

South Texas Birding & Nature Species List | March 11 – 19, 2026 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Sharon Goldwasser with co-guide David Mehlman. Our clients included Jen, Carol, Paul, Kathleen, Tiffany, Jeanette, Genice, David and Marcia

A delightful group of travelers came together for a week in South Texas to enjoy the special natural history of the coastal bend and Rio Grande Valley. We encountered an incredible variety of birds plus an assortment of mammals, reptiles and butterflies. Our journey took us into diverse habitats, from rich coastal and freshwater wetlands near Rockport and Aransas, to Tamaulipan thorn scrub in the lower Rio Grande Valley and further west to the arid semi-desert brush country near Falcon Dam. The boat trip from Rockport gave us spectacular views of the Whooping Cranes and Bottlenose Dolphins in addition to many coastal and marsh birds. The close views of an array of water birds, including a glowing American Flamingo at the Leonabelle Turner Sanctuary was particularly captivating for everyone.

We continued into the lower Rio Grande Valley, where we quickly became familiar with regional specialties such as Green Jays, Altamira Orioles, Great Kiskadees, Plain Chachalacas and Buff-bellied Hummingbirds. Although cold fronts that brought windy weather made it challenging to see wintering warblers, the same front filled the skies at Santa Ana NWR with dozens of migrating Broad-winged Hawks! In the more arid regions of the valley, we found Roadrunners, Pyrrhuloxias, Black-throated Sparrows and Scaled Quail. Altogether, it was a fascinating and memorable week of exploration along the tropical frontier of the lower Rio Grande Valley in south Texas.

BIRDS 172 species were recorded of which one was heard only, and 2 were introduced. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details the 172 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[South Texas Birding & Nature | March 11-19 2026 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Mammals: (8)

Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)— Seen at a few locations during the week including Estero Llano Grande

Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) – Seen near the Aplomado Falcon Viewing area on TX 100

Mexican Ground Squirrel (*Ictidomys mexicanus*) – Two at the bird blind at Falcon State Park and at the feeding area at Rancho Lomitas and one at the Buena Vista Cemetery

Eastern Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) - Several locations including Goose Island State Park, UTRGV and Bentsen State Park

Collared Peccary (*Pecari tejacu*) - Seen at Bentsen state park, foraging under the bird feeders

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) - Several were roaming in Lamar not far from the "Big Tree" section of Goose

Island State Park

Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*)

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (7):

Alligators

American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*)— Captive individual seen at South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, and wild individuals were seen at Estero Llano Grande

Turtles

Rio Grande Cooter (*Pseudemys gorzugi*) - Two were sunning themselves on the rocks in the middle of the Rio Grande at Salineño

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta*)— A few seen at the South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center, at the resacas the University of Texas RGV campus and at Salineno

Texas Tortoise (*Gopherus berlandieri*) - At the parking lot at Palo Alto Battlefield National Monument

Lizards

Brown Anole (*Anolis sagrei*)—Observed at Resaca de la Palma and at least one other location

Spotted Whiptail *Aspidoscelis gularis* – Seen at a few locations like Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and Estero Llano Grande

Diamond-backed Water Snake *Nerodia rhombifer* - Seen swimming in a flooded section of Resaca de la Palma

BUTTERFLIES (10): The weather was not as conducive to spotting butterflies as we had hoped but we did note a number of species through the trip, especially at the Butterfly Center and Edinburg Scenic Wetlands.

Swallowtails

Eastern Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*)

Giant Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes*)

Sulphurs

Checkered White (*Pontia protodice*)

Great Southern White (*Ascia monuste*)

Southern Dogface (*Zerene cesonia*)

Brushfoots

Queen (*Danaus gilippus*)

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)

Zebra Longwing (*Heliconius charathonia*)

Gossamerwings

Reakirt's Blue (*Echinargus isola*)

Skippers

White-striped Longtail (*Chiodes albofasciatus*)