

# Uvalde & TX Hill Country

March 17-18, 2026



Female Ladder-backed Woodpecker

## **72 +2 Trip Total Species**

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/491571>

### **49 +2 species for Uvalde**

Uvalde Natl Fish Hatchery – 37

Uvalde Memorial Park – 23

Knippa car birding - 8

### **36 species for Lost Maples SNA**

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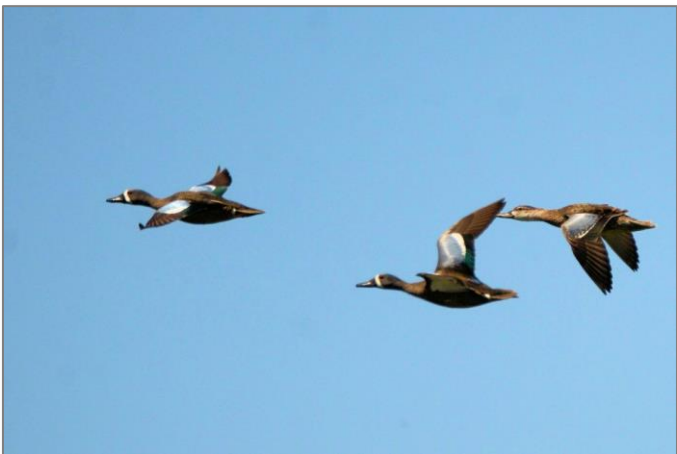
**Purple Martins** welcomed us into the fish hatchery. Started on far side of the pond to put the sun behind our backs, a distant female **Vermilion Flycatcher** landed across the way. A nasal **Great Kiskadee** call soon followed. As we walked along, **Golden-fronted** and **Ladder-backed Woodpeckers** gave us great views. On the water, a 5 **Least Grebes** made regular calls as they floated along. We managed to ‘shoot’ both a **Red-Tailed Hawk** and **Blue Wing Teals** ...well...on the wing. The pond on the opposite side of the hatchery yielded **American Coots**, **Northern Shovelers** and a couple of **Ring-necked Ducks** unsuccessfully posing as Pied-bill Grebes. **Inca Doves** were sorted out from the **House Sparrow** action near the building. Heard but not seen was the distinctive **Cactus Wren** call by the entrance gate. A final glance at the shaded pond gave us the **Black Phoebe** pair. Seeing the gates were about to be locked, we scurried to the vehicle to ensure our trip did not turn into an overnight birding excursion. Not bad for a quick survey in the heat of the day.



One of the many camera-posing Vermilion Flycatchers



The rarely spotted two-headed Least Grebe



Blue-Winged Teal are a much less social bunch



With Red-tailed Hawks, it's a matter of who's watching whom

## Uvalde Memorial Park

The adventure continues at the most seemingly unlikely location, a park smack-center in downtown Uvalde. But rest assured, this little oasis produces many great surprises. Great Kiskadees were shy but with the lemony front, there's no hiding. The more camouflaged **Clay-colored Thrushes** put on a good show as we watched them bath in the creek. Perhaps the most work – but greatest reward – were the **Green Jays** who we tracked by sound and with patience, were able to find a least 4 scattered throughout. That diligence did lead us to a **Long-billed Thrasher**, a few brief bars of an **Audubon Oriole** song and great long looks at the usually spastic **White-eyed Vireo**. Walking through the more open park of the park, amongst the throngs of **Great-Tailed Grackles**, **European Starlings** and **domestic Mallards**, we stumbled across a couple of **Egyptian Geese** in the midst of a short but intimate moment. The source of the many **Inca Dove** “whirlpool” sounds



Green Jay outfitted in his Hawaiian shirt

was also found. A cute little girl also asked us where the ‘capybaras’ were. As she did so, a nutria swam towards us but unlike the turtles, did not seem partial to Flaming Hot Cheetos.



Splish Splash, the Clay-Colored Thrush were taking their baths



Another random skull - at least it wasn't in the cemetery



Birders might expect to find to find porcupines in a tree but not reindeer !

## HEB and Knippa

No visit to Central and South Texas without a trip to HEB. While we made only a quick trip in for water, a feast to go was picked up outside. Mountains of boiled potatoes, corn on the cob and the choice of sausage, shrimp and/or crawfish was to be had for a pittance. A closer walk through the Texas grocery mecca would have yielded Texas-shaped everything – tortilla chips, cheddar cheese, bakeware etc - but birds not groceries were on the to-do list.

