

**North American Birds
Central Texas
Winter 2005-2006**

The drought continued unabated in Central Texas during the season. Normally occurring winter rains were non-existent in most parts of the Central Texas. Winter birds were generally scarce to absent especially in the more southern parts of the region. Basically the winter season was dull with a few exceptions. Brush's Rufous-backed Robin was the best find during the season.

Observations of Note:

Fulvous Whistling-Duck

Twelve Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Hornsby Bend on 5 Feb (Barry Lyon) were somewhat bizarre for the early date.

Snow Goose

A single flyover Snow Goose in Midland on 2 Dec seen by Donna Kelly was considered rare.

Cinnamon Teal

A male Cinnamon Teal was in Temple on 26 Jan. It was followed by three males and a female on 20 Feb (Randy Pinkston).

Greater Scaup

Up to nine+ Greater Scaup were regular on Stillhouse Hollow Lake *Bell* 14 Jan-19 Feb (Randy Pinkston).

Hooded Merganser

Tim Fennell tallied 57 Hooded Mergansers on Meadow Lake in Round Rock *Williamson* on 20 Dec

Pacific Loon

Two Pacific Loons were seen on Lake Brownwood *Brown* on 26 Feb (Dell Little & DD Currie). One was reported by James Kessler from Lake Buchanan (no county location given) on 22 Dec.

Least Grebe

The Austin CBC (17 Dec) tallied 17 Least Grebes with 12 birds being seen at Hornsby Bend (Eric Carpenter).

Western Grebe

Two Western Grebes were on Granger Lake *Williamson* on 19 Feb while a single bird was on Canyon Lake *Comal* on 28 Jan & 25 Feb (David Pueppke).

Great Egret

A single Great Egret remained at a Midland playa throughout the winter season. The playa had a tremendous toad and frog hatch back in September 2005. Great Egrets are considered rare to non-existent thru all of the winter in *Midland* (Bill Lupardus).

Green Heron

A single adult in Salado *Bell* on 20 Feb was considered to be early (Randy Pinkston).

Roseate Spoonbill

An immature Roseate Spoonbill lingered from the fall at Mitchell Lake this winter. It was seen throughout January (Georgina Schwartz et al).

Turkey Vulture

A very early Turkey Vulture was reported from Midland on 2 Feb by Betty Rae Davis.

White-tailed Kite

Of note was a single White-tailed Kite in Bastrop 17 Dec-12 Jan (Stan Wellso) and another single bird near Lytton Springs *Caldwell* 19 Dec (Tom & Pat Wimberly).

Harris's Hawk

Up to four Harris's Hawks were seen in *Travis* this season (m.ob.).

Red-shouldered Hawk

An injured juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk found in *Andrews* was brought in for rehabilitation to a Lubbock rehab center this season (Brandon Best). No specific date was given.

White-tailed Hawk

Perhaps due to the horrific drought, a White-tailed Hawk was hanging around Braunig Lake 29 Jan through the end of the period *Bexar* (Malcolm Mark Swan et al).

Zone-tailed Hawk

Unprecedented were the number of reports of Zone-tailed Hawk this season. At least two birds were seen in *Bexar* during the period while at while up to three birds were seen in the Austin area.

Golden Eagle

A Golden Eagle was found on the San Antonio CBC in southwester *Bexar* on 18 Dec (Steve Hawkins).

Peregrine Falcon

One bird was present in downtown Midland 18 Dec-10 Feb (Bill Lupardus) while another bird was recorded from Johnson Draw *Midland* on 16 Jan (Rose Marie Stortz). Also one was seen on the westside of Midland on 24 Feb (Walt Wigzell).

Mountain Plover

Lee Elliott tallied 33 Mountain Plovers along Hwy. 173 in *Atascosa* on 12 Dec. The location is huge sod farm. Mechlar Road in western *Bexar* hosted up to 42 birds this season (Bob Doe et al). Tim Fennell says that Mountain Plovers were again hard to find this season in the Granger Lake area. He had a high count of 38 birds on 7 Jan.

Black-necked Stilt

Two Black-necked Stilts along Monahan's Draw *Midland* on 17 Dec (Jim Henderson) provided a rare area winter record. Most stilts have vacated the area by the last week of October with the majority having left by September.

Pectoral Sandpiper

A somewhat early Pectoral Sandpiper was present at Mitchell Lake on 24 Feb (Dodge Engleman).

