

Central Texas – Fall 2007 (1 Aug 2007 – 30 Nov 2007)

Compiler by Eric Carpenter

Counties Covered: Andrews, Bandera, Bastrop, Bell, Bexar, Blanco, Borden, Brown, Burnet, Caldwell, Callahan, Coke, Coleman, Comal, Comanche, Concho, Coryell, Crockett, Dawson, De Witt, Eastland, Ector, Edwards, Erath, Falls, Fayette, Fisher, Gaines, Gillespie, Glasscock, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hamilton, Hays, Howard, Irion, Jones, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Lampasas, Lavaca, Lee, Llano, Martin, Mason, McCullough, McLennan, Medina, Menard, Midland, Milam, Mills, Mitchell, Nolan, Reagan, Real, Runnels, San Saba, Schleicher, Scurry, Shackelford, Sterling, Sutton, Taylor, Tom Green, Travis, Upton, Uvalde, Williamson, Wilson

Seasonal Summary: After a wetter than normal summer, the fall was rather hot and dry. A couple of mild cool fronts towards the end of the period helped a bit though mild temperatures prevailed and there seemed to be paucity of many wintering species. No great comments were made about the migration period, which seemed rather ordinary for the most part. Shorebird habitat was perhaps more available than during most falls (due to the summer rains) but there wasn't always a great number of shorebirds to be found. Still, a fair number of excellent birds were found (and many photographed).

Notable Species observed during the period:

Brant - A "Black" Brant discovered in Andrews, *Andrews* 3 Nov lingered there until its demise 13 Nov (†Erik Breden, m.ob.). The cause of death was later determined to be starvation likely related to the bird's broken beak. *TBRC Review Species*.

Surf Scoter - An imm. Surf Scoter was present on L. Pflugerville, *Travis* 17 Nov (Eric Carpenter). *Rare fall migrant – not quite annual*.

Black Scoter - One of the highlights of the season was a Black Scoter discovered 17 Nov on L. Pflugerville, *Travis* (ph., Tim Fennell). Seen by many, it stayed thru the end of the period providing only the second Austin area record. *Rare fall migrant – not annual; it was still present as of this writing (30 Dec)*.

Pacific Loon - Two Pacific Loons were on L. Buchanan, *Llano* 24 Nov (ph., Tim Fennell). *Rare fall migrant/winter visitor – almost annual*.

Common Loon - Quite early was a Common Loon detected on Lake Lady Bird, *Travis* 26 Aug (Andy & Julia Balinsky). *Early*.

Least Grebe - Perhaps owing to the extensive rains from the summer, Least Grebes nested at two locations in *Travis*: a pair at Hornsby Bend fledged young in early September (m.ob.) and another pair successfully nested in early November (Craig Farquhar) at the Parks & Wildlife complex. *Rare nesting records for Travis County*.

Western Grebe - An early Western Grebe showed up on L. Buchanan, *Llano* 3 Sept (Leslie Linehan), and was seen again 30 Sep (Tim Fennell). *Early*.

Brown Pelican - Mitchell L., *Bexar* hosted a Brown Pelican 16-23 Sept (Dodge Engleman). *Rare but somewhat regular post-breeding wanderer*.

Neotropic Cormorant – Rare this far inland, a Neotropic Cormorant was present at Soda Lake, *Midland* 15-27 Aug (Rose Marie Stortz). *Rare and perhaps expanding in the nw. portion of region*.

Glossy Ibis - A Glossy Ibis near Granger L., *Williamson* 18 Aug (Tim Fennell) provided a first county record. *Rare visitor – almost annual though not necessarily in the fall; first county record.*

Swallow-tailed Kite - Swallow-tailed Kites continue to have an increased presence as post-breeding wanderers and/or fall migrants with at least six sightings. Three at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* (Gary Newgord) and four others near *Uteley*, *Bastrop* (Brush Freeman) on 2 Sep were of note. More interesting were 2 birds east of Comanche, *Comanche* 3 Sep (ph., Ray Matlack) and a single bird north of Leakey, *Real* 11 Sep (Tony Gallucci). *Increasing numbers of fall visitors being seen in the last few years.*

Broad-winged Hawk - A rare migrant in the western part of the region was a Broad-winged Hawk over Andrews, *Andrews* 6 Oct (Erik Breden). *Uncommon in western part of region.*

Zone-tailed Hawk - A Zone-tailed Hawk put in an appearance near Webberville, *Travis* 27 Oct (Brush Freeman). More surprising was a Zone-tailed Hawk near MidKiff, *Midland* 4 Nov (Alvin & Donna Kelly). *Somewhat regular in se. part of region; less so north & west of range.*

Aplomado Falcon – An Aplomado Falcon soared near Utopia, *Uvalde* 2 Oct (Mitch Heindel). It could not be determined if the bird was banded or not. *Difficult to determine if any Aplomados are wild or part of re-introduction programs.*

Prairie Falcon - Notable Prairie Falcon sightings include the following: one at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* 1 Oct (Peg Wallace), one on Ft. Hood, *Coryell* 11 Nov (Rich Kostecke, Anthony Hewetson), and another near Granger L., *Williamson* 17 Nov (Rich Kostecke). *Rare but expected annual visitor during the fall/early winter.*

