

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

BIRDS

OF

GUADALUPE RIVER

STATE PARK AND
HONEY CREEK
STATE NATURAL AREA



A FIELD CHECKLIST

2022

Cover: Illustration of Vermilion Flycatcher by Clemente Guzman III.

INTRODUCTION

Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area lie within Comal and Kendall counties and comprise 4,232 acres of the Texas Hill Country. The centerpieces of the area include two miles of the beautiful Guadalupe River flowing through the state park as well as idyllic Honey Creek, a 1.5-mile spring-fed creek, most of which is contained within the natural area. The park is divided into two sections. On the south shore of the river is the main park, which offers recreational opportunities to visitors. Find river access, picnic tables, multi-use trails (hiking, biking, and equestrian), and campsites here. Located on the river's north shore is the Bauer Unit, which offers a more remote experience for daytime exploration, with over six miles of hiking and biking trails. Honey Creek State Natural Area, located on the south side of the Guadalupe River, is accessible by guided programs only. Each weekend, trained volunteers lead guided hikes to Honey Creek, and the park interpreter also occasionally holds interpretive programs there.

Three distinct habitats (riparian, woodland, and savannah) define birding within the park and natural area. The riparian areas along the Guadalupe River and Honey Creek waterways are highlighted with centuries-old bald cypress trees. Pecan, walnut, sycamore, and dwarf palmetto are also abundant within the riparian zone. Ashe juniper, live oak, cedar elm, chinkapin oak, persimmon, and agarita fill the woodlands. The savannahs offer sweeping views filled with tall and short grasses and many wildflowers. More than 13 miles of trails wandering through these habitats allow for close exploration. As you explore, watch for signs of the park's land management efforts to restore the live oak savannah that was here prior to European settlement. Prescribed burns have resulted in the return of grassland and savannah species such as vermilion and scissor-tailed flycatcher, eastern bluebird, and dickcissel, which now breed in the park and natural area.

Designated an Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy, more than 240 bird species have been observed in the park and natural area, the most sought-after species being the federally endangered golden-cheeked warbler. This bird is a true native Texan, nesting exclusively in the Texas Hill Country. The best way to find it is to listen for its high-pitched, buzzy song in the spring, in both the park and natural area wherever there are mixed old growth Ashe juniper and oak woodlands.

The park and natural areas are also known for regional specialty species. Painted bunting, Inca dove, common ground-dove, zone-tailed hawk, crested caracara, green kingfisher, scissor-tailed flycatcher, golden-fronted woodpecker,

ladder-backed woodpecker, and Woodhouse's scrub-jay are a few of the park's more sought-after species.

Birding opportunities are exceptional year-round, with spring being the "birdiest" time of year. During the spring, the park and natural area welcome the return of breeding species and serve as a waystation for migrants passing through on their way north. Summer offers an opportunity to study youngsters and to witness first flights as nestlings come of age. In the fall, the park and natural area again serve as a waystation for birds migrating south, with encounters of large flyover flocks possible. Winter is the time for sparrows that use the park as a winter home. The savannah areas are quite active during the winter months and offer a wonderful opportunity to practice sparrow identification.

The Friends of Guadalupe River and Honey Creek provide funds for a bird blind located in a woodland section of the park's Day Use Area. A volunteer care team keeps the solar-powered water feature and bird feeders active throughout the year. A second bird blind, located in a savannah section along the Painted Bunting Trail, is planned for completion in 2022. Both offer shaded seating and opportunities for up-close views and photography. Donations to the Friends are always appreciated.

Nomenclature and organization of this checklist is based on the American Birding Association (ABA) Checklist Version 8.1. This updated list would not have been possible without the original work compiled by Sue Widenfeld and subsequent revisions by Craig Hensley and Paul Freeman, who utilized a repository of volunteer-prepared paper checklists. This latest update by volunteers Linda Gindler and John Prentice, and GRSP interpreter Holly Platz, is based on efforts from the earlier lists as well as surveys performed and documented within Cornell Lab of Ornithology's online platform, eBird. eBird contains bird sightings submitted by staff, volunteers conducting bird surveys, and many park visitors acting as citizen scientists. You can contribute to this knowledge by reporting your sightings within eBird (ebird.org) or by leaving a copy of your sightings at the Park Headquarters. The Park staff is especially eager to learn of any species not currently documented in this checklist. Thank you for your assistance.

Please help protect natural avian communities by refraining from using playback tapes of bird songs. Frequent use of these tapes alters normal avian activity patterns, disrupts essential territorial behavior, and may lead to nest failure. Thank you for your cooperation.

