

TEXAS CONNECTION

Activity #49

Tropical Tree House



Extra Resources

Houston Audubon
High Island
<http://www.houstonaudubon.org/default.aspx/MenuItemID/373/MenuGroup/High+Island.htm>

Texas Parks and Wildlife
Great Texas Wildlife Trails
Bolivar Loop
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wildlife/wildlife-trails/coastal/upper/bolivar-loop>

Texas Parks & Wildlife
Bird Migration
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/birding/migration/migrants/nn_migrants/

Texas Overview

Drive just 47 miles south of Beaumont — or take a quick ferry trip from Galveston to the Bolivar Peninsula — and you'll find High Island

Located on a salt dome, High Island has the highest and driest ground on the Bolivar Peninsula. As a result, trees and shrubs can grow. And those trees and shrubs lure in migratory birds.

Birders from all over the world come to Texas in hopes of seeing “fallout” — a phenomena that occurs when birds exhausted from their migration across the Gulf of Mexico literally fall from the sky. The trees and shrubs on High Island are the first that migrating birds come across on their migration.

In the spring, High Island is one of the best places in the United States for bird watching. Bird watchers can spot different warblers, scarlet tanagers, orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, buntings and vireos. These birds along with up to 250 species of small songbirds belong to the neotropical group and make the long migration from where they gather in Mexico to Texas. Many will have already traveled many miles north. This happens every spring. The birds fly south in the winter for food and come springtime, they head north to go back to their homes in the United States and Canada.

The fallout depends on weather conditions when the birds start their trip north. With a tail wind from the south, the migration can take only 12 or so hours. But if strong north winds from fronts or storms occur, the birds have to face a head wind and it can take them twice as long to fly across the gulf. When they reach High Island, they're exhausted. They stop, rest and regain their energy before restarting their trip north.

Project Learning Tree is sponsored in Texas by



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