

**North American Birds Report**  
**South Texas Sub-Region**  
**Aug. 1 – Nov. 30, 2006**

Weather was mainly cool and damp in the Lower Rio Grande Valley with consistent rainfall, and no extreme cold periods, except a mid-January snap. The Coastal Bend experienced slightly above average rainfall, with moderate temperatures. Over-wintering neotropical species were noted, particularly Blue-winged and Prothonotary Warbler and American Redstart. Rose-throated Grosbeaks were seen in multiple numbers at various locations in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Large numbers of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins were also reported at several locations in the Valley.

*Common Eider*... An adult (or near adult) male was collected by a hunter in the northern Laguna Madre, *Nueces*, on Jan. 8 (*fide* KK).

*Surf Scoter*... One was found Dec. 17 in the Brownsville Ship Channel between the Boca Chica and South Padre Island jetties, *Cameron*, (BMc).

*Long-tailed Duck*... One was well-described Dec. 13 in the surf at Padre Island National Seashore, *Kenedy*, the first such surf record for many years. (PK, *fide* BS).

*Wood Stork*.. One was found Dec. 22 at La Sal del Rey, *Hidalgo*, for a rare winter record (DJ).

*Bald Eagle*.. A first-year bird was found harassing an Osprey w/fish Feb. 3 at Laguna Atascosa, *Cameron*, for a rare LRGV record (SB). An adult bird was seen Dec. 7 at Hazel Bazemore County Park, *Nueces*, for a rare record for the county (JM).

*Common Black-Hawk*... One was found Feb. 10 at Salineno, *Starr* (KE), and may have been the same individual seen in late December at that location.

*Zone-tailed Hawk*... Multiple birds were reported from the LRGV; One Dec. 18 at Brownsville, *Cameron* (DB), one seen at Sabal Palm Grove, *Cameron*, (PD) was probably present for much of the season (BMc, KE), and another was found Jan. 19 at Salineno, *Starr* (JM).

*Ferruginous Hawk*... Three were found Dec. 29 in *Kenedy* for a noteworthy record that far south (BF). One was at La Sal de Vieja, *Willacy*, Feb. 17 (MH, *fide* BMc).

*Prairie Falcon*.. One was found Dec. 23 east of Harlingen, *Cameron* for a rare LRGV record (MG). Two were found Dec 26 near Sebastian, *Willacy*, (DJ, *fide* BMc) for a rare winter record there.

*Whooping Crane*... The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, *Aransas*, flock was estimated at 237 individuals with no mortality recorded for the season (TS *fide* PB).

*Snowy Plover*...Thirty-five were found Jan. 21 at La Sal del Rey, *Hidalgo*, for a very high winter number at an inland location (DJ, *fide* BMC).

*American Woodcock*...One was found at Bentsen Jan. 17 for a rare LRGV record (R&MS, *fide* JB).

*Wilson's Phalarope*...The isolated winter flock continued at La Sal del Rey, *Hidalgo*, with **109** being found on Dec. 17 (DJ *fide* BMC).

*California Gull*...Three were noteworthy but not unexpected Feb. 3 at Elliott Landfill, Corpus Christi, *Nueces* (SC, MR, WS).

*Glaucous Gull*... One first-winter bird was found Feb. 3 at Elliott Landfill, Corpus Christi, *Nueces*, a species that usually occurs once or twice in the Coastal Bend each winter (SC, MR, WS).

*Green Parakeet*..A high count of **570** was tallied on the Dec. 16 Santa Ana CBC (MCa).

*Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl*...At least two birds continued to be present at Bentsen throughout the period (JR). A calling bird was heard Feb 6&7 near Salineno (SB) and another was heard Feb. 9 along the Rio Grande River near Mission (SB).

