

North American Birds – Winter 2007 Report

North Central Texas Region

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Compiler: D. D. Currie
2703 Colleen Dr.
Arlington, TX 76016
ddbirder@sbcglobal.net

Abbreviations: Fort Worth Audubon Society (F.W.A.S.)

Weather:

“December and January were much wetter than normal. January was also colder than normal February has been dry and cold. As result we had two seasons rolled into a one. A mild wet winter turned cold and drier. We had a small icing spell in January. Ducks and Geese dominated the season. 1000's of ducks piled into recently flooded parts of Lake Tawakoni Rains Co. and Hunt Co. Yet the lake remains 8 ft. low. It made for interesting season.” – Richard Kinney, Edgewood

“December and January were warmer than average, but a cold snap in mid February reminded everyone that it is still winter. Precipitation was about average.” – Debra Halter, Henrietta, TX

General Observations:

An unusually high number of Texas review species were observed during the Winter 2007 reporting period including: Red-necked Grebe (Lake Kickapoo, *Archer*), Little Gull (several birds at several locations), Black-headed Gull (Lake Lewisville, *Denton*), Mew Gull (Lake Lewisville, *Denton*), Thayer's Gull (Lake Tawakoni, *Rains*), Costa's Hummingbird (*Parker*), Snow Bunting (Lake Lewisville, *Denton*), and last, but not least, Common Redpoll (*Wise*).

In addition to these very rare sightings, a significant number of other rare loons, grebes, and gulls were noted at a variety of locations in the region, some lingering throughout the reporting period.

Despite the presence of a goodly number of extreme rarities, some of the more common species were noticeably sparse and/or absent. Due to prolonged drought conditions prior to this reporting period, raptors and sparrows were in low numbers throughout the reporting period. North Central Texas winter irruptive species such as Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, and Red-breasted Nuthatch were virtually absent in the region. On a positive note, Mountain Bluebirds, typically rare for the region, were found in high numbers on numerous occasions in *Throckmorton*.

Several regional Christmas Bird Counts tallied a number of rare sightings, as did field trips conducted in conjunction with the Winter 2007 Texas Ornithological Society meeting held in Arlington, *Tarrant*, proving the theory that more birders, birding more locations, equals more rare birds.

Sightings:

Rare for the season, one **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** was seen at Lake Arlington, *Tarrant* on 22 Feb (GC).

Two adult and one juvenile **Tundra Swans** were found 7 Dec at Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* (KH, JC, LL, WM, DM), the first sighting of this rare winter visitor at the NWR in many years.

An unusually high number of **Greater Scaup** were observed in *Archer* on 3 Feb. Forty-eight were seen at Lake Diversion and 6 were recorded at Lake Kickapoo (DDC, DL, GC). Five **Greater Scaup** were also seen at Greenville City Lake, *Hunt* on 10 Feb (RB).

A rare **White-winged Scoter** previously found on 26 Nov, was still present on 6 Jan + at Firestation Pond, *Grayson* (TR). Four **White-winged Scoters** were noted at Joe Pool Lake, *Dallas* on 18 Feb (DR).

One very rare winter visiting **Long-tailed Duck** was seen flying into a power line at Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* on 2 Dec (TR). The specimen was not recovered.

Eight rare to North Central Texas **Common Mergansers** were seen at Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* 2 Dec (TR), one found at Lake Wichita, *Archer* on 9 Dec (TK, JK), one observed 3 Jan at the Red River near Lake Texoma, *Grayson* (LL), and another female seen at Lake Lewisville, *Denton* on 6 Jan (RP).

A very rare winter resident **Red-throated Loon** was seen at Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* on 10 Feb (GC, TR) and 2 more were noted on 25 Feb (TR, BS) also at Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson* (TR, BS).

An uncommon **Pacific Loon** was reported at Lake Ray Roberts, *Denton* (BF) on 23 Dec, another at Lake Lewisville, *Denton* on 31 Dec (MR) and another was observed on numerous dates (10, 17, & 24 Dec; 7, 10, & 12 Jan; and 4 Feb) at Lake Tawakoni, *Van Zandt* (RK).

Mid-Feb brought a huge influx of **Horned Grebes** to Lake Tawakoni, *Rains* with estimates reaching 5000 (RK).

A very rare winter visiting **Red-necked Grebe** was observed on 28 Jan at Lake Kickapoo, *Archer* (SL, DHo, DPa). The bird lingered throughout the reporting period at the same location.

One **Western Grebe** was observed at Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* on 1 Jan (CA). Three **Western Grebes** were also noted on 28 Jan at Lake Kickapoo, *Archer* (SL, DHo, DPa).

