

# TX Hill Country & Uvalde

March 21 & 25, 2026



White-tailed Hawk, a rare sighting for Uvalde



Lost Maples' most famous bird, the listed Golden-Cheeked Warbler  
Photo 3/26/2026

## **78 <sup>+3</sup> Trip Total Species**

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/493917>

**37** species for the Hill Country

Lost Maples SNA – 36

West Prong Cemetery – 1 additional sp.

**49 <sup>+3</sup>** species for Uvalde

Uvalde Natl Fish Hatchery – 48 + 1

Uvalde Memorial Park – 26

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



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

**Golden-cheeked 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. Today we heard the happy Golden-cheeked song. 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 skulky **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 was another reminder of nature's grandness. While we were graced by **Lark Sparrows**, the Jones and West Prong cemeteries jaunts were for local history and appreciation to those who came before us.



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 + 1 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 park

Northern Cardinal 6

+ Lark Sparrows 2 at Jones Cemetary



## Uvalde National Fish Hatchery

**UVALDE : 3/25**

A few days later, we met up again to explore one of Texas's best kept secrets, Uvalde. In contrast to the Hill Country's lush juniper-oak hills, Uvalde is a flatter more desert-like environment. While not intuitively a birder's paradise, the area holds many surprises year-round. Our first stop was US Fish and Wildlife's Uvalde Fish Hatchery. While the staff studies rare and endangered species including Fountain Darter, Devil's River Minnow, Comal Springs Riffle Beetle, Texas Blind Salamander, Peck's Cave Amphipod and the Comanche Springs Pupfish, birders are hoping for their own rare sightings. The usual dark and shiny power line denizens started us off with **Red-Winged Blackbirds, Purple Martins, Brown-headed Cowbirds** and **Grackles (both Common and Great-Tailed)**. A **Savannah Sparrow** and **Vermilion Flycatcher** caught our attention as we ambled towards the larger, shaded pond. Three **Least Grebes** were found, and finally the remaining 2 were located to complete the entire waterdance. Yes, this is the 'technical term' for a group of grebes. Seen on the wing were **Blue-winged Teal** and first heard then seen over us **Ringed Kingfisher**.

We saw all kinds of last year's nests. Those intricately woven vireo nests make one wonder how these industrious creatures – who lack hands and opposable thumbs – manage such engineering feats. One nest, however, was currently occupied by a female Vermilion Flycatcher. While the nearby guarding bright red (vermilion-colored) male was on guard perched nearby, the plainer tan and white female with hints of yellow on her belly was incubating eggs nearby. Unlike the human females, in the bird world those on the nest must remain lower keyed to escape detection. On the calendar, we were only a week into spring but obviously, the birds have been busy. This turned out to be the first of many occupied nest we found today.



This Great Kiskadee was photo-ready



Brilliant Vermilion Flycatcher guarding the missus on their nest

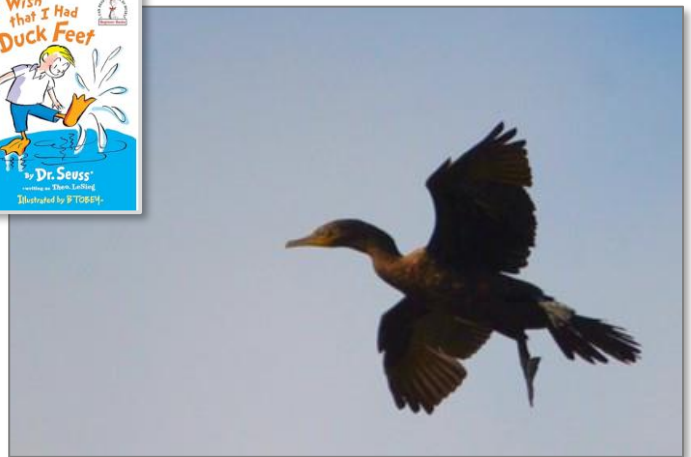
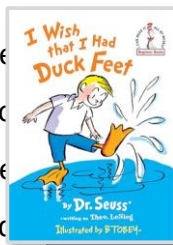


Greater Yellowlegs put on quite a show with all his squawing

The most entertaining site was perhaps the **Greater Yellowlegs** that flew in and squawked up a storm as it foraged in one of the tanks. A **Spotted Sandpiper** was spotted on the edge of a nearby tank. Most awesome in terms of rarity was the big raptor that flew towards us and then circled above. Imagine our surprise when we looked up to find not only one, but a second **White-tailed Hawk** soaring higher up. More common towards the coast, this is a relatively rare find here although one was also reported less than 100 miles northeast of here in Kerr County the day before. Same one? Possible but the other sighting was a single bird and no photo so only the birds themselves will ever know.