Dunlin

Up to seven Dunlins were seen in January around Granger Lake *Williamson* (Tim Fennell).

Stilt Sandpiper

A lone Stilt Sandpiper was photographed on Lake Buchanan *Llano* on 26 Feb. It is hard to determine if the bird over-wintered or was migrating (Tim Fennell).

American Woodcock

Reports of this species seen on people's lawns were numerous. This was apparently caused by the drought. Of note was an American Woodcock seen and photographed in Utopia *Uvalde* on 27 Dec (Mitch Heindel). One was observed along a stretch of the Concho River in San Angelo *Tom Green* on 24 Feb (Terry Maxwell).

Wilson's Phalarope

A Wilson's Phalarope lingered at Mitchell Lake in San Antonio well into January (Sheridan Coffey et al). Two were reported from *Burnet* on 22 Feb (Terry Hill) as per Dixie Feuerbacher in her report.

Bonaparte's Gull

Twenty-four Bonaparte's Gulls were reported from a Midland golf course pond on 2 Dec (Bill Lupardus).

Lesser Black-backed Gull

A second-winter bird was present at Calaveras Lake *Bexar* 26 Jan to 19 Feb (Malcolm Mark Swan et al).

Glaucous Gull

A second-year bird was discovered at Calaveras Lake by Mike Creese on 26 Dec. It was photographed the same day by Martin Reid and Willie Sekula. It was present to at least 4 Jan.

Burrowing Owl

It was a good season for Burrowing Owls in the Granger Lake area. Tim Fennell noted that at least eight birds wintered in the area. One was present in *McCulloch* 6 & 7 Dec (Sally & Chuck Dalchau).

Short-eared Owl

Eight Short-eared Owls were flushed from a pasture on a private ranch in *Midland* on 8 Jan (Jim Henderson).

Lesser Nighthawk

Keith Bartels saw four Lesser Nighthawks flying around parking lot lights at The Quarry in San Antonio on 28 Dec.

Black-chinned Hummingbird

An anomalous immature Black-chinned Hummingbird was present near Utopia *Uvalde* 7-13 Feb (Mitch Heindel). The date is too early for a returning spring bird.

Anna's Hummingbird

Continuing the trend from the fall Anna's Hummingbirds were noted at several Central Texas locations this season. One was in Poteet *Atascosa* 7 Dec to 5 Jan (Michelle Giles) while one wintered in Spring Branch *Comal* (Leslie Linehan). One was present at Laughlin AFB near Del Rio *Val Verde* on 20 Jan (Kelly Barlow). Mitch Heindel had one at his feeder 3-8 Dec near Utopia *Uvalde*.

Calliope Hummingbird

A Calliope Hummingbird was present at a feeder in Poteet *Atascosa* 27 Dec to at least 5 Jan (Michelle Giles).

Rufous Hummingbird

A Rufous Hummingbird stayed at Sara St. Clair's Midland yard 19 Nov-8 Dec.

Ringed Kingfisher

An adult female present at San Gabriel Park in Georgetown, *Williamson* in fall lingered until 14 Jan (Tim Fennell). Grant Crutchfield discovered one on the Lampasas River at Youngsport 26 Jan-4 Feb (Randy Pinkston). It represented a first for *Bell*.

Red-bellied Woodpecker

A Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen along the San Saba River *McCulloch* on 25 Feb by Dixie Feuerbacher, Bobbye Frazier, and Jim Hughes.

Downy Woodpecker

A Downy Woodpecker was seen and photographed by Rose Marie Stortz from Midkiff *Midland* on 19 Feb.

Hammond's Flycatcher

A Hammond's Flycatcher was seen and heard well at least three times along the Sabinal River near Utopia *Uvalde* 25 Dec to late Jan (Mitch Heindel). The bird was associating with a mixed flock. Heindel photographed the bird.

Western Flycatcher

A western-type flycatcher was photographed on the Medina River *Bexar* 20 Feb (Rowe Elliott). It was seen again on 22 Feb (Bob Doe).

Black Phoebe

A Black Phoebe was below Tom Miller Dam in Austin 14 Jan-18 Feb (Andy & Julie Balinsky). Another was at Camp Balcones Spring *Burnet* 9 Dec-11 Feb (Byron Stone).

Vermilion Flycatcher

An immature Vermilion Flycatcher present at Hornsby since fall remained until at least 25 Feb (m.ob.).

