

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

BIRDS

of the

PINEY WOODS OF EASTERN TEXAS

A Field Checklist



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Birds of the Pineywoods of Eastern Texas: A Field Checklist

INTRODUCTION

Popularly known to Texans as the “Pineywoods,” this part of the state (Fig. 1) is also called the West Gulf Coastal Plain. It is the most forested part of Texas, and supports numerous birds that require these conditions. Three of these species may be considered “specialty birds” of the southern pines, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Bachman’s Sparrow, and within Texas they are found exclusively in this region. Along with the Pine Warbler, they grace the front cover of this booklet. The major Texas populations of several other rare or local species are primarily in this region, including Swallow-tailed Kite, Fish Crow, Swainson’s and Prairie warblers, and Henslow’s Sparrow (winter). These species reach the western part of their U.S. range in the Texas Pineywoods.

This region receives a generous amount of rain; typically from 35-60 inches of rainfall each year. The topography is flat in the southern third to gently rolling throughout the remainder with elevations ranging from near sea level to about 600 feet above sea level. In addition to pine forests, the region contains a great diversity of habitats, all of which have been extensively altered by man. A partial list includes bottomland hardwood forests, mixed pine-hardwood forests, pine plantations of varying ages, riparian woodlands, clearcuts, reservoirs, lakes and ponds, swamps and wetlands of several types, grassland and pasture, and small-scale farm crops. The reservoirs, some very large, have greatly increased the habitat available to waterbirds throughout the region.

This is the first definitive checklist for this ecoregion.

For the most part, this list will also apply to the three other states that share the West Gulf Coastal Plain with eastern Texas (e.g., western Louisiana, southwestern Arkansas, and southeastern Oklahoma). Within Texas, this is the first field checklist to treat a region using ecological boundaries, not political ones. This checklist shows all of the species known to have occurred within the region, along with their seasonal abundance. The authors follow the nomenclature and taxonomy presented in the 7th edition of the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (1998) and supplements.

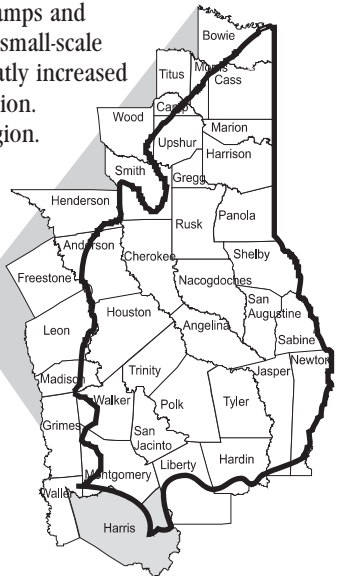


Fig. 1. *The Pineywoods of eastern Texas.* [For Harris Co., see *A Birder’s Checklist of the Upper Texas Coast* by Richardson et al. published by the Outdoor Nature Club-Ornithology Group of Houston.]

The checklist includes 353 species which is 57% of the species documented in Texas. A total of 132 of these species (or 37%) have nested. These are denoted with an asterisk after the common name. Nesting include species with just a few successful breeding records in the region (e.g., Black-crowned Night-Heron, Western Kingbird, Horned Lark, and Warbling Vireo) as well as those that breed widely throughout in large numbers (e.g., Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Crow, Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, etc.).

This checklist is based on 30+ years of record-keeping by field observers scattered throughout the region. The seasonal abundance codes in this checklist are subjective evaluations by the authors. Peripheral species (e.g., Great-tailed Grackle) and local species (e.g., Red-cockaded Woodpecker) have uniform abundance codes assigned to them. Many species show strong ties to certain habitats or are quite localized, making it difficult to assign values that are consistent across the entire region.

Accidentals are defined as those species for which there is only one record for the ecoregion. Twenty-one species are listed as accidental, and on the list they are depicted with one open dot. All were documented with either a specimen, photograph, or written description, and all were seen by more than one experienced observer. The records include some fantastic, almost bizarre surprises. Numerous other species have been recorded in the region only on a few occasions, as casual vagrants or very rare migrants, but are perhaps more likely to occur again in the future.