Not true tree ducks like the Black Bellied Whistling Ducks seen at the shaded pond, a gulp of 20 **Neotropical Cormorants** were perched in the Bald Cyresses edging the pond near the back gate.

Funny feet : For short flights, cormorants don't quite have their duck feet tucked in so it was quite fun to watch them shift around to different locations in the trees. American Coots are also outfitted for their mud bank environment with 4WD armored feet. And the **Black-Bellied Whistling Ducks** we saw at the shaded pond have bubble gum pink feet (and beaks).



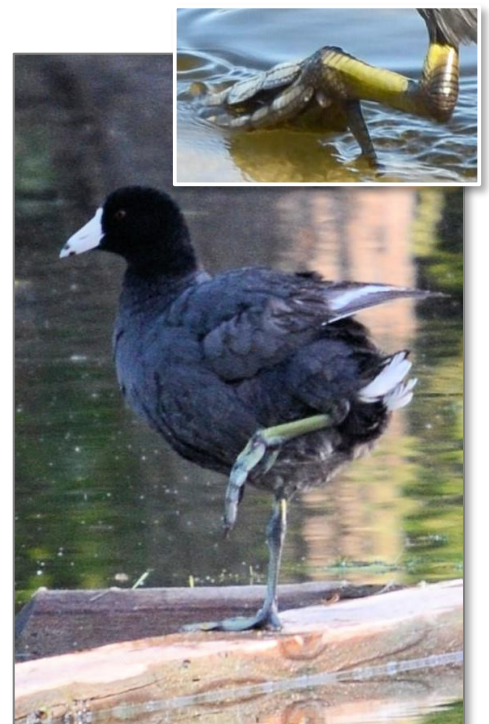
Neotropical Cormorants are equipped for both water and air travel



A duck in a tree, that whistles, has a pink bill and looks like a kid's toy ?!?!? Mother Nature had a fun with Black-bellied Whistling Ducks



Last year's Mexican honey wasp nest



American Coot showing off his 4WD feet  
Photo 05/25

## Uvalde Memorial Park

It would be tough to leave such a great birding destination, if it weren't for the fact that we were headed to an equally spectacular hotspot. The ever-growing population of grackles, starlings, mallards and feral cats keep this spot a hidden secret too but those 'in the know.' A glimpse over the entrance berm gave reminded us of the Hill Country with one of the area's biggest oaks. It was a relatively quiet morning – minus one other human – as we ventured towards the back of our enclave. Near the northern edge of their range, we found the **Clay-Colored Thrushes** that are 'continuing birds' for this specific spot. Also, near the northern edge of their range, we found a loud contingent of 6 **Green Jays** chasing each other to establish territory or maybe just fighting over the hackberries. **Northern Mockingbird** made for a continual soundtrack with possible notes added in by a pair of **Long-Billed Thrashers** which we ID'd more by overall shape, behavior and known location rather than actual looks at the birds. In the same spot, a **White-Eyed Vireo** was more accommodating. Completing our day's theme on nests, the tail of a already heard **Red-Shouldered Hawk** peeked out from a nest. Above us, a **Great Kiskadee** was working on a huge mound of local straw and stuffed animal inners. Along the creek, a pair of scaly **Inca Doves** were sitting on the ground with amorous looks in their eyes. Actually, the nest theme started at Losst Maples when we saw the now retired –possibly revived? – **Red-tailed Hawk** nest, the annual **Common Raven** Nest and a **Ladder-backed Woodpecker** clearing out a hole for this year's newest family members.

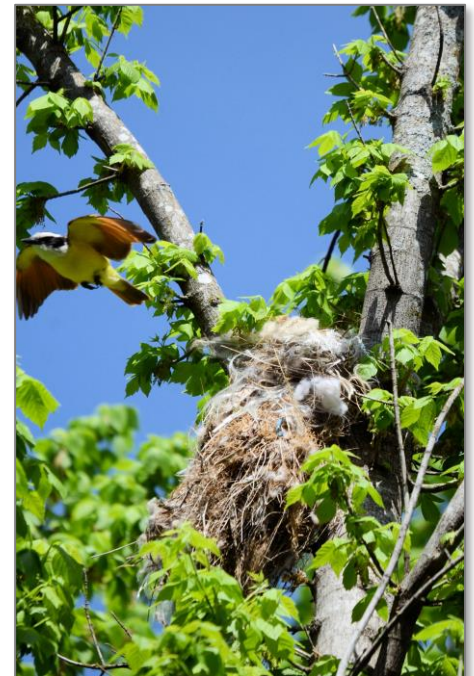
The end - No visit to Central and South Texas without a trip to H.E.B. Founded by his mother and named for Howard E. Butt this Texas grocery cries the usual stuff but many Texas-shaped items – tortilla chips, cheddar cheese, bakeware etc. Sorry Colorado – no state-shaped fun for you.



