

Lost Maples State Natural Area

May 16, 2025



Our Bird of the Day : Eastern Phoebe



Acadian Flycatcher : Peet-sah !

43 Bird Species for the Day

- Nests galore
- A couple long but successful bird finding forays
- Acadian Flycatcher whole body shake
- Oh...and other creatures too!
- Loads of fun, good discussions and great company

Laura M. Levy
Laura@**Busy-Birding.com**
www.Busy-Birding.com
830-328-2662



The Epitome of Spring

Looks around headquarter yielded us nice views of Mr. And Mrs. **Summer Tanager** and a buzzing flyover of a **Canada Goose**. Then it was on into the 'park.' Right from the start, we were warmly greeted by an entire **Eastern Phoebe** family. Mom, Dad and 3 fledglings led us from their nest behind the Murphy House to the bird blind area.

This set the tone for the day in 2 ways : lots of phoebes and lots of babies. This time of year, Lost Maples State Natural Area (SNA) – Texas Parks and Wildlife's very first State Natural Area – can be dubbed 'Lost Maples Nursery.' Babies were everywhere of the avian, ichthy-an (fish) and testud-ian (turtle). Yes, I probably massacred those last 2 words.

The **Common Raven** nest by the bent sycamores had 2 or 3 hatchlings that only a mother could love :-> . Near the end of the day, a noisy flurry of begging **Blue Gray Gnatcatchers** alerted us to their presence. Of course, a vigilant Mom was nearby constantly delivering bugs to her insistent family.



Adorable Blue Gray Gnatcatcher hatchlings



Not visible in the photo, but each hole (redd) has a sunfish actively guarding its fry

On the trail

The fisherman in the group made note of sunfish redds at every water stop. The easiest to see into were at the 'secret 2nd Pond.' The most dramatic view was this entire colony at the main pond.

After the initial crossing to get on the trail we shared information on various plants. We saw a large Texas Madrone, Shrubby Blue Sage, and even a few tiny Mountain Laurel blooms. The usual county-wide Grape Kool-Aid scented bloom never did appear this spring. We also oooh-ed and ahh-ed over nature's most beautiful bloom – Pearl Milkweed vine.

As we did so, a bright yellow flash caught our eye and we were 'serenaded' by a **Yellow Breasted Chat**. Ambling along, we heard and then endlessly search for an **Acadian Flycatcher**.

Fortunately, we found him and all got to witness his whole-body shudder as he hiccupped his explosive "peet-sah!" We toured the raven's nest, the Maidenhair fern-covered waterfall and the scenic main pond. Finally, during a rest at the 2nd pond we got a too quick view of a **Louisiana Waterthrush**, but did see **Eastern PeWee**, another **White Eyed Vireo** and other birds.



Large Milkweed bug on Antelope Horn Milkweed pod



Yellow Breasted Chat



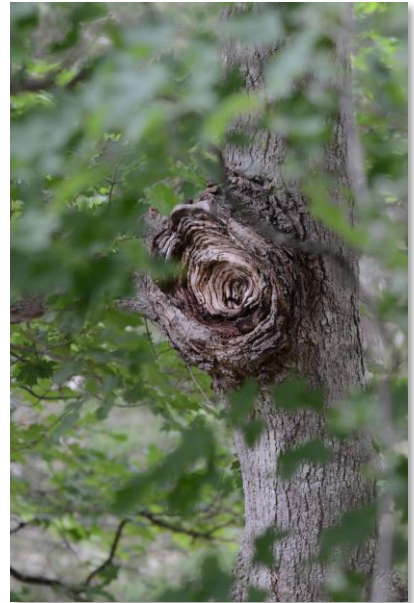
Pearl Milkweed Vine : Man's inspiration to make jewelry

On the return trip

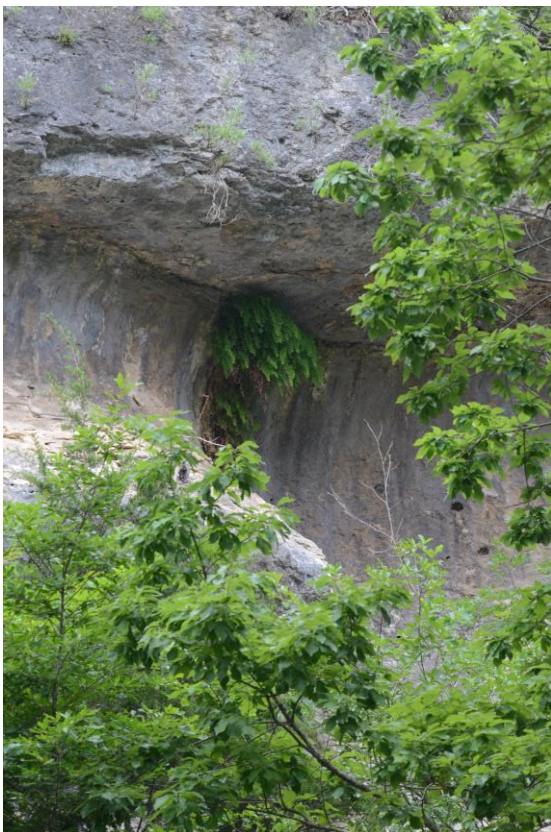
We heard a **White-Tipped Dove** blowing over a coke bottle. There was a 2nd long, long search to finally locate an oddly-colored **Blue Grosbeak**. Apologies for the terrible photo. It does make me wonder if this bird wasn't the 'Green Jay' that was reported earlier this month. We were fortunate enough to get a quick glimpse of a **Black-Capped Vireo** and heard another later near the end of the day. Good looks at the Blue Gray Gnatcatcher nest, and a **Yellow-Throated Vireo**.



