleus*—Fairly common at most inland sites where wildflowers were present. Common in butterfly gardens with blooming mistflowers.

Sachem *Atalopedes campestris*—Seen at Big Tree on Goose Island and several at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Southern Skipperling *Oarisma minima*—Numerous seen, only at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Clouded Skipper *Lerema accius*—Common at butterfly gardens with plumbago, including the Edinburgh World Birding Center and the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Southern Broken-dash *Polites otho*—Two seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Common Mellana *Quasimellana eulogius*—One seen at the S. Padre Island Birding Center and a few at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Eufala Skipper *Lerodea eufala*—Small numbers seen at the Edinburgh World Birding Center, Falcon State Park, and the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

Olive-clouded Skipper *Lerodea arabus*—Specific status still unclear. One seen at the Nat'l Butterfly Center.

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