A single **Clark's Grebe** was seen on 3 Feb at Lake Kickapoo, *Archer* (DDC, DL, GC), along with the previously reported Red-necked and Western Grebes.

Amazingly, six species of grebe were noted on 3 Feb in *Archer*: **Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, and Clark's Grebe** (DDC, DL, GC).

A possible county record **Neotropic Cormorant** was seen on 4 Jan in extreme nw. *Hunt* (MW). An incredible 9 were seen at Lake Tawakoni, *Van Zandt* on 4 Feb (RR). Another was noted at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* on 10 Jan (PBa, RG).

A rare winter **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was seen during the Fort Worth Christmas Bird Count, *Tarrant* on 16 Dec (F.W.A.S.).

A **Harris's Hawk**, very rare for North Central Texas, was seen in *Somervell* on 24 Dec (MR, SC).

Noticeably absent throughout the region and reporting period, a **Ferruginous Hawk** was reported in *Wise* on 16 Dec (CC, MC, KS).

One light morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was seen in *Johnson* on 23 Dec (BF). In *Throckmorton*, one was seen on 31 Dec (DDC, DL), 2 were present on 7 Jan (GC, BG, PB, RR), one on 28 Jan (GC, RH), and two on 18 Feb (GC, BS).

One **Crested Caracara** was reported on along Winscott-Plover Road, *Tarrant* on 11 Dec (JG) and another on 24 Dec in *Tarrant* (MR, SC). Very few records exist for this species in *Tarrant*.

A late **Black-bellied Plover** lingered into the season with the last sighting on 10 Dec at Lake Tawakoni, *Hunt* (RK).

Four rare winter visiting **Snowy Plovers** were seen at Lake Tawakoni, *Rains* on 3 Dec (MW).

A rare winter **American Avocet** was reported at Lake Arrowhead, *Archer* on 18 Feb (BB, GM).

One **Long-billed Curlew**, rare for the season, was reported at Miller's Creek Reservoir, *Throckmorton* on 22 Dec (GC, TR, DH, BS).

On 30 Dec, a rare inland **Sanderling** was found during the Christmas Bird Count conducted at Lake Tawakoni, *Rains* (RR, BG, TR)

A first park record **American Woodcock** was noted at Lake Tawakoni State Park, *Hunt* on 10 Jan (JS).

One **Franklin's Gull**, unusual for the season, was seen at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* 6 Jan (BG).

Very rare winter visiting **Little Gulls** were noted on several occasions during the reporting period. One was observed at Lake Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* on 10 Dec (GC, TR, BS), 2 additional birds at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* on 1 Jan (CR, BS) and throughout the reporting period, and another at Lake Ray Hubbard, *Dallas*, on 27 Jan (GC, TR, BS).

A very rare winter visitor adult **Black-headed Gull** was observed at Lake Lewisville, *Denton* on 31 Jan (MR, SC)

A **Mew Gull**, a very rare winter visitor, was reported at Lake Lewisville, *Denton* on 31 Dec (MR).

A rare first winter **California Gull** was seen at Lake Tawakoni, *Hunt* on 20 Nov (MW) and a second winter bird was seen at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* on 17 Dec and again on 27 Jan (GC, BS).

A rare first winter **Thayer's Gull** was seen at Lake Tawakoni, *Rains* on 31 Dec (MW).

An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, fondly named "Spot" returned for a third consecutive year and was present throughout the reporting period at Lake Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* (GC). Another adult was seen on 16 Dec (GC, BG, PB, RR) and 10 Jan at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* (PBa, RG), one at River Legacy Park, *Tarrant* on 16 Jan (JSi), and yet another winter adult bird was noted on 19 Jan at Lake Lewisville, *Denton* (KL).

A first county record **White-winged Dove** was seen at Terrell, *Kaufman* on 24 Feb (RK).

An extremely rare winter **Common Nighthawk** was reported at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* on 16 Dec (GC, BG).

An unprecedented male **Costa's Hummingbird** originally observed on 30 Nov at a private residence in *Parker* lingered until 20 Feb (MWa). The bird, which was photographed by many observers, endured several bouts of snow and inclement weather and seemingly developed to maturity before the eyes of many observers. This species is considered accidental east of the Trans Pecos region.

Two female **Rufous Hummingbirds** were reported at a private residence in *Tarrant* on 2 Dec (LB) with one remaining throughout the reporting period.

A very late **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was seen at Lewisville Water Treatment Plant, *Denton* on 27 Dec (BG).