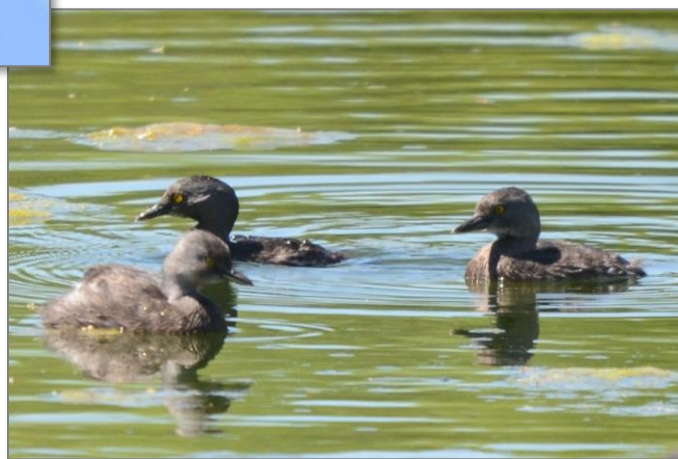
A quick trip down Garner Field Rd and then we left the pavement to survey the hay bales and culverts for a wintering Burrowing Owl which has not been seen but once since late January. Sure enough he was not present but CR-302 side trip gave us pairs of **Crested Caracaras**, **Curved-billed Thrashers**, and **Loggerhead**. The highlight, however, was a very cooperative **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**. We also got a repeat sighting from the hatchery, hundreds of **Red-winged Blackbirds** near, under and riding the irrigation equipment as it watered the alfalfa field.



Golden-fronted Woodpecker : His namesake golden front is visible where his bottom half meet the tree



A scaly Inca Dove



The fuzzier, light gray Least Grebe is a non-breeder, not a chick

**Uvalde Fish Hatchery (HOTW 027), Uvalde, TX**

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S311200892>

Mar 20, 2026 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

2.0 mile(s)

Temp: 83 - 89°F

Clear sky ; Cloud Cover: 0%

Wind: Gentle - moderate breeze

Wind Direction: S;

Humidity: 25 - 36%

Dew point: 46 - 51°F

**37 species**

Blue-winged Teal 6

Northern Shoveler 3

Mallard (Domestic type) 1

Ring-necked Duck 2

Inca Dove 4

White-winged Dove 15

Mourning Dove 10

American Coot 8

Least Grebe 5

Turkey Vulture 6

Cooper's Hawk 1

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Golden-fronted Woodpecker 3

Ladder-backed Woodpecker 2

Crested Caracara 2

Black Phoebe 2

Vermilion Flycatcher 6

Great Kiskadee 2

Black-crested Titmouse 1

Purple Martin 3

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1

Bewick's Wren 1

Cactus Wren 1

Northern Mockingbird 6

House Sparrow 12

Lesser Goldfinch 5

White-crowned Sparrow 5

Vesper Sparrow 6

Savannah Sparrow 6

Lincoln's Sparrow 2

Rufous-crowned Sparrow 2

Red-winged Blackbird 100 200+ is probably more

accurate a number. Hordes of dark black birds riding atop, under and near irrigation equipment as water is being sprayed on ground.

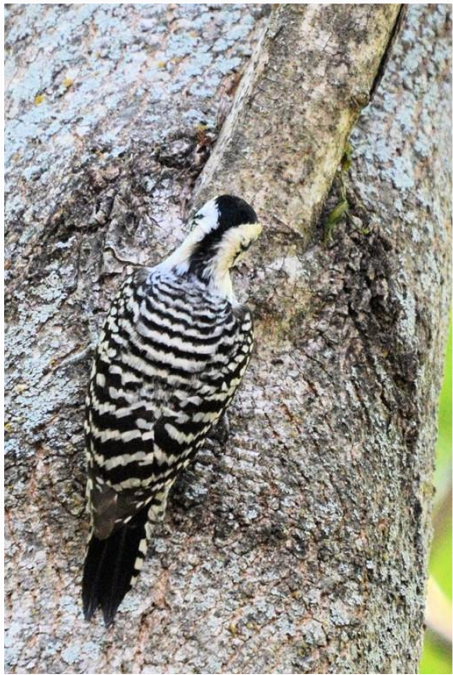
Common Grackle 1

Great-tailed Grackle 12

Common Yellowthroat 1

Yellow-rumped Warbler 2

Northern Cardinal 6



While Ladder-backs are smaller and sound different from Golden-fronteds, both woodpeckers have similar checkered backs. Before our current high-quality optics allowed for more discerning field marks, woodpeckers were named with specimen in hand. Hence, the confusingly-named woodpeckers. What about a campaign to change this pictured Golden-fronted Woodpecker to the Polka-dotted Woodpecker?

