

## Fall 2006 ABA Report - Panhandle and South Plains

by Anthony Hewetson

Autumn, save for one large storm system in early September and a small one in late October, was very dry. Fortunately the systems we did get covered the region nicely and waterfowl, waders, and shorebirds put in a decent showing. Songbird migration was somewhat improved over Fall of 2005 and there were enough early arrivals, oddballs, and lingerers to make birding interesting for our more active folk.

Of particular note; the entire region started seeing an invasion of Western Bluebirds in late Autumn and unusually high numbers and good scattering of Mountain Bluebirds.

### Waterfowl through Waders

Greater Scaup - 2 near Grassland, *Lynn* 25 Nov (AnH) - rarely reported in the region despite a growing number of capable observers.

Clark's Grebe - One at Lake Six, *Lubbock* 7 Aug-15 Sep (AW, BB, AnH, GK, PK, DL, CSt) - accidental for the South Plains; our 8th report and 1st August record.

Western Grebe - One in *Randall* 28 Oct (BP, mob) - casual in the Panhandle; particularly this early in the season.

American White Pelican - One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 28 Oct (BB) - casual in the South Plains.

American Bittern - 2 in *Carson* 31 Oct (RC) - casual in the Panhandle.

Great Egret - One at Dupree Park, *Lubbock* through 29 Nov (FR, AnH) and 2 at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* through 29 Nov (BB) - the third winter in a row that individuals of this species have initiated overwintering attempts.

Snowy Egret - 3 at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* through 29 Nov (BB, AnH) - either very late lingerers or an incredibly rare attempt at overwintering.

Little Blue Heron - One at Wild Horse Lake, *Potter* 21 Aug (LS, CSa) - accidental in the Panhandle.

### Raptors through Terns

White-tailed Kite - 2 just west of Girard, *Kent* 21 Oct (AnH) - accidental but increasing in the South Plains - the 10th record for the region; all since 2001.

Harris's Hawk - One in *Gray* 20 Sep-28 Oct (JE, KG) - accidental in the Panhandle with less than 10 records. Also one adult near Shallowater, *Lubbock* 23 Sep (AnH) and one adult near Escondido Canyon, *Lubbock* 24 Nov (TS) - casual in the South Plains.

Red-shouldered Hawk - One immature at Buffalo Lake NWR, *Randall* 23 Oct (BP, PT) - accidental for the Panhandle with less than fifteen records.

Broad-winged Hawk - One at Buffalo Springs Lake, *Lubbock* 26 Aug (DL, BB, AnH) - fairly early; only the 5th August record for the South Plains.

Semipalmated Plover - 7 near Crosbyton, *Crosby* 16 Sep (BB, AnH, DL) - a high number for any one site on the South Plains.

American Avocet - 21 in *Crosby* 18 Nov (BB) - formerly considered accidental in November, now persist into November almost annually.

Willet - 2 near Smyer, *Hockley* 19 Aug (BB), one near Springlake, *Lamb* 23 Sep (AnH, AvH), and one in northeast *Lubbock* 15 Oct (AnH) - casual during fall migration on the South Plains - this was a good season!

Ruddy Turnstone - One at the Sundown Playa, *Randall* 6 Sep (LS) - accidental; only the 8th record for the Panhandle.

Sanderling - One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 7 Oct (AnH, JH, JJ) - accidental for the South Plains; the 1st record since 2002.

Dunlin - 5 at Lake Meredith, *Moore* 4 Nov (BP) - casual in the Panhandle and a goodly number for a single sighting.

Stilt Sandpiper - One at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* 19 Nov (BB) - very late; only the 2nd November record for the South Plains.

Parasitic Jaeger - One observed harassing Black Terns at Sundown Playa, *Randall* 4 Sep (BP) - accidental; the 3rd record for the Panhandle.

Sabine's Gull - One near Pantex, *Carson* 11 Sep (MK, LR) - accidental for the Panhandle; the 5th record ever. One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 23 Sep (BB) - accidental for the South Plains; the 5th record ever and a 1st for the county.

Common Tern - One at Chas Guy Park, *Lubbock* 21 Aug (BB) and one at Dupree Park, *Lubbock* 20 Aug (EM, TM) - casual in the South Plains; the first fall reports since 2002.

Least Tern - One near New Lynn, *Lynn* 19 Aug (AnH) - casual for the South Plains and the region's 4th August record.

### **Pigeons through Woodpeckers**

Red-naped Sapsucker - 3 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 30 Sep-7 Oct (BB, AnH), 2 at Ransom Lake, *Lubbock* 30 Sep (AnH), and one at Yoakum County Park, *Yoakum* 4 Nov (AnH) - formerly considered accidental in the region during fall; probably simply underreported.

### **Flycatchers through Swallows**

Eastern Wood Pewee - One singing in Thompson Grove, *Dallam* 2 Sep (BP) - far west of usual haunts in the Panhandle and a 1st county record.

