

Winter 2006/2007 ABA Report – Panhandle and Southern High Plains

By Anthony Hewetson

This past winter was pretty tough on birds and birders. Many weekends of potentially good birding were lost to severe weather and the number of reports was down considerably from last year. When people did get out, though, they usually managed to find some good stuff.

Waterfowl through Vultures

Brant – One at Huneke Park, *Lubbock* 4-5 Jan (CS, mob, photos) was well-photographed and represented the seventh record for the Southern High Plains.

Tundra Swan – 6 near Quanah, *Hardeman* 5-8 Jan (SW, DP, mob, photos) and one at Caprock Canyon State Park, *Briscoe* 16 Jan (DO) were both supported by good details and represented solid reports of this increasingly rare species for the Panhandle.

Cinnamon Teal – One at SE Park in Amarillo, *Randall* 6 Jan (MM) and 2 in *Briscoe* 10 Feb (JRe, LS) represented rare winter reports for the Panhandle (less than fifteen winter records).

Common Loon – 8 at Lake Meredith, *Hutchinson* 3-28 Dec (BP, RC, LS) represented an unusually high number for a Panhandle sighting of this species.

Western Grebe – 5 at Greenbelt Lake, *Donley* 17 Dec (BP) represented an unusually high number for a Panhandle sighting of this species.

Brown Pelican – One at Lake Alan Henry, *Garza* 17 Feb (JRo) provided the eighth record for the Southern High Plains.

American Bittern – One at SE Park, Amarillo, *Randall* 21 Jan 9 (BP) represented one of less than twenty winter records for the Panhandle.

Great Egret – One at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* 1 Dec-28 Feb (BB, AH) represented the third successful year in a row of overwintering for this species in the Southern High Plains.

Snowy Egret – One at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* 1-16 Dec (AH, BB) represented the second year in a row of attempted overwintering for this species in the Southern High Plains.

Reddish Egret – One at Dupree Park, *Lubbock* 12 Feb (EM) represented the second record for the Southern High Plains.

Turkey Vulture – One at Lake Meredith, *Hutchinson* 3 Dec (BP) represented the second December record ever for the Panhandle and one near Clairemont, *Kent* 24 Dec (AH) represented the second December record ever for the Southern High Plains.

Raptors through Gulls

White-tailed Kite – 2 at Palo Duro Canyon, *Randall* 11 Jan (RM) represented the first winter record for the Panhandle and 2 near Girard, *Kent* 24 Dec (AH) represented the second winter record for the Southern High Plains.

Lesser Yellowlegs – 3 at Lake Meredith, *Moore* 3 Dec (BP) represented the sixth winter record for the Panhandle and 13 at Leroy Elmore Park, *Lubbock* 16 Dec (JST, mob) represented an unusually high number for a winter sighting in the Southern High Plains.

Solitary Sandpiper – One at MacKenzie Park, *Lubbock* 16 Dec (PK) was well-described and represented the first December record for this species since 1971.

Wilson's Snipe – One at Lake Meredith, *Hutchinson* 3 Dec (BP), 4 at Greenbelt Lake, *Donley* 17 Dec (BP), and 2 at Lake Meredith, *Potter* 17 Dec (fide RM) represented very rare winter reports for the Panhandle – the species is not worth detailing during winter on the Southern High Plains, with thirteen reports this season.

American Woodcock – One near Quanah, *Hardeman* 5 Jan (MT) represented, most likely, a first record for the county and an exciting record of a species accidental for the entire region.

Bonaparte's Gull – One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 17 Dec (AH, mob) represented the fifth December record for the Southern High Plains.

Pigeons through Woodpeckers

Northern Saw-whet Owl – One at Lubbock residence, *Lubbock* 9 Feb-28 Feb (DH, KH, mob, photos) was well-photographed and represented the third record for the Southern High Plains.

Common Poorwill – One at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Dec (AH, mob) represented the second December record for the Southern High Plains and for the county.

Flycatchers through Swallows

Black Phoebe – One near Justiceburg, *Garza* 2 Dec (BB) represented the fourth December record for the Southern High Plains.

Say's Phoebe – One in *Randall* 17 Dec (LS) represented a very rare winter record for the Panhandle.

Northern Shrike – One at Lake Meredith, *Hutchinson* 3 Dec (BP) represented the only report for the species in our region this winter.

Purple Martin – 3 in Clarendon, *Donley* 28 Feb (JT, VT) represented a very early arrival date for the Panhandle – they are now expected in late February in the Southern High Plains.

Cave Swallow – 2 near Clairemont, *Kent* 23 Feb (AH) represented the earliest arrival date for this species only recently established in the Southern High Plains

Titmice through Warblers

House Wren - One at Mitchell Creek, *Donley* 17 Dec (BP) represented one of less than 15 winter records for the Panhandle.

Sedge Wren – One at Lake Meredith, *Potter* 17 Dec (fide RM) represented the seventh record for the Panhandle and 2 at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Dec (BB) represented the fourth winter in a row that the species has wintered somewhere on the Southern High Plains.

Western Bluebird – 46 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 17 Dec (BB, AH) represented the highest number ever recorded for the Southern High Plains and one at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Dec (RK, PK) was far east of the species usual wanderings through the Southern High Plains.

Orange-crowned Warbler – One at Lake Meredith, *Potter* 17 Dec (fide RM) represented one of less than ten winter records for the Panhandle.

Pine Warbler – One at the Lubbock Cemetery, *Lubbock* 10 Dec-28 Jan (WW, AH) represented a rare wintering record for the Southern High Plains.

Tanagers through Finches

Green-tailed Towhee – One at White River Lake, *Crosby* 16 Dec (CS, DL) represented the fifth December record for the Southern High Plains.

Le Conte's Sparrow – One at Lake Six, *Lubbock* 16 Dec (AH, mob), 2 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 17 Dec (PK, mob), and one near Girard, *Kent* 24 Dec (AH) represented the ninth, tenth, and eleventh December records for the Southern High Plains.

Lapland Longspur – 300 near Matador, *Motley* 21 Jan (BB) represented an unusually high number of this rarely reported from the Southern High Plains species.

Yellow-headed Blackbird – 2 in Amarillo, *Randall* 16 Dec (fide RM) represented one of less than twenty winter records for the Panhandle.

Rusty Blackbird – 22 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 17 Dec (AH, mob) represented the highest number ever recorded from the Southern High Plains.

Observers

BB – Brandon Best
RC – Rudy Cadra
JC – Jeremy Clark
DH – Dale Hayden
KH – Karen Hayden
PK – Phillip Kite
RK – Rich Kostecke
DL – Dell Little
RM – Ray Matlock
EM – Ellen McBride
MM – Mary Ann Melton
DO – Deanna Oberheu
BP – Barrett Pierce
DP – David Powell
JRe – Joel Reese
JRo – Jerry Roberts
LS – Laura Sare
CS – Cliff Stogner
JT – Jay Teague
VT – Verna Teague
MT – Matt Thompson
ST – Susan Tomlinson
JST – Jo-Szu (Ross) Tsai
SW – Steve Welborn
WW – William Wenthe