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## PLACES TO BIRD WATCH ON THE UPPER COAST

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**Shorebirding** – The coastline is replete with excellent locations for shorebirds. Our suggestions include Bryan Beach near Quintana, San Luis Pass, East Beach, the lagoons on Pelican Island and Bolivar Flats.

**Marshes** – Great freshwater marshes exist at Brazos Bend State Park, plus Anahuac, Brazoria and San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges. Healthy salt marshes exist all along the bay side of Follet's Island, Galveston, and Bolivar Peninsula. Two excellent locations are found along Sportsman Road in Galveston, and the Yacht Basin Road on Bolivar.

**Neotropical Migrants** – The best coastal forests for spring/fall songbirds are found at High Island, Galveston's Laffites Cove Nature Preserve, Quintana Neotropical Sanctuary and Sabine Woods. Inland locations like Edith Moore (Houston Audubon) and Klebb Woods can be productive, especially with spring south winds, or in the fall.

**Offshore Birding** – There are several vantage points along the Upper Texas Coast for gannets and other sea birds. We recommend the Quintana Jetties, the parking lot at the west end of Galveston's Seawall and the beach near Bolivar Flats. Actual pelagic (boat) trips off the UTC are not especially productive.

**Colonial Nesters** – Many waterbirds nest on various spoil islands in Galveston Bay and West Bay, such as North Deer Island and Little Pelican Island. Best of all, though, is the Spoonbill Rookery on High Island.

**Inland Forest Habitat** – For deep woodlands we recommend Brazos Bend State Park, which has both dry oak forest and swamp eco-tones; great for winter or breeding birds. Jones State Forest has excellent woodlands for piney woods specialities.

**Prairieland** – We have only remnants left of our original coastal plain prairies, but excellent habitat exists at Attwater's Prairie-Chicken National Wildlife Refuge near Eagle Lake. It also contains good marshes and lakes.

**Other Birdy Places** – We encourage visits to Hornsby Bend in Austin and the lower end of HW 36 in Brazosport for waterbirds.

**Three Great Books** – For more information on finding birds, try *Birdlife of Galveston* by Jim Stevenson, *Birder's Guide to the Texas Coast* by Mel Cooksey & Ron Weeks, or *Birdlife of Houston, Galveston and the Upper Coast* by Ted L. Eubanks, Jr, Robert A. Behrstock, & Ron J. Weeks.

*Information provided by Jim Stevenson who provides birding trips anywhere, anytime. 409.370.1515.*