LEGEND

Abundance

- A – Abundant:** Present in such numbers and with such general distribution in proper habitat that many may be found in a given day.
- C – Common:** Always present and in such numbers that one may expect to find several in a day.
- U – Uncommon:** Normally present in habitat but one cannot be sure of finding one in a day. The bird referred to by the phrase “it should be there but we might miss it” is “uncommon.”
- R – Rare:** Definitely not expected. On the average it occurs only a few times a season or not at all. It is always a surprise to see one.
- I – Irruptive:** Birds who irregularly migrate. Some years the species are not present at all; other years they may occur in numbers.
- X – Extremely Rare:** Only one or two records exist in the Park and Natural Area.
- * – Indicates a known breeding species in the Park and Natural Area.

Seasons

- SP – Spring (March, April, May)
- S – Summer (June, July, August)
- F – Fall (September, October, November)
- W – Winter (December, January, February)

CHECKLIST

	SP	S	F	W
DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS				
___ Black-bellied Whistling-Duck*.....	U	U	U	X
___ Snow Goose.....				X
___ Greater White-fronted Goose.....			X	X
___ Canada Goose.....	X		X	
___ Egyptian Goose.....	X	X		X
___ Wood Duck.....	R	X	R	R
___ Blue-winged Teal.....	U		X	U
___ Northern Shoveler.....	X		X	R
___ Gadwall.....	U		U	U

	SP	S	F	W
___ American Wigeon.....				R
___ Mallard.....		X	X	
___ Green-winged Teal.....				R
___ Redhead.....				U
___ Ring-necked Duck.....				U
___ Greater Scaup.....				X
___ Lesser Scaup.....U		X		U
___ Hooded Merganser.....X				X

NEW WORLD QUAIL

___ Northern Bobwhite*.....U	U	U	U	U
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PARTRIDGES, GROUSE, TURKEYS AND OLD WORLD QUAIL

___ Wild Turkey*.....C	U	U	U	
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GREBES

___ Pied-billed Grebe.....				X
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PIGEONS AND DOVES

___ Rock Pigeon.....X	X	X		
___ Eurasian Collared-Dove.....R	R	R	R	R
___ Inca Dove*.....U	U	U	U	U
___ Common Ground Dove*.....U	U	U	U	U
___ White-winged Dove*.....A	A	A	A	A
___ Mourning Dove*.....C	C	C	C	C

CUCKOOS, ROADRUNNERS AND ANIS

___ Greater Roadrunner*.....U	U	U	U	U
___ Yellow-billed Cuckoo*.....U	U	R		

GOATSUCKERS

___ Lesser Nighthawk.....X	X			
___ Common Nighthawk*.....U	U			
___ Common Pauraque.....X				
___ Common Poorwill.....R	R			
___ Chuck-will's-widow*.....U	U			
___ Eastern Whip-poor-will.....X				

SWIFTS

___ Chimney Swift.....U U U

HUMMINGBIRDS

___ Ruby-throated HummingbirdU R C

___ Black-chinned Hummingbird*C C U

___ Rufous Hummingbird..... X

RAILS, GALLINULES AND COOTS

___ Sora X

___ American Coot.....X X

CRANES

___ Sandhill CraneR R X

STILTS AND AVOCETS

___ American Avocet..... X

LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS

___ Killdeer*U U U U

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES AND ALLIES

___ Upland SandpiperR R

___ Baird's Sandpiper.....X

___ Least Sandpiper.....X X

___ Pectoral Sandpiper.....X

___ American Woodcock..... X

___ Wilson's Snipe X X

___ Spotted SandpiperR R R R

___ Solitary SandpiperX

___ Lesser YellowlegsX

___ Greater Yellowlegs.....X X X

___ Wilson's PhalaropeX

GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS

___ Franklin's GullX

DARTERS

___ Anhinga..... X

CORMORANTS

___ Double-crested Cormorant	R	X	R	R
___ Neotropic Cormorant	X			X

PELICANS

___ American White Pelican	X			
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BITTERNs, HERONS AND ALLIES

___ Great Blue Heron	U	U	U	U
___ Great Egret	U	U	U	U
___ Snowy Egret		X		
___ Little Blue Heron			X	
___ Cattle Egret	X	X		
___ Green Heron	U	U	X	
___ Black-crowned Night-Heron	X			
___ Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	X	X		

NEW WORLD VULTURES

___ Black Vulture*	A	A	A	A
___ Turkey Vulture*	A	A	A	U

OSPREY

___ Osprey	R		X	R
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HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES AND ALLIES

___ Northern Harrier	R	X	X	R
___ Sharp-shinned Hawk	U	X	U	U
___ Cooper's Hawk*	U	U	U	U
___ Bald Eagle			X	X
___ Mississippi Kite	R	X	R	
___ Harris's Hawk	X			
___ Red-shouldered Hawk*	U	U	U	U
___ Broad-winged Hawk	R	X	R	
___ Swainson's Hawk	R	X	R	
___ Zone-tailed Hawk*	U	U	R	X
___ Red-tailed Hawk*	U	U	U	U