This checklist can be used with any standard field guide or reference book. There are also several site-finding guides that suggest a wide variety of birding localities within the Pineywoods, including many sites with public access.

American Birding Association. 1994. *Birdfinding in Forty National Forests and Grasslands*. ABA, Colorado Springs. 186 pp.
 Holt, H. R. 1993. *A birder's guide to the Texas coast*. American Birding Association, Inc. Publications. Colorado Springs, CO. 214 pp.
 Kutac, E. A. 1998. *Birder's Guide to Texas* (second edition). Gulf Publishing Co., Houston, TX. 383 pp.
 Texas Parks and Wildlife. 1999. *The Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail: Upper Texas Coast*. PWD MP W7000-482 (2/99).
 Wauer, R. H. and M. A. Elwonger. 1998. *Birding Texas*. Falcon Guide, Helena, MT. 525 pp.

Like any species checklist, this is a *living* document that will require constant updating. Please submit any changes, additions, comments, or questions to Cliff Shackelford via e-mail at clifford.shackelford@tpwd.state.tx.us or phone at 1-800-792-1112, ext. 0.

LEGEND

Abundant		Very rare or casual ● or ●—● (connected dots indicate one record over a period of time)
Very Common		Accidental ○ or ○—○ (connected dots indicate one record over a period of time)
Common		Breeding record for region *
Uncommon		
Scarce, occasional, or highly localized in a few localities		

CHECKLIST

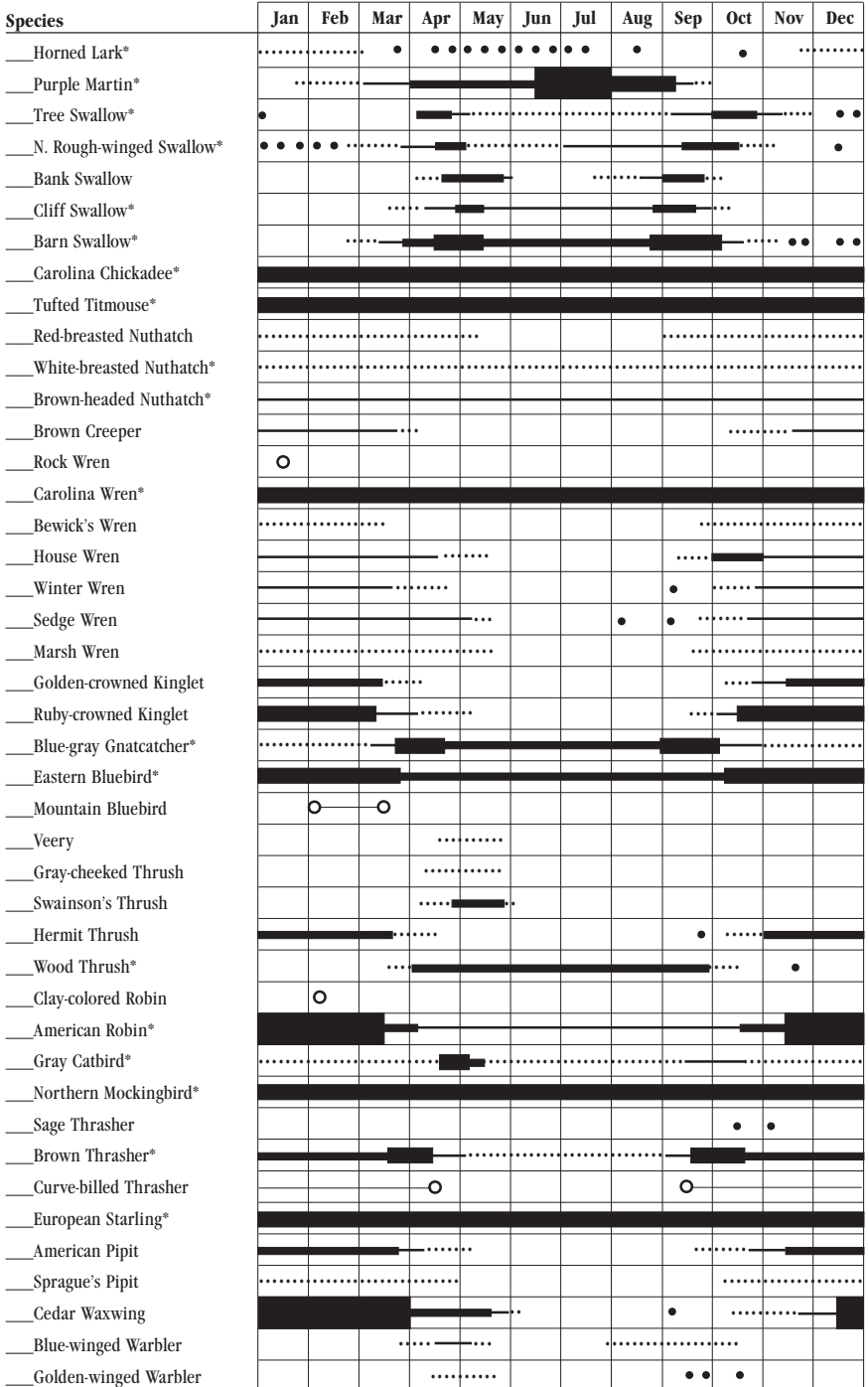
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Red-throated Loon	•••	••										
Pacific Loon	•••	••	••		•						••	••
Common Loon				•••••	•••••	•••••	•••••	•••••	•••••	•••••	•••••
Yellow-billed Loon	○											
Least Grebe									○	○		
Pied-billed Grebe*	—————	—————	—————
Horned Grebe							••
Red-necked Grebe	○	○										
Eared Grebe	•	••	•
Western Grebe	•••	•••	••	•							•	•••
American White Pelican	—————	—————	—————
Brown Pelican				•••				•		•	•	•
Neotropic Cormorant*	•••	••			•••
Double-crested Cormorant*	—————	—————	—————
Anhinga*
Magnificent Frigatebird									○			
American Bittern
Least Bittern*			
Great Blue Heron*	—————	—————	—————
Great Egret*	—————	—————	—————
Snowy Egret*
Little Blue Heron*	•••	•••	•••	•••	•••
Tricolored Heron*	•••	•••	•••	•••
Reddish Egret								•	•	•		
Cattle Egret*
Green Heron*	•			•	•••
Black-crowned Night-Heron*
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*
White Ibis*
Glossy Ibis				○								
White-faced Ibis	•		•	•	•••	•••
Roseate Spoonbill		•		•	•	•	•
Wood Stork				•	•
Black Vulture*	—————	—————	—————
Turkey Vulture*	—————	—————	—————
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck*	•••	•••	•••	•••
Greater White-fronted Goose
Snow Goose	
Ross's Goose	•••	••		••							••
Canada Goose			•						•••
Tundra Swan											•••	••
Wood Duck*	—————	—————	—————

