

2022 LOS/BSG Sandhill Crane Field Trip
19 February 2022
Larry Raymond

The annual Shreveport Bird Study Group field trip to find Sandhill Crane was again opened to LOS members. A group of Shreveport-area birders including Terri Jacobson (co-leader), Martha Lennard, Cran and Didaciane Lucas, Larry Raymond (co-leader), and Mark Wilson met at LSUS at 7 a.m. to caravan to the LSUA campus to meet up with birders from other parts of the State. Lawrence Datnoff and Roger and Fran Beach Kinnison joined our caravan at 9:15 a.m. We recorded several birds on the LSUA campus, including an Eastern Phoebe added by Lawrence, and then headed to LA 3170 to look for cranes.

We stopped along LA 3170 at a large pond to look for water birds. Although we didn't find any waterfowl, Terri spotted a pair of Sandhill Crane flying across the road ahead of us and yelled out "cranes." A short distance up the highway, 3 cranes were observed at a distance in an open field. As we scoped these birds, others were spotted flying near the tree line at the back of the field. Roger counted 20 Sandhill Crane for a total of 22 in all, and, as it turned out, these would be the only cranes recorded on the trip. While observing the cranes, an adult Bald Eagle was spotted soaring nearby and gave everyone great looks. We could hear Killdeer calling across the road, and Roger stopped to count 10 Killdeer that we added to our list. Red-tailed Hawk and Northern Harrier were also seen along LA 3170.

We next took a side road off LA 1 to LA 457 and looked for birds in the J.H. Overton Recreation Area at Lock & Dam #2 on the Red River. Here we added Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, and a few Double-crested Cormorant. Several Red-tailed Hawk were observed along the way to the Lock & Dam.

After leaving the Lock & Dam, we drove to Sandy Lane and Echo-Cheneyville Road. Stopping several times to scope the ponds along the road, we added thousands of Snow Goose, along with some Greater White-fronted Goose and at least a couple of Ross's Goose. More than a thousand Northern Shoveler were observed, along with Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, and a couple of Northern Pintail. An adult and immature Bald Eagle on the ground provided good views through the scopes. Several *Plegadis* sp., Double-crested Cormorant, and Black-necked Stilt were observed, and flocks of hundreds of distant shorebirds went unidentified. A small group of White Ibis were recorded by Terri and Martha as they flew over. American Kestrel and Northern Harrier were also seen along the road.

The last leg of the trip included Bayou Road and a search for the continuing Scaly-breasted Munia coming to a feeder on the south end of the road. By this time, the winds were making birding difficult, but we eventually added the Munia, as well as American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Terri added an Eastern Towhee here and Terri and Martha recorded five Loggerhead Shrike along Bayou Road as we headed home. We ended the day with 48 species.

I learned later that Terri and Martha recorded a Peregrine Falcon along I-49 north of Natchitoches as they headed home for Shreveport-Bossier.