



## Upper Texas Coast Birding Tour: 6 Days

### Day 1: Arrival in Houston

Arrive in Houston in the afternoon, and check in to the hotel. Evening birding is possible at Jesse H. Jones County Park.

Overnight at Houston hotel.

### Day 2: High Island Birding in the Morning; Bolivar Flats in the Afternoon

The early birder gets the Worm-eating Warbler, so check out of hotel at 7:30 AM and head to High Island. We may make a stop at White Memorial Park at the halfway point for dawn chorus. Boy Scout Woods will be the first High Island stop, with migrant possibilities including Swainson's Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Painted Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, numerous warbler species, and many others. We will bird until 11:00 AM or so, then head to the coast, checking Hook's Woods as we depart. Additional stops will include Rollover Pass for terns, including Caspian, Royal, Black, Forster's, Common and Sandwich Terns, plus Black Skimmer, Reddish Egret and American White Pelican. Yacht Basin and Tuna Roads should yield Clapper Rail, Seaside Sparrow and Whimbrel.

At the restaurant where we will stop for lunch, you can watch terns fly up and down the intercoastal waterway. After lunch, we will continue to Bob Road for Nelson's Sparrow and then Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary for all manner of shorebirds, including Semipalmated Plover, Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover, Piping Plover, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Red Knot, Dunlin, American Avocet, plus Least Tern and many other species.

We will return to High Island in time for the evening migrant arrival, then drive to Winnie for dinner and to check in to our hotel where we will stay for the remainder of the trip.



### **Day 3: AM Birding Sabine Woods; Afternoon at Smith Oaks and the Rookery at High Island**

We will depart for Sabine Woods in the morning for more migrant birding. Here some additional eastern species such as Blackpoll Warbler and Black-throated Blue Warbler are more frequent, Swainson's Warbler and Ovenbird are possible, and many different types of flycatchers should be easily spotted.

Following lunch in Port Arthur, people who wish to rest may remain at the hotel as we pass through Winnie. The birding day will finish with an evening in High Island and The Rookery at Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary to see nesting Roseate Spoonbill, Neotropic Cormorant, Snowy Egret and Great Egret, with possible sunset Barn Owl sightings.

Overnight in Winnie.

### **Day 4: Anahuac NWR in the Morning, High Island in the Afternoon.**

Today begins with a morning drive to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge for waterbirds, rails, shorebirds and more. We will stop at various fields along the way for American Golden-Plover, Upland Sandpiper and Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

In the afternoon we will explore the various and less visited sanctuaries in High Island, then spend part of the evening on High Island Beach, watching for waterfowl flybys such as Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Gannet, scoters, and more.

Overnight in Winnie.

### **Day 5\*: Very Early Morning Drive to Boykin Springs/Pineywoods, Afternoon in Tyrrell Park, Evening in High Island.**

We need to depart today before dawn, heading for Boykin Springs, in order to arrive in time to see Red-cockaded Woodpeckers leave their nest holes at sunrise. Bachman's

Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Chuck-will's-widow and more should also be among the dawn chorus.

After seeing the woodpeckers, we will head to Martin Dies State Park to check for inland migrants. We will continue birding down towards the coast with stops in the Big Thicket for Pileated Woodpecker, Pine Warbler and Prairie Warbler. The Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Sanctuary may provide Acadian Flycatcher, Belted Kingfisher and Great-crested Flycatcher.

After lunch in Beaumont, we will be birding in Tyrrell Park, which includes wetlands where we may see Bald Eagle, Fish Crow, Wilson's Snipe, and a large variety of waterfowl. We will continue down to High Island to catch the afternoon migrants, stopping along the way to check a flooded field or two for migrating shorebirds.

\*Today's plan is subject to change based on weather and wind conditions. A south wind will have more birds inland, while a north wind or storm in the gulf will result in more migrants along the coast. Your guide will monitor the weather and change plans to best take advantage of the conditions.



## **Day 6: Morning birding in High Island/Anahuac NWR, Depart to Airport and Flights Home.**

We hope to start today with a morning Yellow Rail walk at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge (if one can be scheduled). Alternatively, we will bird High Island in the morning.

We will return to the Winnie hotel in time to check out, then, if departing flight times allow, we will make stops at White Memorial Park or Trinity River rookery on the way to the airport.

Fly home from Houston, or continue your birding adventure in Texas on your own.