Bad photo of a great bird, Green Jay



Proof that yes, some birds **ARE** watching us humans = true birdwatching  
*photo from property near W. Prong cemetery*



The beginning of a big football-shaped Kiskadee nest...and a small step towards park clean-up

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

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S313157788>

Mar 25, 2026 8– 11 AM

2.5 miles

Cloud Cover: 100% at start; mostly clear by 11

Wind: Moderate breeze - gentle breeze

Wind Direction: SE - E

Humidity: 78 - 94%

Sunrise: 7:37am; Sunset: 7:53pm

**48 species +1 other taxa**

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck 7

Blue-winged Teal 6

Northern Shoveler 8

Eurasian Collared-Dove 2

Inca Dove 5

White-winged Dove 8

Mourning Dove 8

American Coot 6

Killdeer 2

Spotted Sandpiper 1

Greater Yellowlegs 1

Least Grebe 5

Pied-billed Grebe 1

Neotropic Cormorant 20

Black Vulture 15

Turkey Vulture 5

Northern Harrier 1

White-tailed Hawk 2 Pair soaring together

Red-tailed Hawk 1

Ringed Kingfisher 1

Belted Kingfisher 1

Golden-fronted Woodpecker 2

Ladder-backed Woodpecker 1

Crested Caracara 1

Vermilion Flycatcher 4 On nest



Cormorants with landing gear up

Great Kiskadee 3

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 1

Loggerhead Shrike 1

Black-crested Titmouse 1

Purple Martin 6

Barn Swallow 2

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2

Bewick's Wren 2

Cactus Wren 1

European Starling 4

Northern Mockingbird 2

House Sparrow 8

House Finch 2

White-crowned Sparrow 6

Savannah Sparrow 2

Lincoln's Sparrow 3

Western/Eastern

Meadowlark 2

Red-winged Blackbird 15

Brown-headed Cowbird 6

Common Grackle 4

Great-tailed Grackle 15

Orange-crowned Warbler 1

Yellow-rumped Warbler 2

Northern Cardinal 4



Mr. Pond Slide : Why did I ever slide away from the pond ?



Lincoln's Sparrow after too many Uvalde frijoles?

**Uvalde Memorial Park, Uvalde, Texas, US**

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S313157844>

Mar 25, 2026 11:26 AM - 12:33 PM

0.5 miles

Temperature: 77 - 83°F

Broken clouds - clear sky; Cloud Cover: 72%

Wind: Moderate breeze; Wind Direction: SE

Humidity: 47 - 55%

**26 species**

Muscovy Duck (Domestic type) 1

Mallard (Domestic type) 12

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 12 Throughout park

Inca Dove 6

White-winged Dove 8

Mourning Dove 8

Black-chinned Hummingbird 1

Red-shouldered Hawk 1 In nest

Golden-fronted Woodpecker 1

Great Kiskadee 3 One atop nest

White-eyed Vireo 1

Green Jay 5

Common Raven 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1

Carolina Wren 1

European Starling 25 Throughout park

Long-billed Thrasher 2

Northern Mockingbird 1

Clay-colored Thrush 2 Continuing birds

House Sparrow 4

White-crowned Sparrow 4

Lincoln's Sparrow 2

Audubon's Oriole 1

Great-tailed Grackle 20 Throughout park

Northern Cardinal 2



Compare this Swainson Hawk from Lost Maples with the White-Tailed Hawk (cover) seen at the Uvalde Fish Hatchery



Texas Mountain Laurel blooms such as these at Lost Maples fill the Hill Country with a wonderful grape Kool-Aid scent



Christmas cholla, a definite desert look

**Total species for Uvalde : 59 + 3**

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/492583>

Thank you for allowing Busy Birding to  
**Nurture Your Love  
for Nature**



Female ladder-backed working  
on nest cavity



Errant Least Grebes away from other 3



Incas on a date perhaps