

# Texas Coast & Big Thicket Species List | April 15 – 23, 2026 with Naturalist Journeys



## Guide: Mason Flint and participants Julie, Palma, and Bill

This spring migration trip started with two-and-a-half days inland where we saw resident birds and newly arrived migrants in their breeding range in mixed pine-deciduous forests northeast of Houston. Stops included W.G. Jones State Forest, Big Creek Scenic Area, Lake Livingston, Martin Dies State Park, parts of the Agelina National Forest and The Big Thicket National Preserve. After a stop at the beautiful Cattail Marsh at Tyrell Park in Beaumont, we continued south to the upper Texas Coast, recognized as one of the best places to be during spring migration. We spent the next several days on our close to the coast where we visited remnants of tallgrass prairie separating marshes, lagoons, and sandy coastline on barrier islands from brushlands and forests in the interior and coastal. These coastal areas were spotted with patches of forests including many oaks that provide havens for migrating songbirds after crossing the Gulf of Mexico.

These varied habitats provide opportunities to see a wide variety of birds. Highlights included four species of rail (often many individuals), 27 species of shorebirds, six species of terns, 16 species of waders including Roseate Spoonbill, and American and Least Bittern. We saw or heard dozens of species of songbirds nearly every day. Highlights included Bachman's, Seaside, and Nelson's Sparrow, numerous Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, and more than 20 species of warbler including Golden-winged, Blue-winged, and Cerulean.

The group as a whole recorded 190 species of birds during the trip.

The eBird Trip Report is at the link below. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report to reveal where and when each of the birds were seen.

[Texas Coast & Big Thicket - April 15, 23, 2026 - eBird Trip Report](#)

We also saw at least 7 species of mammals (excluding...accidental mammals...) and a four species of reptiles including a very cute Marsh Rat at Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary, Bottle-nose Dolphins during the Bolivar-Galveston ferry crossing, and several American Alligators.

### MAMMALS (7)

**Swamp Rabbit** *Didelphis virginiana* — We saw many of these large rabbits closer to the coast.

**Eastern Gray Squirrel** *Sciurus carolinensis* — abundant.

**Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus niger* — We heard one at Big Creek Scenic Area.

**White-tailed Deer** *Odocoileus virginianus* — Fairly common when inland.

**Swamp Rabbit** *Didelphis virginiana* — We saw many of these large rabbits closer to the coast.

**Hispid Cotton Rat** *Sigmodon hispidus*— At Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary the volunteers pointed out what they called a "Marsh Rat" that was likely a Hispid Cotton Rat.

**Common Bottle-nose Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus* — We saw several from the ferry while crossing from the Bolivar Peninsula to Galveston.

#### **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (4)**

**Common Slider** *Trachemys scripta* — Seen almost daily during the trip.

**Red-eared Slider** *Trachemys scripta elegans* — Seen at the Cattail Marsh at Tyrell Park and Lafitte's Cove near Galveston.

**Mississippi Green Watersnake** *Nerodia cyclopion* — We spotted one from the boardwalk at the Cattail Marsh at Tyrell Park.

**American Alligator** *Alligator mississippiensis* — Common near the coast with several very large specimens at Jocelyn Nungaray NWR and Brazos Bend State Park.