

# Great Texas Birding Classic



Gulf Coast Bird Observatory  
103 West Highway 332  
Lake Jackson, TX 77566  
[www.birdingclassic.org](http://www.birdingclassic.org)

## ***The Great Texas Birding Classic is the biggest, longest, wildest birdwatching tournament in the United States!***

### **What is the Great Texas Birding Classic?**

The Great Texas Birding Classic (GTBC), sponsored by the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, is a friendly, but serious birding-for-conservation tournament. It is held each year during April to coincide with the spectacular spring bird migration in Texas. During the tournament, teams vie to see who can spot and record the most bird species in a given time period. The adult teams with the highest species counts win the privilege of choosing the conservation projects that will be awarded Conservation Grant Grand Prizes.

To date, the GTBC has contributed \$578,000 directly to avian habitat conservation along the Texas Gulf Coast through the conservation grant funding. Prior to each year's competition, organizations submit conservation project proposals to win funding through the grants awarded by the winning teams.

### **Why is bird habitat conservation important?**

Currently, 630 species of birds have been documented in Texas. Over 400 species can be found along the Texas coast during spring migration. All of these birds are present due to the highly diverse habitats along the Texas coast. Each year, more and more habitat is significantly altered. Forty years of bird population data from Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys were analyzed by National Audubon to determine bird population status. Since 1967, the average population of the common birds in steepest decline has fallen by 68 percent; some individual species nose-dived as much as 80 percent. All 20 birds on the national Common Birds in Decline list lost at least half their populations in just four decades.

These findings point to serious problems with both local habitats and national environmental trends. Only citizen action can make a difference for the birds and the state of our future.

*While conservation organizations and agencies are working harder than ever to preserve habitat, we all have resource limitations. It is the support and generosity of corporations, communities, local businesses and caring individuals that enable additional habitat preservation. Working together, we are making a difference.*



# THE GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC

## Why was the Birding Classic created?

The purpose of the Birding Classic is to increase public awareness of Texas birds and the habitats that support them, fund avian habitat conservation projects along the Texas Coast, and promote community-level nature tourism.

## Who can compete?

### ■ ROUGHWINGS

Young birders, up to age 13, are invited to participate in the Roughwings category. Roughwings compete for prizes in a separate eight-hour event.

### ■ GLIDERS

Young adults, ages 14–18, join as Gliders.

### ■ ADULT

Teams whose members are 19 and over are welcome to compete in the Adult category.

### ■ BIG SIT! AND OUTTA-SIGHT SONG BIRDER

Teams may be mixed in age (adult and youth participants compete equally).

## Where does the funding come from?

The Great Texas Birding Classic is a self-funded conservation initiative. Thus, anyone can participate; you don't have to be on a team to make a contribution. So anyone interested in helping save Texas' diverse coastal habitat can participate. This project would not be possible without the support of countless corporations, small businesses, communities, artists, foundations and private individuals who have an interest in conserving the natural heritage of Texas.

## How does it work?

There are several separate competition categories:

### ■ WEEKLONG

This consists of five consecutive days of counting birds. The teams are open to bird the entire Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail in any order they desire. Teams of 3–5 compete as a sponsored team.

### ■ ONE DAY SECTIONAL

Each of the three coastal sections has a designated day for a 24-hour event, from midnight to midnight. Teams consist of 3–5 birders. A Big Day.

### ■ GLIDERS

Compete in one section of the coast for a 24-hour tournament. Teams consist of 3–5 birders.

### ■ ROUGHWINGS

Teams compete in one section of the coast for an eight-hour event. Teams consist of 3–5 birders.

### ■ BIG SIT!

Tournament is held on the first Sunday of the tournament week and is a 24-hour event. Teams may have up to 10 members of any age. Make this a fun family outing!

### ■ OUTTA-SIGHT SONG BIRDER

A special competition for blind and visually impaired birders. Teams consist of 3–5 birders.



## Mission Statement

*To increase appreciation, understanding and conservation of birds along the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail through education, recreation, nature tourism and conservation fundraising.*

For more information, visit our Web site at:

[www.birdingclassic.org](http://www.birdingclassic.org)

or call

Carol Jones, Tournament Coordinator  
(979) 480-0999



Gulf Coast Bird Observatory  
103 West Highway 332  
Lake Jackson, TX 77566



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, TX 78744

*As a part of the funding for the Conservation Grants, we hold an online auction. The auction begins online at [www.birdingclassic.org](http://www.birdingclassic.org) in late winter and concludes at the close of the competition week. Donations to the auction are also welcomed.*