Western Kingbird

An early Western Kingbird was reported on 24 Feb from Midland by Mark Cranford. This is a month ahead of schedule.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Helen Rezbek found four Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in western *Bexar* on 7 Jan.

Cassin's Vireo

A Cassin's Vireo was present at Government Canyon State Park *Bexar* 7 Jan (Helen Rezbek).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

An early Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen on a Midnat field trip to Harris Tank *Midland* on 4 Feb.

Mountain Bluebird

A Mountain Bluebird was seen by Brush Freeman at Possum Kingdom Lake *Palo Pinto* on 26 Jan.

Rufous-backed Robin

A Rufous-backed Robin was discovered by Freeman at his Utley *Bastrop* residence on 7 Jan. It remained through the period. I think most seasoned observers that were made aware of this astounding record are befuddled as to reason for this species occurrence in Central Texas. The only thing that comes into my mind is the drought.

Crissal Thrasher

A Crissal Thrasher was found on the Midland CBC 31 Dec by Donna Kelly and Mark Cranford. One (or the same bird?) was also photographed in Midland on 24 Feb (*fide* Bill Lupardus).

Northern Parula

A Northern Parula was reported from Susan Schaezler's property *Guadalupe* on 4 Feb (*fide* Georgina Schwartz).

Tropical Parula

Mike Creese found a Tropical Parula along Avenue A in San Antonio 15 Dec. It was seen throughout the rest of the reporting period by numerous observers. It was also photographed by Martin Reid.

Black-throated Gray Warbler

A female Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen in a San Antonio backyard on 29 Jan (Tom & Carol Fawcett).

Pine Warbler

A single Pine Warbler was reported in a mixed-species flock at Midland on 28 Dec by Rose Mare Stortz and Mary Stortz. The bird was present all of January.

Palm Warbler

Byron Stone had one south of Lake Georgetown *Williamson* on 10 Dec.

Black-and-white Warbler

A female in Salado *Bell* on 17 Dec was considered unprecedented by Pinkston.

Louisiana Waterthrush

Bill Lindeman reports seeing one in western *Kerr* on the Kerrville CBC (no specific date was given). It was seen on the same creek about a half-mile from where he photographed one in the winter of 2004-2005. Sue Wiedenfeld reports seeing one along a creek on her ranch near Boerne *Kendall* on 27 Feb.

Black-throated Sparrow

A Black-throated Sparrow visited a feeder in Kerrville 4-25 Feb (Mimi McMillen).

Bullock's Oriole

A female Bullock's Oriole appeared for the third year in a row around Don and Joann Merritt's home in Midland. It was first seen on 14 Dec and remained thru the season.

Audubon's Oriole

An Audubon's Oriole was seen near Utopia *Uvalde* 20 Feb. It was photographed at a feeder on 1 March (Mitch Heindel).

Scott's Oriole

One was seen in *Mason* on 13 Feb (Dixie Feuerbacher).

Purple Finch

The only Purple Finches reported this winter were a female at Pedernales Falls State Park *Blanco* on 2 Dec-8 Jan (Bill McDaniel) and two in Webberville *Travis* on 9 Jan (Brush Freeman).

Cited Observers:

Andy & Julie Balinsky
Kelly Barlow
Brandon Best
Eric Carpenter
Mark Cranford
Mike Creese
Grant Crutchfield
D.D. Currie
Sally & Chuck Dalchau
Betty Rae Davis
Bob Doe
Lee Elliott
Rowe Elliott
Dodge Engelman
Tom & Carol Fawcett
Tim Fennell
Bobbie Frazier
Brush Freeman
Dixie Fueurbacher
Michelle Giles
Steve Hawkins
Mitch Heindel
Jim Henderson
Terry Hill
Jim Hughes
Leslie Linehan
Donna Kelly
James Kessler
Greg Lisciandro
Dell Little
Bill Lupardus
Barry Lyon
Bill McDaniel
Mimi McMillin
Terry Maxwell
Don & Joann Merritt
Randy Pinkston
David Pueppke
Martin Reid
Helen Rezbek
Sara St. Clair
Susan Schaezler
Georgina Schwartz
Byron Stone
Mary Stortz
Malcolm Mark Swan

Rose Marie Stortz
Stan Wellso
Sue Wiedenfeld
Tom & Pat Wimberly
Walt Wizzell