*Short-eared Owl*... There were several reports for the LRGV: One was seen Dec. 5 flying over the flats north of the South Padre Island Convention Center, *Cameron* (RA). Three were found Dec. 25 near Weslaco, *Hidalgo*, along with a road kill (MG). One was found Jan. 3 in sugar cane on the Bentsen CBC near Anzalduas County Park, *Hidalgo*, and another was seen Jan. 22 at Bentsen (MG).

*Costa's Hummingbird*...An immature male was found in Port O'Connor, *Calhoun*, Dec. 18 for a rare coastal record. (BF, Details to TBRC).

*Yellow-throated Vireo*...One was found Feb. 4 at Sabal Palm Grove, *Cameron* (DB *fide* BMC).

*Brown Jay*...Only three birds are known to exist in Texas as of this winter, attending feeders both at Salineno and Chapeno, *Starr*, throughout the season. As recently as the early 1980's, 50+- could be found daily along a few miles of the Starr County Rio Grande River woodland (JA, *pers.comm*).

*Tamaulipas Crow*...There were no reliable reports during the winter season.

*Blue-winged Warbler*...One was at Sabal Palm Grove, *Cameron*, Dec. 18 (C&LL, RH) for a very late record.

*Tropical Parula*.. One was found Jan. 10 at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, *Aransas*, for a rare Coastal Bend record (JM).

*Yellow "Mangrove" Warbler*...Several individuals were along the mangrove bayshore in the Laguna Madre at South Padre Island, *Cameron*, on Jan. 10 (SCo).

*Townsend's Warbler*...Two were present at Anzalduas County Park, *Hidalgo*, Dec. 5 (BMc) and Dec. 15 (MG) and apparently for some time after.

*Hermit Warbler*...One was present from Dec. 5 until the end of the period at Anzalduas County Park, *Hidalgo* (MG, RS m.ob. photo) for a very rare winter record.

*American Redstart*...One was found Dec. 30 at Frontera Audubon Sanctuary, *Weslaco, Hidalgo*, for an unusual winter record (DJ).

*Prothonotary Warbler*...One was found Jan. 1 on the Guadalupe Delta, *Refugio*, for a rare winter record (L&PS). Another was located Feb. 2 on the King Ranch, *Kleberg*, (BW).

***Gray-crowned Yellowthroat***... Two birds believed to be this species were briefly observed Dec. 2 at Sabal Palm Grove, *Cameron* (BMc). Despite being reported through the remainder of season, no documentation was obtained during the period.

*Western Tanager*.. One was found Dec. 30 at Frontera Audubon Sanctuary, *Weslaco, Hidalgo* (DJ).

*Rufous-crowned Sparrow*...One was well east of the species' normal range Jan. 28 at La Sal del Rey, *Hidalgo*, (ST, *fide* BMc).

*Rose-breasted Grosbeak*...This species was seen in small numbers in the LRGV from Dec. 30 when an imm. male was found at Bentsen (R&LG). One was present at Santa Ana Feb. 1 (SB). One was at Laguna Atascosa, *Cameron*, on Jan. 17 (SS). A total of **nine** birds were found at Bentsen February 15 (RR, *fide* JR). An immature male was seen Feb. 4 near Mathis, *Live Oak* (RB). This seems to be an unprecedented event, as the species has a history of being very rare in winter in Texas. The birds were generally seen feeding on Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) seeds.

*Black-headed Grosbeak*...Two were seen at Bentsen from Jan. 13 until at least Feb. 23, Feeding on sunflower seeds at feeders (JB, DD&JD, *fide* JR, BMc). One was at the Quinta Mazatlan World Birding Center, *McAllen, Hidalgo*, Dec. 10 (BM *fide* BMc).

*Rusty Blackbird*...One was photographed Jan. 17 at the Santa Gertrudis division of the King Ranch, *Kleberg*, for a rare South Texas sighting (BW).

Observers:  
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Rick Snider  
Tom Stehn  
Sandy Turner  
Brian Williams

Bentsen: Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park/World Birding Center, *Hidalgo*  
Santa Ana: Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, *Hidalgo*