BARN OWLS

___ Barn Owl	X			
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TYPICAL OWLS

___ Eastern Screech-Owl*	U	U	U	U
___ Great Horned Owl*	U	U	U	U
___ Barred Owl*	U	U	U	U

KINGFISHERS

___ Ringed Kingfisher	R	R	R	
___ Belted Kingfisher*	U	U	U	U
___ Green Kingfisher*	U	U	U	U

WOODPECKERS AND ALLIES

___ Golden-fronted Woodpecker*	C	C	C	C
___ Red-bellied Woodpecker	X			X
___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	U		U	U
___ Red-naped Sapsucker	X			X
___ Downy Woodpecker	R	R	R	R
___ Ladder-backed Woodpecker*	C	C	C	C
___ Northern Flicker.....	R		U	R

CARACARAS AND FALCONS

___ Crested Caracara*	U	U	U	U
___ American Kestrel	U	X	U	U
___ Merlin	X		X	X
___ Peregrine Falcon	X		X	

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

___ Ash-throated Flycatcher*	C	C	R	
___ Great Crested Flycatcher*	U	U	R	
___ Brown-crested Flycatcher		X		
___ Couch's Kingbird*	R	R		
___ Western Kingbird*	U	U	R	
___ Eastern Kingbird	R	X	X	
___ Scissor-tailed Flycatcher*	U	U	U	
___ Olive-sided Flycatcher.....	U		R	
___ Eastern Wood-Pewee*	U	U	R	
___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	X			
___ Acadian Flycatcher*	C	C	U	
___ Alder Flycatcher	X			

	SP	S	F	W
___ Willow Flycatcher.....	X			
___ Least Flycatcher	C	R	U	
___ Black Phoebe.....	X	X	X	X
___ Eastern Phoebe*	C	C	C	C
___ Say's Phoebe.....	X			
___ Vermilion Flycatcher*	C	C	U	X

VIREOS

___ Black-capped Vireo	X			
___ White-eyed Vireo*	C	C	U	X
___ Bell's Vireo*	U	U	R	
___ Hutton's Vireo.....	R	R	R	R
___ Yellow-throated Vireo*	U	U	U	
___ Blue-headed Vireo	U		U	R
___ Philadelphia Vireo	X		X	
___ Warbling Vireo	U		X	
___ Red-eyed Vireo*	C	C	R	

SHRIKES

___ Loggerhead Shrike	R	R	R	R
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JAYS AND CROWS

___ Blue Jay	U	X	X	U
___ Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay*	U	U	U	U
___ American Crow.....	R	X	X	R
___ Common Raven*	C	C	C	C

VERDINS

___ Verdin	X	X		X
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CHICKADEES AND TITMICE

___ Carolina Chickadee*	A	A	A	A
___ Black-crested Titmouse*	A	A	A	A
___ Tufted x Black-crested Titmouse	X	X		

SWALLOWS

___ Bank Swallow.....	X			
___ Tree Swallow	X		X	
___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow	R		X	

	SP	S	F	W
___ Purple Martin*.....	U	U	X	
___ Barn Swallow*.....	U	U	U	
___ Cliff Swallow*.....	C	C	R	
___ Cave Swallow.....	X	X	X	
BUSHTITS				
___ Bushtit.....	X		X	X
KINGLETS				
___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet.....	C		C	C
___ Golden-crowned Kinglet.....	U		X	U
WAXWINGS				
___ Cedar Waxwing.....	C		R	C
NUTHATCHES				
___ Red-breasted Nuthatch.....	I		X	I
CREEPERS				
___ Brown Creeper.....	R		R	R
GNATCATCHERS AND GNATWRENS				
___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*.....	C	C	C	X
WRENS				
___ Rock Wren.....			X	
___ Canyon Wren*.....	C	C	C	C
___ House Wren.....	C	X	U	C
___ Winter Wren.....	R		R	U
___ Marsh Wren.....	X		X	X
___ Carolina Wren*.....	A	A	A	A
___ Bewick's Wren*.....	C	C	C	C
___ Cactus Wren.....			X	
MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS				
___ Gray Catbird.....	R		R	R
___ Curve-billed Thrasher.....		X	X	
___ Brown Thrasher.....			X	
___ Long-billed Thrasher.....	X			X

