



Congrats!

**BIRD
CITY**

T E X A S

**SURFSIDE
BEACH**

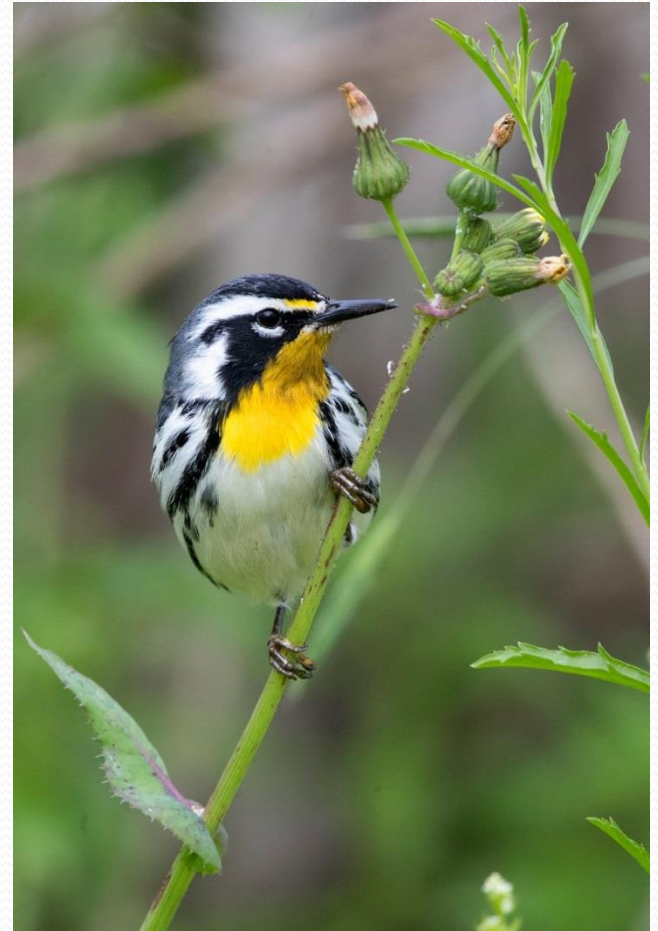
Surfside Beach, Texas

- Just where IS Surfside?
- We are a barrier island located in Brazoria County on the coast about 50 miles from Houston and 40 miles from Galveston
- Population: About 500 full time residents and 500 part-time residents. During the summer we can see well over 20,000 visitors on a Holiday weekend
- Surfside is surrounded on 2 sides by large industries such as Dow Chemical, LNG, BASF etc.



Why did we apply to be Bird City?

- We wanted to develop Eco-tourism during the off seasons to encourage visitors to our beautiful island during Fall, Winter and Spring
- Bird City was a natural fit for Surfside since Brazoria County has the highest bird species count (458) in the United States
- Location, location, location! Our area has many eco-systems which attract all types of resident and migratory birds
- We have many open spaces in our rural community besides the beach that we wanted to capitalize on



Persistence!

- We applied 2 times to be designated as Bird City and we made it on the second application in 2021!
- It was rigorous!
- Many collaborative workdays with lots of homework!



Surfside Beach has beautiful beaches and the city wanted to add additional nature venues for residents and visitors alike to view the birds and nature!

- In 2018 the City received a Grant from TPWD to add to the natural beauty of Surfside by creating a Bird and Butterfly Trail. The site is along the Intracoastal Waterway about ¼ mile from the Gulf. Trails were cut through heavy brush which reveled many native shrubs and trees such as Hackberry and Toothache Trees.



The Many Ecosystems of Surfside



Ocean



Beach and Dune



Marsh



Parks with Native Vegetation

Overhead View!

The Bird and Butterfly Trail is about 1 ½ miles long and includes 8 planting beds filled with native plants.



Volunteers did the work!



From the Beginning to the Grand Opening!

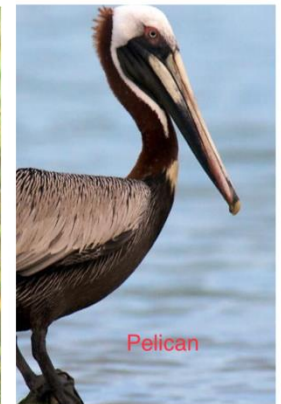
PLANNING AND DESIGN



Visitors and residents young and young at heart love the trail!