Dusky Flycatcher - One at Ransom Lake, *Lubbock* 8 Oct (BB) - casual in the South Plains; the 1st October record for the region.

Black Phoebe- One at Palo Duro Canyon, *Randall* 3 Aug (RM) - accidental for the Panhandle.

Northern Shrike - One at Lake Meredith, *Moore* 4 Nov (BP) and one in *Dallam* 18-24 Nov (TF, JK, CG, RG).

Cassin's Vireo - One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 23 Sep (BB) - casual in the South Plains; the 9th record since 'Solitary' Vireo was split.

Philadelphia Vireo - One at Buffalo Lake NWR, *Randall* 4 Sep (BP) - accidental as a fall migrant in the Panhandle; less than five solid records.

Tree Swallow - Thousands of birds were stalled in the region by unsettled weather in early September. 875+ at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 2 Sep (BB, DL, AnH) was the most exceptional report and represents the highest number ever recorded for the South Plains.

### **Titmice through Warblers**

Western Bluebird - 10 at Boy's Ranch, Oldham 14 Nov (BP) and 5 at Buffalo Lake NWR, *Randall* 21 Oct (BP) - solid reports for the Panhandle. 5 near Quanah, *Hardeman* 2 Nov (BF) - VERY far east of normal haunts in South Plains.

Mountain Bluebird - 300+ at Lake Meredith, *Moore* and 700+ in *Potter* on 27 Sep (BP) - unusually high numbers, especially so early in the season, for the Panhandle. Seven reports of 4-22 birds scattered across *Bailey*, *Crosby*, *Dickens*, *Floyd*, *Lubbock*, and *Motley* from 27 Oct-30 Nov (BB, AnH, RL, AR, JR, LW) - very good numbers and scatter for fall on the South Plains.

Hermit Thrush - 2 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 19 Aug (BB) - the earliest report on record for the South Plains and only the 2nd August record for the region.

Sage Thrasher - One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 2 Sep (BB, AnH, DL) and one near Whiteface, *Cochran* 22 Sep (AnH) - very early; accidental during September on the South Plains; the 3rd and 4th September records, respectively.

Black-throated Blue Warbler - One in *Randall* 5 Oct (BM) - accidental in the Panhandle with less than 20 records.

Blackburnian Warbler - One in Lubbock, *Lubbock* 17 Sep (JC) - accidental on the South Plains; the 20th record.

Pine Warbler - One in *Randall* 20 Sep (BM) - early for the Panhandle; only the 2nd September record. One at Swenson Park, *Dickens* 5 Nov (AnH) - casual on the South Plains and a 1st county record.

Blackpoll Warbler - One at Rita Blanca Lake, *Hartley* 14 Oct (BP, LS) - accidental as a fall migrant in the Panhandle; only the 2nd October record.

Prothonotary Warbler - One at MediPark, *Potter* 8 Aug (LS) - accidental for the Panhandle with less than 10 records.

Wilson's Warbler - One at the Cochran County Golf Course, *Cochran* 4 Nov (AnH) - very late; only the 2nd November record for the entire region.

Yellow-breasted Chat - One in Pep, *Hockley* 7 Oct (AnH) - late and far west of usual haunts on the South Plains.

### **Tanagers through Finches**

Baird's Sparrow - One near Lehman, *Cochran* 4 Nov (AnH) - accidental for the region; the 1st record since 2001 - report filed with TBRC.

Bronzed Cowbird - One male and one female at White River Lake, *Crosby* 5 Aug (AnH, AvH) - persisting in the region though relatively few were noted this year.

Orchard Oriole - One female near Afton, *Dickens* 7 Oct (BB) - very late; the 1st October record for the entire region.

Lesser Goldfinch - One at Lake Tanglewood, *Randall* 10 Aug (BP) and one at Palo Duro Canyon, *Randall* 28 Oct (BP, mob) - status for the Panhandle poorly understood; all reports worth noting.

### **Observers**

BB - Brandon Best  
RC - Rudy Cadra  
JC - Jim Crites  
JE - Jan Elston

TF - Terry Ferguson  
BF - Brush Freeman  
KG - Kathryn Green  
CG - Carol Gutberlet  
RG - Ronald Gutberlet  
JH - Jack Henshall  
AH - Anthony Hewetson  
AvH - Aveline Hewetson  
JJ - Jim Joiner  
MK - Mike Keck  
JK - Jerri Kerr  
GK - Glenda Keilstrup  
PK - Phillip Kite  
RL - Rob Lee  
DL - David Lukas  
RM - Ray Matlack  
EM - Ellen McBride  
TM - Toby McBride  
BM - Bill Murphy  
BP - Barrett Pierce  
LR - Lee Read  
AR - Anona Roberts  
JR - Jerry Roberts  
FR - Floyd Robertson  
CSa - Clint Sare  
LS - Laura Sare  
CSt - Cliff Stogner  
PT - Peggy Trosper  
LW - Lois Wallace  
AW - Achim Weber

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