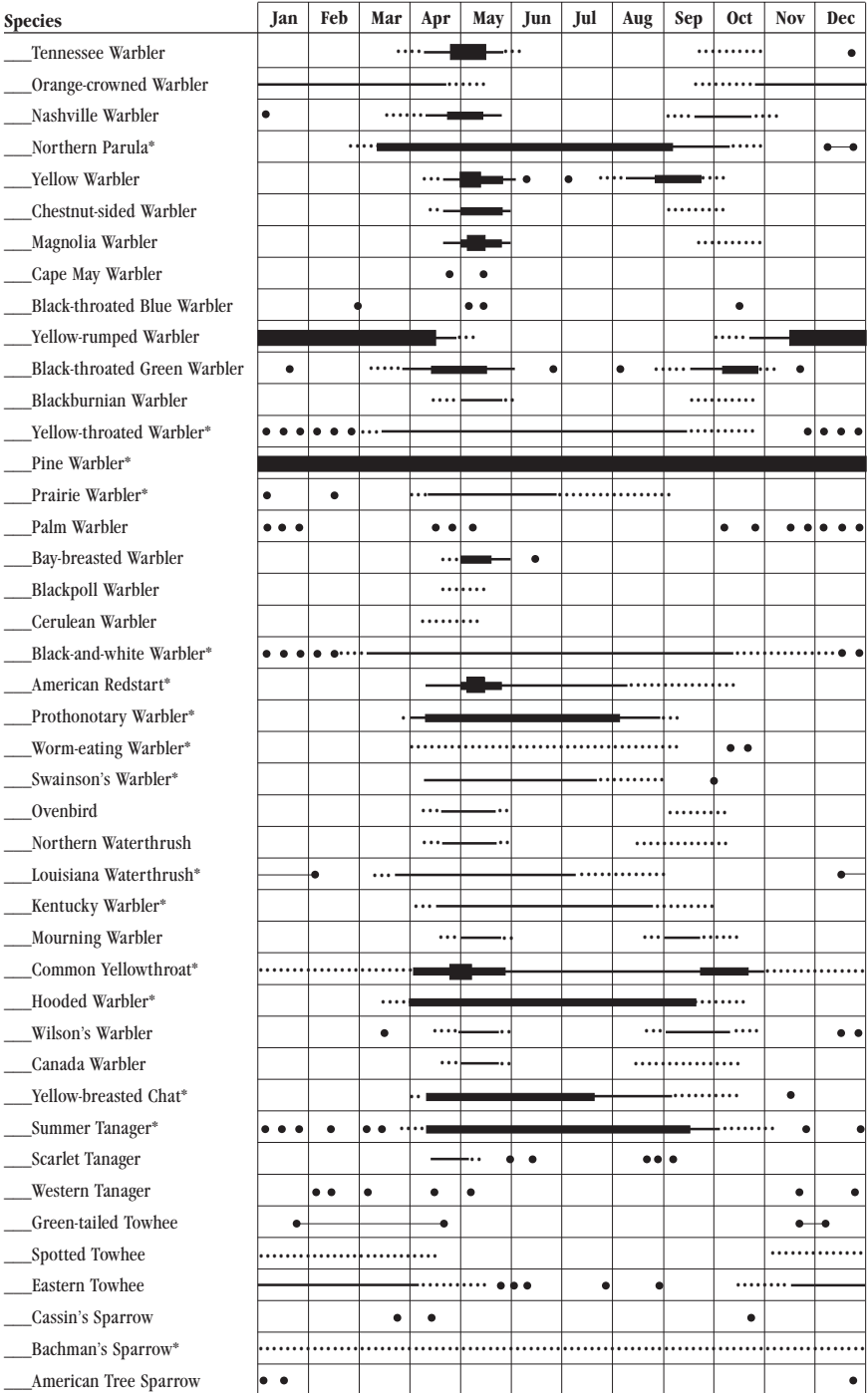
Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gadwall	██████████			●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	██████████		
Eurasian Wigeon		● ●										
American Wigeon	██████████	██████████	● ●				██████████		
American Black Duck											● ●	
Mallard*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Mottled Duck*
Blue-winged Teal*	██████████	██████████	● ●	● ●	██████████	██████████
Cinnamon Teal		● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ●						●		● ● ●	
Northern Shoveler					●	●	●			
Northern Pintail			●		●	●			
Green-winged Teal	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Canvasback	██████████	██████████			●	██████████	
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Surf Scoter	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●									● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
White-winged Scoter	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●								● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Black Scoter			●								●	
Oldsquaw	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●								● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●
Bufflehead	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Common Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser*
Common Merganser	● ● ●		● ●									● ●
Red-breasted Merganser
Masked Duck						○						
Ruddy Duck*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Osprey*
Swallow-tailed Kite*			
White-tailed Kite*		● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Mississippi Kite*				██████████
Bald Eagle*
Northern Harrier				● ●
Sharp-shinned Hawk*			
Cooper's Hawk*			
Red-shouldered Hawk*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Broad-winged Hawk*			██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Swainson's Hawk				●
Red-tailed Hawk*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Ferruginous Hawk			●								●	●
Golden Eagle		● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●							● ● ●	●	●
American Kestrel*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Merlin	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●	● ● ● ●