Birds in Surfside!



Bird City Project Requirements

- The Bird City Designation requires projects and we must track those projects in a number of ways. Such as:
- Increased attendance at events
- Increased visitors to the nature venues
- Increased bird species





Bird City Surfside 2020 Projects

Nature Fest 2020



Surfside Beach
Nature Fest

**Saturday,
October 17, 2020**

10:00am - 4:00pm

Surfside Bird and Butterfly Trail
418 Parkview

Schedule of Events

Tree Giveaway for Surfside Property Owners 8:00 am – 10:00am

Photography Contest - 10:00 - 3:00 @ Fort

Bird Walk and Talk
10:00, 12:00, and 2:00

Nature Bingo and Seed Stomp
11:00 and 1:00

Music by Martha White - 12:00 - 2:00

Birds of Prey Program 2:30 @ Fort

Surfside Museum Open 10:00-3:00 City Hall

Photography Contest Winner Announced - 3:30



The Seed Stomp is the best part of Nature Fest!



Or, maybe it was the Birds of Prey Program educating attendees about conservation!



Mike Williams created the first Surfside Birding Map!

Wings over Surfside A Birder's Location Guide

1 The Jetty – Far End

A premier spot for observing pelagic and costal species, and a great place to spend the day with a telescope. Variable by season but Northern Gannet, Northern Fulmar and occasionally the odd Petrel species are all possible. Also a great location for Magnificent Frigatebird and shorebirds such as Turnstones and Oystercatchers

2 The Jetty – Sides

While walking to the far end scanning the jetty on either side can yield great results. A great spot for Sandpipers, as well as the Turnstones and Oystercatchers mentioned above. In Winter this can be a great location for Grebes and Common Loons



3 The Jetty Park and Ship Channel

The ship channel is great place to sit and watch Gulls, Terns and Pelicans and in Spring can yield migrants such as Buntings and Warblers and in Winter Sparrows.

4 The Bird and Butterfly Trail

The premier migrant trap in Surfside, a walk in Spring and Fall often yields multiple Warbler and Bunting species, as well as such rarities as Western Tanager and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Also provides great habitat for Ruby Throated Hummingbirds throughout Spring, Summer and into Fall. Also a good location for Swallows and in Winter occasionally waders at the small pool and raptors searching for prey, (notably Kestrel, Merlin and Northern Harrier). Also a walk to the boat ramp at the end often yields a few waders.

5 Militia Road Corner

A great stop off to look for raptors in the Winter on the various wires, notably Kestrel and Merlin. Also look in the often-flooded yards here for plovers and smaller sandpipers.

6 Canal Drive Marsh

The premier location for Long-billed Curlew and Whimbrel as well as many marsh species – Ibis, Stilts and Spoonbills. Also look in the scrub and hedgerows for sparrows and in migration Warblers and Buntings

7 Crab Street Marsh

The best location is Surfside for Marshland species, notable for Clapper Rail, Nelsons and Seaside Sparrows, as well as larger Sandpiper species – Yellowlegs, Willets etc. and all 6 species of herons in the region. In addition Ibis, Egret, Spoonbill and Cormorants are common, as are Northern Harriers and other raptors. Gulls and Terns are common including the much sought-after Black Skimmer. During migration, the roadside hedgerows can also yield warblers and buntings.

12 Blue Water Highway Marsh

Another great location for marsh birds. Of note are the raptors, especially Northern Harrier, often seen hunting in Winter in this location. Again all the typical marsh species can be observed here.

13 North Beach and Dune System

Similar beach birds to 12 but with the added habitat of the dune system. The latter provides habitat for Horned Lark, numerous Sparrows (mainly Savannah and Seaside), and the occasional vagrant such as Varied Thrush! The beach is more extensive here so large groups of Gulls and Terns are common as are many shoreline waders. Occasionally Jaegers and Scoters too.