**Uvalde Memorial Park, Uvalde, TX**

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S311201630>

Mar 20, 2026 3:45 PM - 5:00 PM

0.4 mile(s)

Temp: 90°F

Clear sky; Cloud Cover: 0%

Wind: Gentle breeze - moderate breeze

Wind Direction: SW – S

Humidity: 22 - 27%

**23 species**

Egyptian Goose 2 Mating

Muscovy Duck (Domestic type) 1

Mallard (Domestic type) 15

Inca Dove 5

White-winged Dove 5

Mourning Dove 5

Turkey Vulture 1

Red-shouldered Hawk 1

Golden-fronted Woodpecker 1

Ladder-backed Woodpecker 1

Great Kiskadee 2

White-eyed Vireo 1

Green Jay 4

Carolina Wren 1

European Starling 20\*

Too many to accurately count

Long-billed Thrasher 1

Northern Mockingbird 1

Hermit Thrush 1

Clay-colored Thrush 2 Continuing birds

Lesser Goldfinch 2

Great-tailed Grackle 20\*

Too many to accurately count

Yellow-rumped Warbler 2

Northern Cardinal 6



TX Lesser Goldfinch males have a contrasty black back – rather than green elsewhere



Hermit Thrush with his cute blank stare



The park would e a great place for a turtle survey !

**Knippa, CR-302, Uvalde, TX**

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S312233276>

Mar 20, 2026 5:45 PM - 6:15 PM

4.0 mile(s)

Checklist Comments: Car birding with stops to get out and survey seen birds.

Temp: 88°F

Clear sky; Cloud Cover: 0%

Wind: Moderate breeze

Wind Direction: S

**8 species**

Crested Caracara 2

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 1

Loggerhead Shrike 2

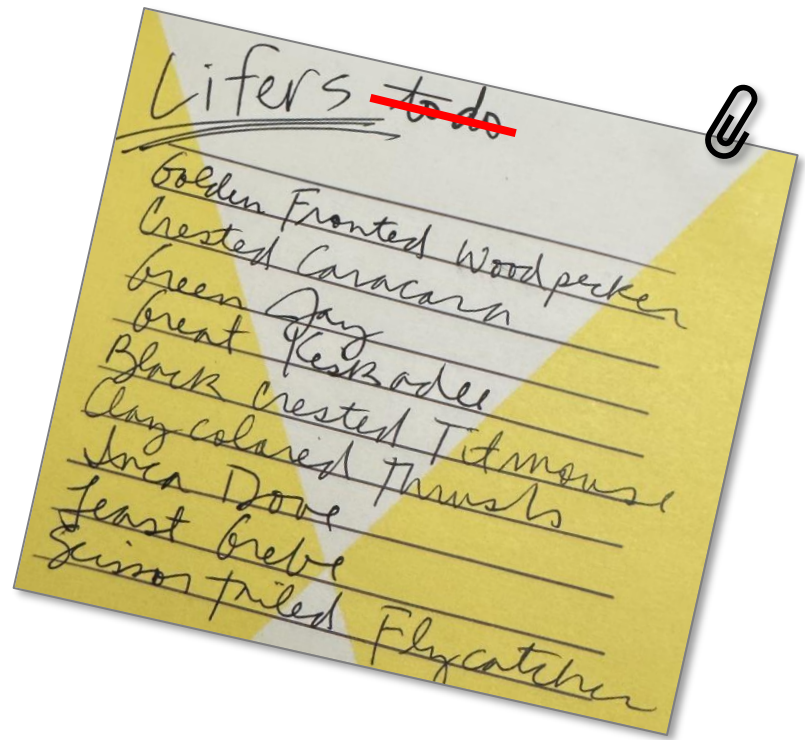
Curve-billed Thrasher 2

Northern Mockingbird 5

White-crowned Sparrow 1

Savannah Sparrow 5

Red-winged Blackbird 100



NOT to-do but DONE!