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Peregrine Falcon				•				•		••
Wild Turkey*
Northern Bobwhite*
King Rail*		•		•
Virginia Rail
Sora
Purple Gallinule*				•		
Common Moorhen*
American Coot*	████████	████████	████████	████████	████████	████████
Sandhill Crane				•	•					•	•••	•
Black-bellied Plover	••	•	•	•	•
American Golden-Plover						•	•	
Snowy Plover				•				•	•			
Semipalmated Plover	••	••	••	•	••	••
Piping Plover		•		•		
Killdeer*	████████	████████	████████	████████	████████
Black-necked Stilt			•	•	•••				•			
American Avocet				•••	•••			•
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs	••	████████	████████	••
Solitary Sandpiper			████████	████████	••	•••
Willet
Spotted Sandpiper	████████
Upland Sandpiper
Whimbrel			•		•••		•					
Long-billed Curlew			•		•		•		•			••
Hudsonian Godwit								•		
Marbled Godwit				•	••		•		•			
Ruddy Turnstone			
Red Knot									•••			
Sanderling			•	••	
Semipalmated Sandpiper		
Western Sandpiper	•	████████
Least Sandpiper	████████	████████	████████	████████	████████	████████
White-rumped Sandpiper	████████
Baird's Sandpiper			•	
Pectoral Sandpiper		•	████████	████████	••	••
Dunlin		•	•	••
Stilt Sandpiper		
Buff-breasted Sandpiper		
Ruff								○				
Short-billed Dowitcher				•••
Long-billed Dowitcher	••	••