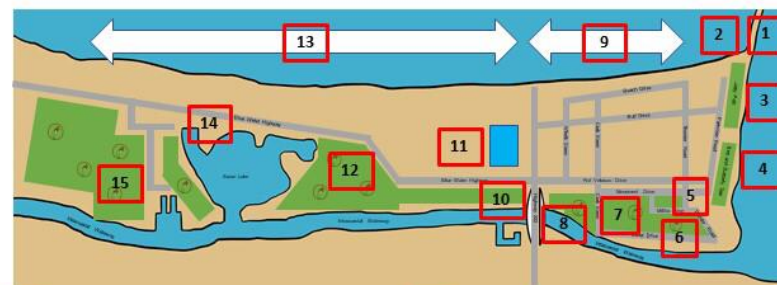


14 Crabbing Pier

The crabbing pier provides a unique elevated view over marshland. This is a prime location to see hunting raptors especially Northern Harrier. Also look here for Clapper Rail and fishing Terns.

15 Bay Avenue and Swan Lake

When the tide or rainfall has been high and the saltwater flats here are flooded this is the best location Surfside for waders of all kinds. Long-billed Curlews and Whimbrels are common here in Spring and Fall together with many waders. Dowitchers abound with Yellowlegs, Willets and many other sandpiper species. Also a prime location for plovers, gulls and terns. Including Franklins and Bonaparte's Gulls and Black Skimmer.



8 Intracoastal Waterway

Birdlife is not common but look for Osprey and occasionally Bald Eagle. Look landward for Whimbrel and Long Billed Curlew. Gulls, Terns and occasionally Skimmers fish here.

9 Pedestrian Beach and 332 end

In Winter and early mornings when human activity is at its lowest, look for Gulls, Terns and smaller Sandpipers at the waters edge and possible Scoters and other marine ducks further out.

10 Bridge Corner Marsh

Like the Crab Street Marsh location it provides a second chance for Heron, Ibis and Egret species, (especially Reddish).

11 Seahorse Pond

Under-birded spot that regularly has Coots, Gallinules and Grebes, (including Least Grebe). Great place for wildfowl including Blue Winged and Green Winged Teal, Mottled Duck and Scaup. With more regularly visits will likely yield many other species.

Common Birds of Surfside

Black bellied Whistling Duck	ALL
Blue Winged Teal	6 7 10 11 12
Northern Shoveler	6 7 10 11 12
Gadwall	6 7 10 11 12
American Widgeon	6 7 10 11 12
Mallard	6 7 10 11 12
Mottled Duck	6 7 10 11 12
Green Winged Teal	6 7 10 11 12
Ringed Necked Duck	11
Greater Scaup	11
Lesser Scaup	11
Black Scoter	9 13
Red Breasted Merganser	1 2 3
Common Loon	1 2 3
Pied Billed Grebe	6 7 10 11 12
Eared Grebe	1 2 3
Northern Fulmar	1 2
Northern Gannet	1 2
Anhinga	6 7 10 12
Brown Pelican	ALL
Magnificent Frigatebird	ALL
Neotropic Cormorant	ALL
Double Crested Cormorant	ALL
Great Blue Heron	ALL but 1 & 2
Great Egret	ALL but 1 & 2
Little Egret	ALL but 1 & 2
Snowy Egret	ALL but 1 & 2
Little Blue Heron	ALL but 1 & 2
Tri Colored Heron	ALL but 1 & 2
Reddish Egret	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Cattle Egret	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Green Heron	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Black Crowned Night Heron	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Yellow Crowned Night Heron	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
White Ibis	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
White Faced Ibis	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Roseate Spoonbill	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Black Vulture	ALL
Turkey Vulture	ALL
Osprey	ALL
Red Tailed Hawk	4 5 6 7 10 12 14
Northern Harrier	4 5 6 7 10 12 14
Clapper Rail	6 7 8 10 11 12 15
Common Gallinule	6 7 8 10 11 12 15
American Coot	6 7 8 10 11 12 15
Black necked Stilt	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
American Avocet	ALL but 1 & 2
American Oystercatcher	ALL but 1 & 2
Black Billed Plover	ALL but 1 & 2
American Golden Plover	ALL but 1 & 2
Semi-palmated Plover	ALL but 1 & 2
Wilson's Plover	ALL but 1 & 2
Snowy Plover	ALL but 1 & 2
Piping Plover	ALL but 1 & 2
Killdeer	ALL but 1 & 2
Whimbrel	6 7 8 10 12 15
Long Billed Curlew	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Common Birds of Surfside contd.

