Common Texas Gulf-Coast Bird Species

Birds of a feather flock together 😊
Shorebirds

Found along the surf on the beaches
Terns

- Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) is the most common tern found in the United States.
- Global breeding range extending from the Arctic, south into northern climates of North American, Asia and Europe.
- Can adapt their breeding strategy to fit a variety of inland and coastal habitats.
- Royal Terns and Sandwich terns are common on the Gulf Coast.
Herring Gulls

- The Herring Gull (Larus argentatus),
- found throughout most of North America, north of Mexico.

It's summer range extends as far north as the south coast of Alaska and the northern territories of Canada.

- Pink legs and an orange to red mark on the bottom bill serve as the only real distinguishing marks of the species, which often makes for difficult identification.
Laughing Gull

- The solid colored, dark head feathers in summer plumage, often described as a hood. The picture shows the Laughing Gull in winter plumage, with a prominent white eye ring and dark legs and a minimal dark patch of feathers on an otherwise white head.
- Population spread along the southern coast of the United States, south to the northern coastal areas of South America.
- Like other gull species, they are colony nesters that extend their range along the Northeast Atlantic Coast during summer breeding season.
Ring-billed Gull

- Yellow legs and a black ring around a yellow bill distinguish the Ring-billed Gull from other species.
- One of the more common gulls in the United States, wintering in the southern part of the United States from coast to coast.
- Ring-billed gulls serve to remind us that sometimes the term sea gull is a misplaced description of the genus. Many individuals spend the majority of their summer and winter lives far away from salt water habitats.
Black Skimmer

• the sole representative of the three Rynchops species found in the world.
• the only native bird with a low mandible that is larger than the upper mandible, designed this way to help it gather fish as it skims the tops of coastal waterways.
• Their above average size, conspicuous bill and bright red legs make them a beach standout.
The American Oystercatcher is one of two native species that lives along the coastal areas of the Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico. Just under two feet in height, they are striking birds that use their brightly colored bills to break open the bivalves they find along the shoreline. Most of the native species are considered as year round residents.
Plovers

- Wilson’s plover (Charadrius wilsonia) inhabits coastal areas of the Southeast and Gulf Coast.
- Thick bill (used for catching small crustaceans) and beige legs
- Stands about seven inches in height
- Threatened species
- Their open area nesting practices contribute to their declining numbers. The amount of open beach space within their historical range continues to shrink. On remaining beach areas, their nesting can be disturbed by human and pet encroachment as well as dealing with egg predation by resident mammals and birds.
Curlew

- The Long-billed Curlew (Numenius americanus) is a bird of extremes.
- It is the largest shorebird in the United States.
- It has the longest bill, and it is the most endangered shorebird.
- They are migrants, breeding primarily in the grasslands of the Western United States and wintering in Mexico. They also winter on the Gulf Coast of Texas.
- Along with a couple of Plover Species, Long-billed Curlews are listed among the most endangered of all the shorebirds. Their biggest threat is habitat destruction.
Sandpiper

- The Least Sandpiper (Calidris minutilla) is a small and common sandpiper, found throughout the United States.
- During migration they seek out food in freshwater mudflats, and often congregate in large flocks.
- They are characterized by yellowish legs and a long bill.
Spotted Sandpiper

- Spotted Sandpipers (Actitis macularius) are one of the most common shorebirds in the United States.
- They are very adaptable birds that feel equally at home near your back yard pond as they feel in a marsh or wetlands in the wilderness.
- The white underside, covered with various shades of spots, and the orange bill, make for easy identification of the species.
- They do not rank as the most social of shorebirds. Often during migration you can spot them alone or in a very small group.
Sanderling

- Most people are familiar with the Sanderling (Calidris alba) as the shorebird that runs up and down the beach with the tide looking for food.
- Like other smaller sandpipers, they breed in northern freshwater locations as far north as the Arctic circle. Unlike other sandpipers, they chart an expanded southern migrate route, along coastal beach areas worldwide.
- They are a medium sized bird with black legs and a white underside. The top feathers range from chestnut to gray, depending on the season.
- The Sanderling in the picture is in non-breeding plumage. They often congregate in groups.
Black-Necked Stilt

- medium sized and long legged shorebird that breeds in fresh and salt water locations along the West Coast, Gulf Coast and South Atlantic Coast.
- Their long red legs and black and white bodies make easy to identify in the field.
- Like many shorebirds, black-necked stilts are opportunistic feeders, eating a variety of insects and aquatic organisms in their territory.
- Although the Hawaiian population is considered imperiled, the continental population is considered fairly stable.
Brown Pelican
American White Pelican
Cormorant
Wading Birds

Found wading in calmer waters, like bays and wetlands
American Bittern

Click here for sound call
Glossy Ibis
White Ibis
Wading Birds – misc.

- White ibis
- Glossy ibis
- American bittern
Yellow-crowned Night Heron

Has red eyes to help it find prey at night.
Little Blue Heron

First-year birds are pure white
Tri-colored Heron
Green Heron
Great Blue Heron
Wading Birds - Herons

Great Blue Heron
Green Heron
Yellow-crowned Night Heron
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Reddish Egret
Cattle Egret

Click here for call
Snowy Egret

Click here for call
Great Egret

Click here for call
Wading Birds - Egrets

- Snowy egret
- Cattle egret
- Great egret
- Reddish egret
Roseate Spoonbill

Click here for call
Sandhill crane
Birds of Prey

These birds nest in trees but hunt and feed around coastal areas.
Osprey

Click here for call
Kingfisher
Seabirds

These birds spend long periods of time flying over open oceans and don’t come to shore very often.
Magnificent Frigatebird
Wandering Albatross

Click here for call