Can never have too many turtles !



Just a few steps off the trail, a mysterious 'trunk rose'



Maidenhair fern growing out of the limestone seeps



Giant Lichen Orbweaver
....well, the web IS a giant mess when you walk into it !

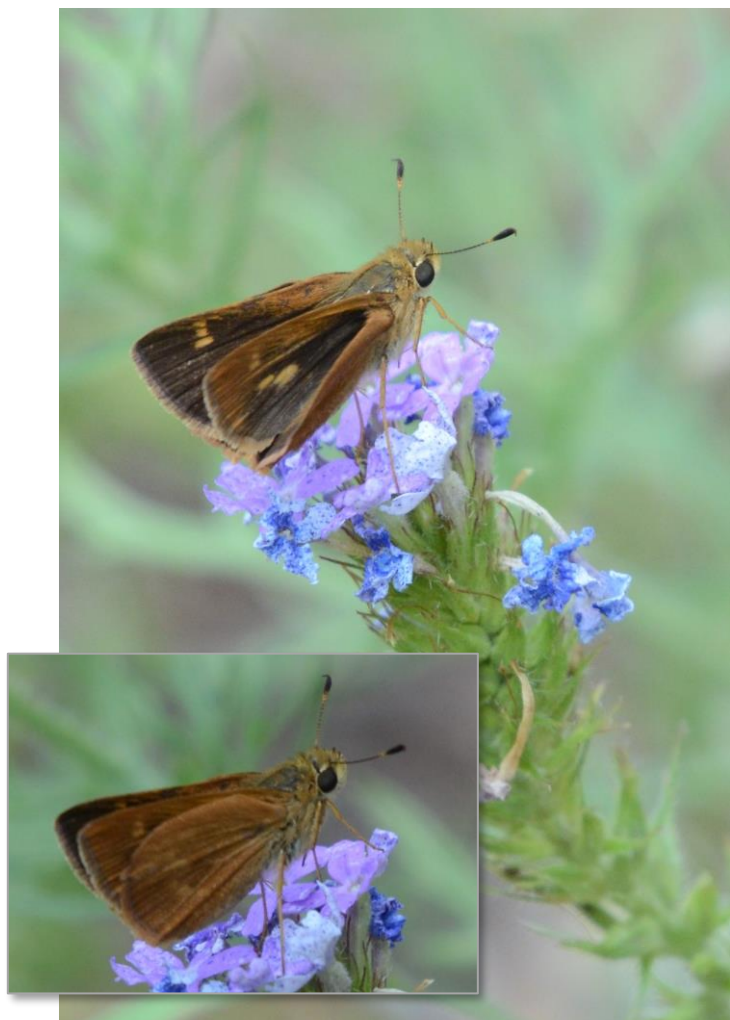
Heard Only

Remember those old SAT word analogies?

Fishing:Catching as Birding: Birdwatching. We heard the usual incessant Mr. Zippy (aka **Tropical Parula**), many enchanting **Yellow Billed Cuckoo** ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-kow-kow-kowlp-kowlp-kowlp-kowlp calls - yes, it's fun to type too! - and a few **Golden-Cheeked Warblers** but we saved actually seeing these birds for another trip. In fact, any day now the golden-cheeks will fledge and then Lost Maples will be full of clouds of golden cheek fledglings begging for food with their parents doing their best to keep up with their newest family members. As human parents, when baby crawling makes life more challenging. Imagine if our kids could fly!?!?



Oddly colored Blue Grosbeak



Southern Broken Dash: Once it closed its wings, the telling backwards 3 made the ID easier



The tiniest of 5 baby turtles struggling across the milfoil forest

**Lost Maples State Natural Area
(HOTW 061), Bandera, Texas, US**
43 species

May 16, 2025 7:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Protocol: Traveling

2.5 mile(s)

Checklist Comments:

Quick look around headquarters.

Mostly Bird Blind to 2nd pond and return.