Marbled Godwit	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Ruddy Turnstone	All except 3 to 5
Red Knot	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Stilt Sandpiper	All except 3 to 5
Sanderling	All except 3 to 5
Dunlin	All except 3 to 5
Least Sandpiper	All except 3 to 5
Pectoral Sandpiper	All except 3 to 5
Western Sandpiper	All except 3 to 5
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	All except 3 to 5
Short Billed Dowitcher	All except 3 to 5
Long Billed Dowitcher	All except 3 to 5
Wilson's Snipe	All except 3 to 5
Wilson's Phalarope	All except 3 to 5
Solitary Sandpiper	All except 3 to 5
Greater Yellowlegs	All except 3 to 5
Lesser Yellowlegs	All except 3 to 5
Willet	All except 3 to 5
Bonaparte's Gull	All
Franklin's Gull	All
Laughing Gull	All
Ring Billed Gull	All
Herring Gull	All
Lesser Black Backed Gull	All
Black Tern	All
Least Tern	All
Forster's Tern	All
Sandwich Tern	All
Royal Tern	All
Black Skimmer	All
Rock Pigeon	All
Mourning Dove	All
Yellow Billed Cuckoo	4 6 7 10
Barn Owl	4
Common Nighthawk	All
Lesser Nighthawk	All
Ruby Throated Hummingbird	4
Rufous Hummingbird	4
Belted Kingfisher	ALL but 1 & 2
Red Bellied Woodpecker	4
Yellow Bellied Sapsucker	4
Northern Flicker	4
American Kestrel	ALL but 1, 2 & 3
Merlin	ALL but 1, 2 & 3
Crested Caracara	ALL but 1, 2 & 3
Bald Eagle	3 4 5 6 7 8 10 12
Eastern Wood Pewee	4 6 7 14 15
Least Flycatcher	4 6 7 14 15
Acadian Flycatcher	4 6 7 14 15
Eastern Phoebe	4 6 7 14 15
Vermillion Flycatcher	4 6 7 14 15
Great Crested Flycatcher	4 6 7 14 15
Eastern Kingbird	ALL but 1, 2, 9 & 13
Western Kingbird	ALL but 1, 2, 9 & 13
Scissor Tailed Flycatcher	ALL but 1, 2, 9 & 13
Loggerhead Shrike	ALL but 1, 2, 9 & 13
White Eyed Vireo	ALL but 1, 2, 9 & 13

Common Birds of Surfside contd.

Yellow throated Vireo	4 5 6 7
Blue Headed Vireo	4 5 6 7
American Crow	4 5 6 7
Horned Lark	4 5 6 7
Purple Martin	4 5 6 7
Barn Swallow	4 5 6 7
Carolina Chickadee	4 5 6 7
Carolina Wren	4 5 6 7
Blue Gray Gnatcatcher	4 5 6 7
Ruby Crowned Kinglet	4 5 6 7
Northern Mockingbird	4 5 6 7
Ovenbird	4 5 6 7
Cape May Warbler	4 5 6 7
Worm Eating Warbler	4 5 6 7
Louisiana Waterthrush	4 5 6 7
Northern Waterthrush	4 5 6 7
Loggerhead Shrike	4 5 6 7
Golden Winged Warbler	4 5 6 7
Blue Winged Warbler	4 5 6 7
Black and White Warbler	4 5 6 7
Prothonotary Warbler	4 5 6 7
Tennessee Warbler	4 5 6 7
Orange Crowned Warbler	4 5 6 7
Nashville Warbler	4 5 6 7
Common Yellowthroat	4 5 6 7
Hooded Warbler	4 5 6 7
American Redstart	4 5 6 7
Northern Parula	4 5 6 7
Magnolia Warbler	4 5 6 7
Bay Breasted Warbler	4 5 6 7
Blackburnian Warbler	4 5 6 7
Yellow Warbler	4 5 6 7
Chestnut Sided Warbler	4 5 6 7
Black Throated Green Warbler	4 5 6 7
Wilson's Warbler	6 7 9 10 11 12 14 15
Nelson's Sparrow	6 7 9 10 11 12 14 15
Seaside Sparrow	4
White Crowned Sparrow	4
White Throated Sparrow	4
Song Sparrow	4
Swamp Sparrow	6 7 9 10 11 12 14 15
Savannah Sparrow	4 6 7 9 10 11 12 14 15
Summer Tanager	4 5 6 7
Scarlet Tanager	4 5 6 7
Northern Cardinal	4 5 6 7
Rose Breasted Grosbeak	4 5 6 7
Blue Grosbeak	4 5 6 7
Indigo Bunting	4 5 6 7
Painted Bunting	4 5 6 7
Dickcissel	4 5 6 7
Eastern Meadowlark	4 5 6 7
Orchard Oriole	4 5 6 7
Baltimore Oriole	4 5 6 7
Red Winged Blackbird	ALL but 1 & 2
Great Tailed Grackle	ALL but 1 & 2
Pine Siskin	4 5 6 7
American Goldfinch	4 5 6 7

