

North American Birds – Summer 2006 Report
Jun. – Jul.
Region 19 – Texas
Sub-region 2 – North-central Texas

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Locations key: POLC = Plano Outdoor Learning Center & Bob Woodruff Park,
Collin
Tawakoni = Lake Tawakoni, *Rains/Hunt/Van Zandt*

Weather:

“When July turned to August the drought level was changed from severe to extreme. It is so dry that stressed trees and several older trees are dead and dying around Lake Tawakoni. The Lake is eight feet low and dropping. The effect on birds was very noticeable. Most warblers left early. Swainson's Warbler that were easier to find last year were very difficult this year.” – Richard Kinney, Edgewood

“Temperatures were just a little over average overall during the period, however precipitation was way down (per Wichita Falls’ official records). July had only 1.04” for the month (2.65” below average) and July saw only 0.09” (1.49” below average). It has been very dry, although there have been a few widely scattered showers that have produced good rainfall, but they were very few and very, very localized. Burn bans continue in all counties in the area. Area ponds and lakes are drying up. Larger lakes like Arrowhead and even Wichita still have good water levels, but poor North Fork Buffalo Creek Reservoir (aka Lake Buffalo) has yet to recover from the last few years of drought (beginning in 2003) and continues to shrink into oblivion.

Wild foods are scarce and water hard to find for some wildlife. With pastures drying out, many grasses have died back or gone dormant. Several duck species were found that should not have been here this time of year. Have the prairie potholes dried up, too?” - Debra (McKee) Halter, Henrietta

ANSERIFORMES

A pair of **Greater White-fronted Goose** were at Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul., probably sick or injured birds that spent the summer with the local Canada Goose flock (BG, RR, BS). This species is unexpected in summer.

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were reported with young at Texas A&M Commerce *Hunt* 21 Jul., and also one from *Rains*, away from known sites for this local breeder (DG).

Forty **Mallard** were reported from *Hunt* 2 Jul., a high count for summer (RB).

Scarce in the area, two **Mottled Duck** were in *Rains* in mid-Jul. (RK).

Redhead, Gadwall, and several **Northern Shoveler** were found at Lake Iowa Park *Wichita* 18 Jul, where no previous July records exist for that part of the region for any of the species (TK, JK). Also present was a **Blue-winged Teal**, with only one previous July record (TK, JK).

CICONIIFORMES

Five **Tricolored Herons** were at Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul., a high count (BG, RR, BS).

Thirty-five **Roseate Spoonbill** was an unprecedented number at Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul.; several adults were present among the many juveniles (BG, RR, BS).

At Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul., a high count of 120 **White Ibis** were tallied (BG, RR, BS). In strange contrast none were reported this summer from Tawakoni *Rains/Van Zandt*, where they were numerous the previous summer (RK).

White-faced Ibis were reported as being early in *Wichita*, with one at Lake Iowa Park 18 Jul and 3 at North Fork Buffalo Creek Res. 26 Jul (JK, TK). The previous early date for *Wichita* was 8 Aug; it is possible that these early birds dispersed from nearby Hackberry Flats, Oklahoma where they breed (DHa). Two **White-faced Ibis** were at Tawakoni *Rains* 11 Jun. (RB) and one at Tawakoni *Hunt* 26 Jul. (RK).

Twenty-three **Wood Stork** were present at Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul., an irregular post-breeding wanderer to the area (BG, RR, BS).

FALCONIFORMES

A very early migrating **Peregrine Falcon** was seen chasing terns and shorebirds at Tawakoni *Rains* 10 Jul. (RK).

An **American Kestrel** was in w. *Clay*, where they are scarce in summer, 11 Jun (DHa).

GRUIFORMES

Common Moorhen is a scarce and local summer resident and nester so 1-2 at Lake Iowa Park *Wichita* 18 and 26 Jul were good finds (JK, TK).

CHARADRIIFORMES

A pair of **Snowy Plover** spent the summer at Tawakoni *Rains* (RK). TR and CR found a probable family group of four there 4 Jul., which would represent a new breeding location for this rare and local species.

A rare **Piping Plover** was at Tawakoni *Rains* 4 Jul. (TR, CR).

A hundred **Black-necked Stilts** at Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul. was a very high count at this breeding location (BG, RR, BS). Single birds were reported from Lake Iowa Park *Wichita* 18 and 26 Jul, possibly wanderers from nearby Hackberry Flats, Oklahoma where they nest (JK, TK).

Tawakoni has less than ten records of **Long-billed Curlew** so three on 17 Jun (*Rains*) was a good record (MW).

RB photographed a rare **Ruddy Turnstone** at Tawakoni *Rains* 30 Jul.

Two **Sanderlings**, rare migrants, were at Tawakoni *Rains* 26-31 Jul (RK).

Seven early **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were at Tawakoni *Rains* 26 Jul (RK) and 2 were at Southside *Dallas* 29 Jul. (BG).

Uncommon late summer migrants, 3 **Caspian Terns** were at Tawakoni *Rains* 11 and 27 Jun (RK, MW).

CUCULIFORMES

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were notably absent from Arbor Hills Park *Denton* this season (PP), where they are usually conspicuous residents.

STRIGIFORMES

Burrowing Owl is a very local resident in the western counties, so one 17 June near Charlie *Wichita* was a good find (PM).

PICIFORMES

Ladder-backed Woodpeckers were harder to find this summer at Arbor Hills Park *Denton* (PP). This species has nested at the park in recent years and is a scarce and local resident in the vicinity of the metroplex.

PASSERIFORMES

TYRANNIDAE

An early **Alder Flycatcher** was observed at Tawakoni *Van Zandt* 1 Jul (RK).

VIREONIDAE

A **Bell's Vireo** was observed at LBJ Nat. Grasslands *Wise* 3 Jul (CC). This species seems to be scarce and declining through much of its range and can still be found with some regularity in the western counties of the region.

ALAULIDAE

Horned Lark is rarely reported in summer in recent years, so one near Charlie *Wichita* 17 Jun was a good record (PM).

SITTIDAE

Three **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were seen at their usual haunts in se. *Van Zandt* 16 Jun (RK), possibly the only area in the region to find this species.

SYLVIIDAE

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are very local and uncommon summer residents of the region. PA found them regularly through the period at POLC *Collin*, including a probable family group 24 Jun.

PARULIDAE

A rare and early **Prairie Warbler** was reported from Lake Tawakoni State Park *Hunt* 8 Jul (VW).

Northern Parulas, local and uncommon breeders in the region, were noted throughout the period and presumed breeding at White Rock Lake *Dallas* (m. obs.) and at POLC *Collin* where a pair plus a juvenile were seen (PA).

TR and CR observed 4 **Swainson's Warblers** in se. *Van Zandt* 4 Jul, where this first known breeding population for the region was discovered the previous summer.

A pair of **Louisiana Waterthrushes** were seen and heard singing 23 Jul at LBJ Nat. Grasslands *Wise*, probably local breeders at the western edge of the species' range (CC).

EMBERIZIDAE

Field Sparrows are very local summer residents in the region, and 2 streaked juveniles among several singing adults at LBJ Nat. Grasslands *Wise* 3 Jul provided a good breeding record (CC).

ICTERIDAE

Orchard Orioles were more common than usual in *Hunt* and *Van Zandt* this summer (RK).