Overcast clouds, Temperature: 74 - 96°F

Wind: Mostly calm - gentle breeze

Wind Direction: SW

Cloud Cover: 85 - 100%, Humidity: 28 - 84%

Canada Goose 1

Inca Dove 1

White-tipped Dove 1 :

Long established population at LMSNA

White-winged Dove 10

Yellow-billed Cuckoo 3

Chimney Swift 3

Black-chinned Hummingbird 4

Black Vulture 1

Turkey Vulture 6

Red-shouldered Hawk 1

Ladder-backed Woodpecker 2

Eastern Wood-Pewee 1

Acadian Flycatcher 4

Eastern Phoebe 12 :

Includes 2 separate families of 2 parents + 3 'kids'

Ash-throated Flycatcher 2

Black-capped Vireo 2

White-eyed Vireo 6

Hutton's Vireo 1

Yellow-throated Vireo 2

Red-eyed Vireo 6

Common Raven 4

At least 2, probably 3 in nest

Carolina Chickadee 2

Black-crested Titmouse 2

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 8 :

Nest with 3 hatchlings

Canyon Wren 3

Carolina Wren 3

House Finch 1

Lesser Goldfinch 4

Olive Sparrow 3

Chipping Sparrow 2

Canyon Towhee 1

Yellow-breasted Chat 3

Louisiana Waterthrush 1

Black-and-white Warbler 3

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 :

Broken eyering

Tropical Parula 1

Continuing

Yellow-throated Warbler 1

Golden-cheeked Warbler 3

Summer Tanager 3

Northern Cardinal 5

Blue Grosbeak 1 :

1 oddly colored blue grosbeak

Indigo Bunting 1

Painted Bunting 2

Plant Species

Not meant to be a comprehensive list

Agarita
Antelope Horn Milkweed
Ashe Juniper (Mtn Cedar)
Beggar's Ticks
Blue Oak
Cedar Sage
Chinquapin Oak (Serrated Leaves)
False Daylily (Yosemite Sam face)
Flame-Leaf Sumac
American Sycamore
Frostweed
Green briar
Hill Country Yellow Buckeye
Lacy "Blue" Oak
Lindheimer's Senna
Lindheimer's Silktassel
Maidenhair Fern
Moonseed
Mexican Buckeye
Mountain Laurel – a few blooms
Mullein
Pearl Milkweed Vine
Red Oak
Scarlet Leather
Shrubby Blue Sage
Spanish Grapes
Texas Madrone



Moonseed : I love that every trip has 'homework'!

This vine by the 2nd pond was identified by Seek as Moonseed. I had always dismissed the plant pictured above as grapes. Not seen in the photo but it even had the spirally beginnings of the fruit. According iNaturalist, the seed inside the berry resembles a crescent moon, and is responsible for the common name. The fruit is ripe between September and October, the same general time frame in which wild grapes are ripe. Both the leaves and fruit resemble those of grapes; confusion can be dangerous as moonseed fruit is **poisonous**. So, Seek is right on another count as well – Do **NOT** eat anything you are not sure about. Agarita berries and Wild Garlic aside, I don't do much foraging at Lost Maples unless I have one of my trusty – very trusty – plant experts with me.

Promised Photos

We had so many great discussions on this trip about bird names and behaviors, the thrill of the discovering new things outdoors, nature and life. THANK YOU!

Here are a few photos from previous Lost Maples outings that I promised along the way:



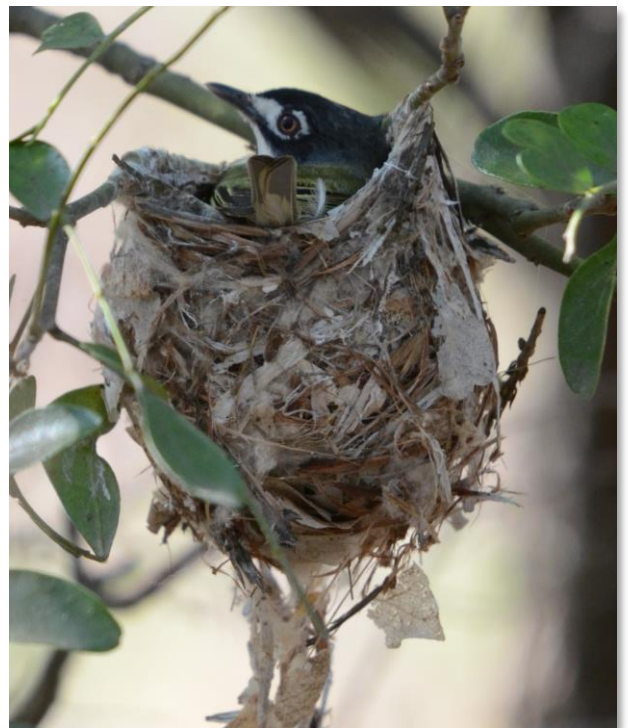
White Tipped Dove – Formerly White Fronted Dove



White Tipped (larger) and White Winged Doves comparison



Black Capped Vireos : Dad delivering dinner and Mom on nest
Find their fledgling on the end page



Thank you for
allowing
Busy-Birding to

Nurture
Your
Love for
Nature



Black Capped Vireos: Fledgling, Dad delivering dinner and Mom on nest
Note : These photos from previous trailside nest at Lost Maples

... and for supporting **Houston Audubon** with a great day at Lost Maples

Sincerest Regards,
Laura M. Levy
830-328-2662
www.Busy-Birding.com
Laura @ Busy-Birding.com