Wings over Surfside

A Birder's Location Guide



Take only Photographs



Leave only Footprints



Native Tree Giveaway!



Local Residents Donated Seating Along The Trail so our visitors and residents could sit and view the wildlife!



Surfside Businesses

- There are over 400 businesses in Surfside from restaurants, vacation rentals, retail, housekeeping, lawn service, maintenance
- All businesses are directly affected by tourism




COVID Effects on Tourism

- Tourism in Surfside exploded during COVID 2020!
- The beach was full to capacity every weekend
- Vacation Rentals were booked solid
- Businesses such as housekeepers, lawn service and handymen were extremely busy
- Retail stores did very well
- Restaurants did struggle but began offering curbside and delivery



Eco-Tourism During COVID

- Surfside still held the majority of the eco-tourism and other events during COVID because the events were outdoors. Such as:
 - Nature Fest
 - World Migratory Bird Day
 - Kite Flights
 - Surfing Santa's
 - Christmas Tree Lighting
- 
- We believe this helped all of our businesses be successful during the peak of the pandemic



Bird City Surfside 2021 Projects

Replaced over 300 plants at the Trail that did not survive the February Freeze



Added native plants and covered observation area at the Crabbing Pier over the wetlands!



Extended the Bird and Butterfly Trail by about a ¼ mile to the public boat ramp planting 30 additional native trees and shrubs



Restoring Sand Dunes!

- Save Our Beach Association Places Donated Christmas Trees in the Dunes to restore them.
- This offers protection to human homes and provides nesting habitat for shore birds.



World Migratory Bird Day 2021

- Speakers
- Educational Booths
- Vendors
- Activities



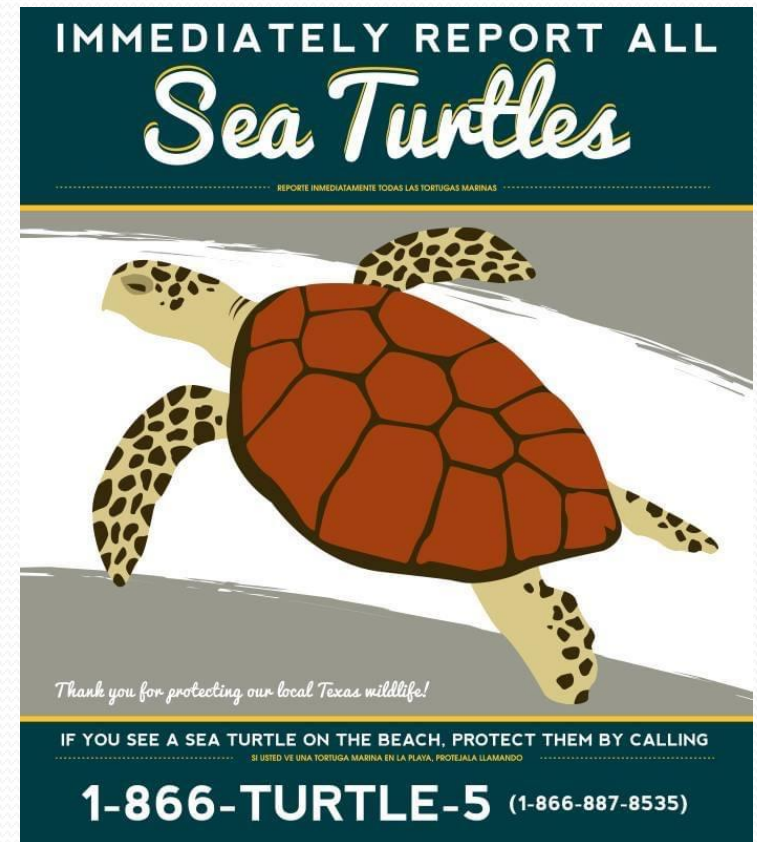
Nature Fest 2021 October 9th was awesome!