	SP	S	F	W
___ Sage Thrasher			X	X
___ Northern Mockingbird*	C	C	C	C

STARLINGS

___ European Starling.....	R	X	X	X
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THRUSHES

___ Eastern Bluebird*	C	C	C	C
___ Swainson's Thrush.....	R			
___ Hermit Thrush	U		R	U
___ American Robin	U	X	R	C

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

___ House Sparrow*	R	R	R	R
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WAGTAILS AND PIPITS

___ American Pipit	X		X	R
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FRINGILLINE AND CARDUELINE FINCHES AND ALLIES

___ House Finch*	C	C	C	C
___ Pine Siskin	I		I	U
___ Lesser Goldfinch*	C	C	C	C
___ American Goldfinch.....	C		U	C

TOWHEES AND SPARROWS

___ Cassin's Sparrow	X		X	X
___ Grasshopper Sparrow.....	C		U	C
___ Black-throated Sparrow.....			X	
___ Lark Sparrow*	C	C	U	R
___ Lark Bunting			X	
___ Chipping Sparrow*	C	C	C	A
___ Clay-colored Sparrow	U		U	X
___ Field Sparrow*	C	C	C	C
___ Fox Sparrow				R
___ Dark-eyed Junco.....	U		R	C
___ White-crowned Sparrow	C		U	C
___ White-throated Sparrow	U		R	U
___ Vesper Sparrow.....	C		U	C
___ LeConte's Sparrow.....			R	U

	SP	S	F	W
___ Savannah Sparrow.....	C		U	C
___ Song Sparrow.....	U		R	U
___ Lincoln's Sparrow	C		C	C
___ Swamp Sparrow	X			X
___ Canyon Towhee.....	R	R	R	
___ Rufous-crowned Sparrow*	R	R	R	R
___ Green-tailed Towhee	X		X	
___ Spotted Towhee	U		R	U

YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS

___ Yellow-breasted Chat*	U	U	X	
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BLACKBIRDS

___ Yellow-headed Blackbird	X			
___ Eastern Meadowlark	R		U	U
___ Western Meadowlark.....	R		U	U
___ Orchard Oriole*	U	U	X	
___ Bullock's Oriole.....	X		X	
___ Audubon's Oriole.....	X			X
___ Baltimore Oriole	U		R	
___ Scott's Oriole	X	X		
___ Red-winged Blackbird.....	R	X	X	R
___ Bronzed Cowbird.....	X	X		
___ Brown-headed Cowbird*	C	C	X	R
___ Brewer's Blackbird	X			
___ Common Grackle.....	R	X	X	X
___ Great-tailed Grackle.....	R	R	R	R

WOOD WARBLERS

___ Louisiana Waterthrush*	U	U	X	
___ Northern Waterthrush	X	X		
___ Golden-winged Warbler	X			
___ Black-and-white Warbler*	C	C	R	
___ Prothonotary Warbler.....	X			
___ Tennessee Warbler.....	U		R	
___ Orange-crowned Warbler.....	C		C	C
___ Nashville Warbler.....	C		U	
___ MacGillivray's Warbler.....	X			

	SP	S	F	W
___ Mourning Warbler	U		R	
___ Common Yellowthroat	U	X	U	
___ American Redstart	U	X	R	
___ Northern Parula*	C	C	R	
___ Magnolia Warbler	U			
___ Blackburnian Warbler	R		X	
___ Yellow Warbler	C	R	C	
___ Chestnut-sided Warbler	R			
___ Pine Warbler				X
___ Yellow-rumped Warbler	C		U	C
___ Yellow-throated Warbler*	C	C	U	
___ Townsend's Warbler			X	
___ Golden-cheeked Warbler*	C	U		
___ Black-throated Green Warbler	U		R	
___ Canada Warbler	X			
___ Wilson's Warbler	U		U	

CARDINALS, PIRANGA TANAGERS AND ALLIES

___ Summer Tanager*	C	C	C	
___ Scarlet Tanager	X		X	
___ Northern Cardinal*	A	A	A	A
___ Pyrrhuloxia	X	X	X	
___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	X		X	
___ Blue Grosbeak*	C	C		
___ Lazuli Bunting	X			
___ Indigo Bunting*	U	U	C	
___ Painted Bunting*	A	A	R	
___ Dickcissel*	U	U		

CITATION

Platz, Holly. February 2022. *Birds of Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area: a field checklist*. Natural Resources Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife.

In 1983, the Texas Legislature created the Special Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Fund. This fund may be used for nongame wildlife and endangered species research and conservation, habitat acquisition and development and dissemination of information pertaining to nongame management. Money for this fund is obtained through private donations and sale of nongame wildlife art prints and stamps. This fund now gives Texans a unique opportunity to help support this state's valuable and sensitive nongame resources. Your individual contributions and purchases of nongame art prints and stamps will help determine the level of nongame conservation activities in Texas. For more information call toll-free (1-800-792-1112) or contact: **Nongame and Endangered Species Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744.**

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