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Common Snipe	█				█		
American Woodcock*			•			•			
Wilson's Phalarope				•					
Red-necked Phalarope									••			
Red Phalarope									•	•		
Long-tailed Jaeger								○				
Laughing Gull											
Franklin's Gull				
Little Gull		••										•
Black-headed Gull	••	••	•									•
Bonaparte's Gull	█				█
Ring-billed Gull	█					••	█	█
Herring Gull	█					•		•		
Thayer's Gull	○										○	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	○											○
Great Black-backed Gull			○									○
Sabine's Gull									••••			
Black-legged Kittiwake		•••	•								•••	•
Caspian Tern	••••	••	•	•	•		
Common Tern	•		•		••						
Forster's Tern	█		█	█	█	█	█
Least Tern				•				
Sooty Tern								•	•			
Black Tern				•		•		•
Black Skimmer							○					
Rock Dove*	█											
Eurasian Collared-Dove*											
White-winged Dove	•			••••				•	•	•	•	•
Mourning Dove*	█											
Inca Dove*											
Common Ground-Dove	••	••	••••	•••••			•	•	••••	••••	••••	••••
Black-billed Cuckoo									•		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo*						
Greater Roadrunner*											
Groove-billed Ani					•				•	••		
Barn Owl						•					•	•
Eastern Screech-Owl*	█											
Great Horned Owl*											
Burrowing Owl				•							••	•
Barred Owl*	█											
Short-eared Owl	••••	••••	••••	•							••••	••••
Common Nighthawk				•				•
Chuck-will's-widow*		

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Whip-poor-will	•			—••••					••••••••••	•		
Chimney Swift*			—	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	•	
Green Violet-ear						•	•					
Ruby-throated Hummingbird*	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	••••••••••	••••••••••
Black-chinned Hummingbird					•				•			•
Anna's Hummingbird	••	•							•		••••••••••	••••••••••
Calliope Hummingbird										○		
Broad-tailed Hummingbird				○							○	
Rufous Hummingbird	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••		•	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••
Belted Kingfisher*			
Red-headed Woodpecker*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Red-bellied Woodpecker*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Downy Woodpecker*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Hairy Woodpecker*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Red-cockaded Woodpecker*
Northern Flicker*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Pileated Woodpecker*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Olive-sided Flycatcher			
Eastern Wood-Pewee*				—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			
Acadian Flycatcher*				—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Alder Flycatcher				•
Willow Flycatcher				•	•
Least Flycatcher				—	—
Eastern Phoebe*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Say's Phoebe	•		•						•	•	•	•
Vermilion Flycatcher	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••		•			••••••••••	••••••••••	••••••••••
Great Crested Flycatcher*			—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Western Kingbird*				•	•
Eastern Kingbird*			•	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	•
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*	•	••	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	••••••••••
Loggerhead Shrike*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
White-eyed Vireo*	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bell's Vireo*			
Yellow-throated Vireo*			—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blue-headed Vireo		
Warbling Vireo*			•	•	•	•
Philadelphia Vireo			
Red-eyed Vireo*				—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blue Jay*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
American Crow*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Fish Crow*	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████





Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chipping Sparrow*	[Solid black bar]											
Clay-colored Sparrow	•	•	•	•	•	•			•			•
Brewer's Sparrow										○		
Field Sparrow*	[Solid black bar]											
Vesper Sparrow			•	•	•							
Lark Sparrow*												
Lark Bunting				•				•		•		
Savannah Sparrow	[Solid black bar]											
Grasshopper Sparrow*												
Henslow's Sparrow												
Le Conte's Sparrow												
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow												
Fox Sparrow												
Song Sparrow	[Solid black bar]											
Lincoln's Sparrow												
Swamp Sparrow												
White-throated Sparrow	[Solid black bar]											
Harris's Sparrow				•	•						•	
White-crowned Sparrow												
Dark-eyed Junco												
Lapland Longspur											•	•
Smith's Longspur	•											•
Chestnut-collared Longspur				•	•							
Snow Bunting												○
Northern Cardinal*	[Solid black bar]											
Rose-breasted Grosbeak			•	—	—	•					•	
Black-headed Grosbeak	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•			•
Blue Grosbeak*												
Lazuli Bunting				•	•	•						
Indigo Bunting*			•	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•
Painted Bunting*	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Dickcissel*		•	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	•
Bobolink										•	•	
Red-winged Blackbird*	[Solid black bar]											
Eastern Meadowlark*	[Solid black bar]											
Western Meadowlark										•		
Yellow-headed Blackbird	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Rusty Blackbird												
Brewer's Blackbird												
Common Grackle*	[Solid black bar]											
Great-tailed Grackle*	[Solid black bar]											
Brown-headed Cowbird*	[Solid black bar]											
Orchard Oriole*				—	—	—	—	—		•		

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Baltimore Oriole*		•	•	—■	—■		•
Bullock's Oriole	••••	•										•
Scott's Oriole	○	—○	○									
Purple Finch			—
House Finch*												
Red Crossbill	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••	••••
Pine Siskin	—■	—■	—■	—■					••••	—■
American Goldfinch	—■	—■	—■	—■	•	•		•	—■
Evening Grosbeak	••					
House Sparrow*	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■	—■

Hypotheticals (no accepted or confirmed records):

Fulvous Whistling-Duck	Long-eared Owl
Barrow's Goldeneye	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Northern Goshawk	Couch's/Tropical Kingbird
Rough-legged Hawk	Plumbeous/Cassin's Vireo
Yellow Rail	Cave Swallow
Whooping Crane	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Royal Tern	Connecticut Warbler
murre sp.	Hooded Oriole

Extinct or Extirpated from the region:

- Trumpeter Swan
- Passenger Pigeon
- Carolina Parakeet
- Ivory-billed Woodpecker

LEGEND

Abundant	—■	Very rare or casual	• or —•
Very Common	—■	(connected dots indicate one record over a period of time)	
Common	—■	Accidental	○ or —○
Uncommon	—	(connected dots indicate one record over a period of time)	
Scarce, occasional, or highly localized in a few localities	Breeding record for region	*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This booklet was a project of the Texas Partners in Flight Program based at Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW). The authors thank Temple-Inland Forest, Inc., especially Don Dietz, for assistance in printing this checklist.

Original artwork on the cover was completed by wildlife artist, Clemente Guzman III of TPW. Clockwise from the top right, the species are: Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Pine Warbler. Design and layout were completed by Suzanne Davis, also of TPW. Printing was done through TPW's Creative Services.

We appreciate the critical reviews by the following persons: Nancy Bird, David Brotherton, Kelly Bryan, Louis Debetaz, Don Dietz, Rhandy Helton, Dick Payne, Elena Wolf, and Mimi Wolf.

CITATION

Wolf, David E., Clifford E. Shackelford, Guy G. Luneau, and C. Dean Fisher. 2001. Birds of the Pineywoods of Eastern Texas: A Field Checklist. Texas Parks and Wildlife PWD BK W7000-603 (01/01). 12 pp.



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