- We had a 65% increase in attendance
- Speakers:
- Yvette Stewart – Bird City
- Martin Hagne - GCBO
- Birds of Prey Presentation
- Educational Nature Booths
- Business Booths
- Craft Booths
- Kids Activities
- Native Plant Sale
- Bluebonnet Seed Stomp



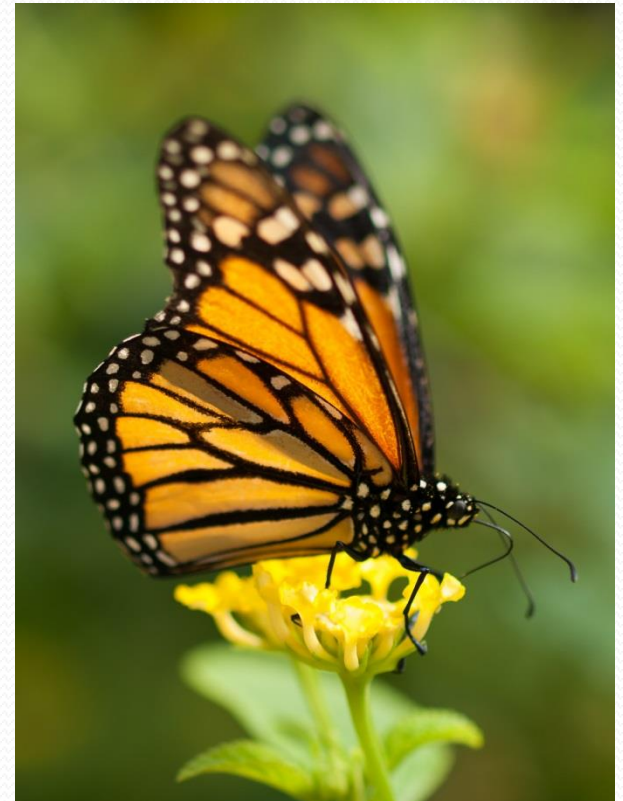
Ongoing Projects!

- City beach clean ups are a frequent public involvement event. Keeping the beach clean promotes eco-tourism
- Trail work days bring residents and visitors to Surfside to help plant and create new areas for native habitat
- Citizen Science:
 - Christmas Bird Counts
 - eBird - tracking of birds
 - iNaturalist - tracking of wildlife, plants and other nature
 - Lights Out for Birds
 - Sea Turtle Patrols



Citizen Science Monarch Research

- Village of Surfside Beach was awarded “Monarch’s Choice - Key Texas Habitat Award” by Monarch Gateway
- Citizens and visitors are encouraged to report Monarch Butterfly sightings to Monarch Gateway.
- Monarch Gateway is tracking monarch migration habits using wind patterns
- Monarch Gateway is also tracking key habitats where monarchs frequent on migration routes



2022 Projects!

- Water Feature
- Birding Blind
- Bird Information Signage
- Purple Martin Houses
- Additional Seating
- More Wildflowers!
- Remove Invasive Plants
- Wings Over Surfside Event

Surfside Birding - The Marsh Trail



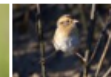
- 5) Militia Road Corner
- 6) Canal Road Marsh
- 7) Crab Road Marsh
- 8) Intracoastal Waterway



Starting at Militia Road this is a great place to search for raptors especially in Winter. Merlin, Red Tailed and Swainson's Hawk are often found here. Also scan the yards and roadside ditches for plovers notably Piping stilts and flycatchers as you walk towards Canal Road



Turning the corner in Canal Road scan the hedgerows for passerines including migrating warblers and orioles. As the marsh takes over ourlews and whimbrels are often found in season and scan the pools for sandpipers, terns and skimmers.