These are the lifers from Day 1....with still one more day to go

**Total species for Uvalde day : 49 + 2**

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/490535>



Shot this backwards looking Crested Caracara along the same road earlier today



Loggerhead Shrike aka the Butcher Bird elected to the Hall of Infamy ala our favorite movie, The Big Year

**Lost Maples State Natural Area (SNA)**

**TX Hill Country : 3/21**

**Golden-cheek Warblers** sing 2 songs. The happy La Cucharacha zee-zee-zee-ZEE-zee is when they first arrive and are establishing territory. Later, once nesting it changes to a slower and lower subtle version of that song. Perhaps due to the short cold streak a couple days prior, the lower version was being heard more than the fiesta version. But make no mistake, birds and birders alike were enjoying today's warmer weather. We heard the happy Golden-cheek song throughout the day. In fact, it was the first song heard after parking at headquarters and one of the first birds seen in the parking lot near the bird blind. Parking lot birding is always best.....well maybe. **Yellow-throated Warbler., Eastern Phebe** and Rough-Winged Swallows were some of the parking lot/bird blind finds. Our usual Rufous-crowned Sparrows refused to make a showing but even better, was a usually sulky **Olive Sparrow** feeding out in the open. An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** greeted us as we struck out along the trail. As for raptors, a migrating Swainson's hawk (FOS), **Red-Tailed and Red-Shouldered Hawks, American Kestrel** and **Turkey Vultures** all appeared in a flurry between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> crossings. Canyon Wrens were seen flitting in and out of a hole near the 'little sleeping pig' rock's ear. They nest in this same spot annually. Besides the Swainsons Hawk, first of season (FOS) **Louisiana Waterthrushes** and **Parulas** were heard. This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> year the female **Northern Parula** and male **Tropical Parula** have nested at the 2nd crossing. On the return trip, **Sandhill Cranes** were heard but not located by eye in the same area. Finally, the troops ventured out to Lost Maples Café for lunch and lifer pie. A sightseeing trip to see a line of 400+ year old Bald Cypress in Utopia Park wrapped up our TX Hill Country day.



Is a mouse face is adorable?  
It is atop a titmouse body



Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher's spee-spee was also part of the day's background sounds



A brilliantly colored Yellow-throated Warbler seeking out insects in the never-ending ball moss

**Lost Maples SNA (HOTW 061),**

**Bandera, TX**

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S311706619>

Mar 21, 2026 8:30 AM - 1:30 PM

2.0 mile(s)

Bird Blind to 2nd pond and return

Temp: 58 - 84°F

Clear sky; Cloud Cover: 0%

Wind: Light - moderate breeze

Wind Direction: SW - S

Humidity: 28 - 80%

Dew point: 48 - 52°F

Sunrise: 7:40am; Sunset: 7:49pm

**36 species**

White-winged Dove 8

Sandhill Crane 1

Number unknown. Heard only.

Black-chinned Hummingbird 4

Black Vulture 2

Turkey Vulture 6

Red-shouldered Hawk 1

Swainson's Hawk 1

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Ladder-backed Woodpecker 3

American Kestrel 1

Eastern Phoebe 1

Ash-throated Flycatcher 2

White-eyed Vireo 5

Hutton's Vireo 2

Common Raven 3

Carolina Chickadee 4

Black-crested Titmouse 8

Northern Rough-winged Swallow 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 5

Canyon Wren 2

Carolina Wren 2

Bewick's Wren 2

House Finch 6

Lesser Goldfinch 5

Olive Sparrow 1

Chipping Sparrow 12

Lincoln's Sparrow 2

Louisiana Waterthrush 2

Black-and-white Warbler 10

Orange-crowned Warbler 1

Northern Parula 1

Tropical Parula 1 Seen in usual place singing with

Northern Parula in same tree

Yellow-throated Warbler 3

Golden-cheeked Warbler 10 Singing throughout

Northern Cardinal 6



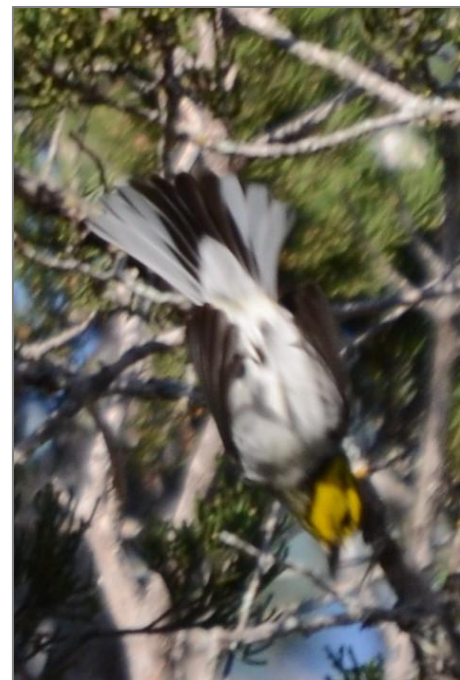
Thank you for allowing Busy Birding to  
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for Nature**



Treated to the last few blooms of the Grape Kool Aid –scented TX Mountain Laurel

The start of the tri-pod bearing, light pink Mexican Buckeye

.. and a  
a less than traditional view of the endangered-listed Golden-Cheeked Warbler



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