The **Northern Shrike** previously found on 11 Nov near Hagerman N.W.R., *Grayson*, continued into the reporting period with a sighting on 5 Dec+ (LL).

One **Chihuahuan Raven**, a seasonal rarity, was reported n. of Breckenridge, *Stephens* on 28 Jan (GC, RH).

Four very early **Cliff Swallows** were seen at Lake Arrowhead, *Archer* in 27 Feb (SL).

Verdin were noted on several occasions in the western portion of the region. One bird was seen on 22 Dec in *Throckmorton* (GC, TR, DH, BS), another in *Throckmorton* on 7 Jan (GC), and a third on 18 Feb in *Stephens* (GC, BS).

A pair of **Rock Wrens** overwintered at Lake Tawakoni State Park, *Hunt* (RK). They were seen throughout the reporting period. Up to 3 **Rock Wrens** were observed throughout the reporting period at along the dam at Miller's Creek Reservoir, *Baylor* (GC, BG, PB, RR, TR, BS).

Irregular in winter, 2 **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were observed at Hubbard Creek Lake, *Stephens* on 1 Dec (DP), another was seen during the Fort Worth Christmas Bird Count, *Tarrant* on 16 Dec (F.W.A.S.), and yet another was seen on 14 Jan at a private residence in *Johnson* (MR).

Two **Sage Thrashers**, casual winter visitors, were reported in *Throckmorton* on 18 Feb (GC, BS).

Several seasonally rare warblers were noted during the reporting period. A **Nashville Warbler** and **Yellow Warbler** were seen during the Fort Worth Christmas Bird Count, *Tarrant* on 16 Dec (F.W.A.S.). Two **Black-and-white Warblers** were seen at White Rock Lake, *Dallas* during the Dallas Christmas Bird Count on 16 Dec (GC, PB).

Two **Canyon Towhees**, uncommon for this region, were reported on 31 Dec in s. *Throckmorton* (DDC, DL). Two singing males were also observed in s. *Throckmorton* on 18 Feb (GC, BS).

Three uncommon **Black-throated Sparrows** were seen in *Throckmorton* on 22 Dec (GC, TR, BS, DH), 2 more on 31 Dec (DDC, DL) and 2 again on 18 Feb (GC, BS) all in *Throckmorton*.

On 16 Dec, during the Dallas Christmas Bird Count, *Dallas*, a very rare winter immature **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found at a private residence (SB).

Lake Lewisville, *Denton* produced an extremely rare for the state **Snow Bunting** on 26 Dec (KL). The bird lingered at least until 13 Jan and was often seen consorting with a group of Killdeer.

A scarce winter **Indigo Bunting** was reported at Lake Tawakoni, *Rains* on 10 Jan (RK).

A rare winter male **Painted Bunting** was observed on 12 Jan (JJ) at Fossil Rim Nature Center, *Somervell* on one of the Winter 2007 Texas Ornithological Society field trips. Another unbanded female was seen in an open area on 17 Feb at the Fort Worth Zoo, *Tarrant* (GC).

A **Common Redpoll**, considered accidental for the state, was reported at private residence in *Wise* on 22 Jan (KH). The bird, which was seen and photographed by many, lingered for the remainder of the reporting period.

List of Contributors:

Charlie Amos (CA), Ron Baltzegar (RB), Lynn Barber (LB), Sharon Barker (SB), Peter Barnes (PBa), Peter Billingham (PB), Buck Buchanan (BB), Jack Chiles (JC), Sheridan Coffey (SC), Greg Cook (GC), **D. D. Currie (DDC)**, Claire Curry (CC), Mary Curry (MC), Jeff Gerbracht (JG), Brian Gibbons (BG), Ron Gutberlet (RG), Brush Freeman (BF), Karl Haller (KH), Rebecca Haney (RB), Derek Hill (DH), Dave Holbert (DHo), Ken Hunt (KH), Jim Jones (JJ), Jan Kaspar (JK), Tim Kaspar (TK), Lee Lemmons (LL), Dell Little (DL), Keith Lockhart (KL), Scotty Lofland (SL), Richard Kinney (RK), Dick Malnory, (DM), Wayne Meyer (WM), Gail Morris (GM), Dan Patrick (DPa), Jim Pierce (JP), Randy Pinkston (RP), David Powell (DP), Thomas Riecke (TR), David Ringer (DR), Ross Rasmussen (RR), Marie Redwine (MR), Chris Runk (CR), Kathy Saucier (KS), John Schenck (JS), Jim Sipiora (JSi), Bob Stone (BS), Matt White (MW), Michelle Wayman (MWa)