Towards the end of Canal turn into Crab Road and search the reedbeds and marsh. This is the most productive area in Surfside. Look for Seaside and Nelson's Sparrows in Winter. Herons and egrets abound all year and Clapper Rail is common. Sandpipers are plentiful at low tide.

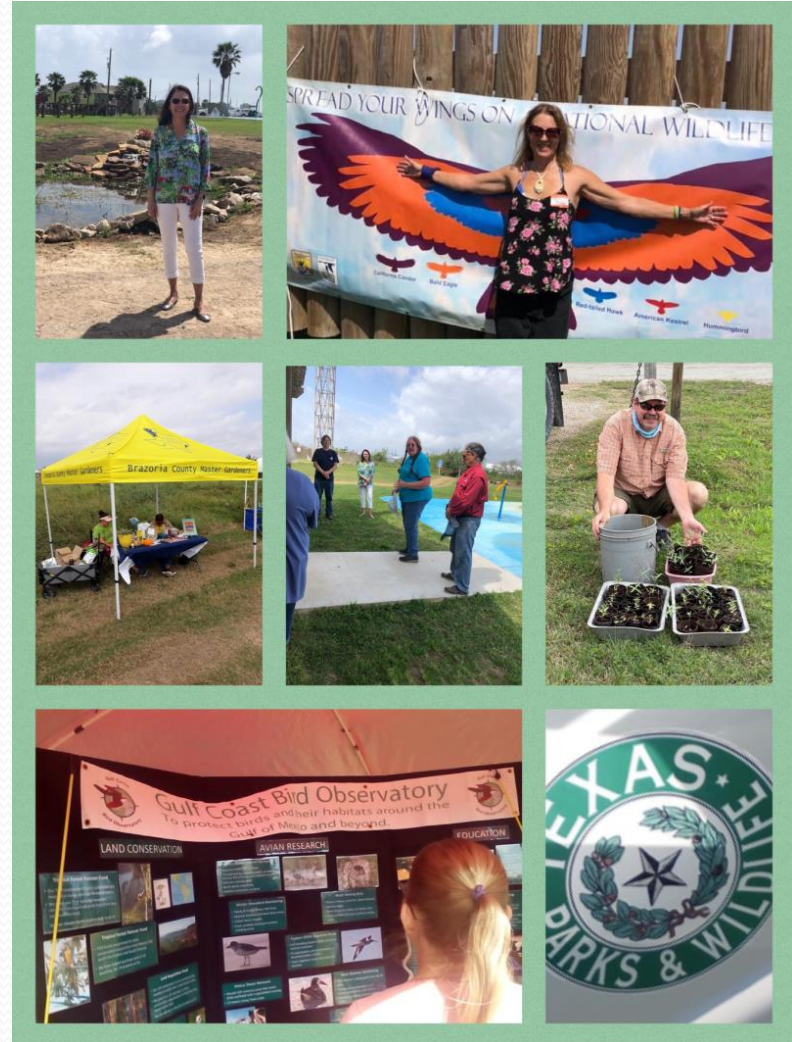


While walking Canal and Crab always keep an eye on the Intracoastal Waterway. Raptors notably Ospreys and occasionally Bald Eagles fish here as do Pelicans and Cormorants. The shore provides a more rugged habitat and Spotted Sandpipers and even Avocets are sometimes found here.



Community Partners!

- GCBO – Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
- Master Naturalists
- Master Gardeners
- NRCS
- Village of Surfside Beach
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Audubon Texas
- Port Of Freeport
- TreeLife Farms
- And many more!



We couldn't do it without our Community Volunteers!

Adopt a Spot Volunteers



Community Volunteers



Bird Photographers LOVE Surfside!

Eco-Tourists are very respectful of the environment



Varied Thrush

Eco-tourism!

Surprise Visitor from the Northwest stayed for about 2 weeks to make sure birders from far and near could see him!



It's All About The Birds!



Bird City Surfside Collaborative Team

- Eva Chappell
- Sandy Shanks
- Mike Williams
- Michelle Booth



Contact Info

- Follow our progress by joining the Facebook Group “Surfside Beach, TX Nature Lovers”
- Contact info:
- Sandy Shanks 979-248-8257
- sandy@windyescapes.com
- Questions?