King Rail - Rarely detected in central Texas, a King Rail was heard along Stillhouse Hollow Res., *Bell* 27 Oct (Rich Kostecke). *Found less than annually in region.*

Virginia Rail - A Virginia Rail was detected along Stillhouse Hollow Res., *Bell* 16 Nov (Randy Pinkston). *Late migrant.*

Purple Gallinule - A nice find in the San Antonio area, a Purple Gallinule was at Braunig L., *Bexar* 20 Aug (Mike Sims). *Rare in our region but more expected along se. edge of region.*

American Golden-Plover - Two American Golden-Plovers were detected along Granger L., *Williamson* 27 Sep (Tim Fennell), while a lone bird was near Uteley, *Bastrop* 9-10 Oct (Brush Freeman). *Rare but seemingly regular fall migrant.*

Snowy Plover - A Snowy Plover along Granger L., *Williamson* 28-29 Sep (Tim Fennell) was a nice find. *Uncommon fall migrant.*

Mountain Plover - Mountain Plovers were rarely reported from their regular areas around Granger, *Williamson* and New Braunfels, *Comal*. Away from these locations, 13 birds were studied s. of Andrews, *Andrews* 2 Oct (Brush Freeman), and 12 birds were between Fredericksburg and Stonewall, *Gillespie* 18-25 Oct (Tony Gallucci). *Not detected often away from localized wintering groups.*

Marbled Godwit - A single Marbled Godwit near Uteley, *Bastrop* 22 Oct (Brush Freeman) was a nice fall find. *Rare fall migrant – probably less than annual.*

Wilson's Snipe - An early Wilson's Snipe was at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* 9-11 Aug (Eric Carpenter). *Early.*

Red-necked Phalarope - Single Red-necked Phalaropes were at Andrews, *Andrews* 27 Sep (Erik Breden) and near Midland, *Midland* 29 Sep (Rose Marie Stortz). *Regular and expected in small numbers in w. portion of region.*

Laughing Gull - Two Laughing Gulls at Braunig L., *Bexar* 17-21 Aug (m.ob.) were likely pushed inland by Tropical Storm Erin. Single Laughing Gulls were also reported along the Belton L. Spillway, *Bell* 11 Aug (Gil Eckrich, Sabrina Nicholson) and at Hornsby Bend, *Travis* 25 Sep (Peg Wallace). *Irregular migrants; occasionally pushed inland due to tropical storms/hurricanes.*

California Gull - An ad. California Gull at L. Buchanan, *Llano* 24 Nov (ph., Tim Fennell) was likely the same individual that has visited here during the fall/winter since 2003. *Good find anywhere in the region – typically less than annual.*

Sabine's Gull - A Sabine's Gull was present in Andrews, *Andrews* 15 Sep (Erik Breden). *Rare but regular fall migrant.*

Pomarine Jaeger - Kirby L., *Taylor* hosted an immature Pomarine Jaeger 8 Nov+ (Heidi Trudell, m.ob.). *Irregular visitor to region; the least expected jaeger inland in TX (?).*

Long-tailed Jaeger – One of the highlights of the season, and perhaps the result of Tropical Storm Erin, a Long-tailed Jaeger lingered at Braunig L., *Bexar* 17-19 Aug (†Martin Reid, m.ob.). *T.B.R.C review species though likely an annual visitor to the state. My guess it was either blown in by the storm or had its migration stopped because of it.*

Jaeger species - A jaeger unidentified as to species was seen at a distance on Granger L., *Williamson* 7 Oct (Eric Carpenter et al.). *Only 2nd jaeger to be found on Granger Lake; discussion with local fisherman indicated bird may have been present for a few days prior.*

Lesser Nighthawk - As many as 9 Lesser Nighthawks were present near Cibolo, *Comal* 6 Sep – 15 Oct (Susan Schaezler). *An unexpected "pocket" of this species a bit north of their usual range – especially due to the numbers and duration of this sighting.*

Buff-bellied Hummingbird - A Buff-bellied Hummingbird was in nw. Austin, *Travis* 29 Aug – 13 Sep (Eric Carpenter). *Seemingly almost annual around Bastrop and Gonzales, not frequently seen in Travis County nor this far up the edge of the Edwards Plateau.*

Anna's Hummingbird - Quite rare for central Texas, an Anna's Hummingbird was present near Dripping Springs, *Hays* 5-6 Nov (ph. Howard Williams). *Less than annual visitor to eastern part of region.*

Calliope Hummingbird - A Calliope Hummingbird stopped near Uteley, *Bastrop* 18-19 Aug (Brush Freeman). *More expected in western part of region, still rare and perhaps regular visitor to eastern section.*

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - Two different Broad-tailed Hummingbirds were in w. Austin, *Travis* with one present 31 Aug – 2 Sep (Ed Fair) and another present 27 Aug+ (Judy Quick). *It is becoming more regular in area, though unusual for a bird to stay the season and into the winter.*

Allen's Hummingbird – An imm. Allen's Hummingbird near Utopia, *Uvalde* 2-17 Oct (Mitch Heindel) was identified by its distinctive display flight. Whether this is a valid identification criterion is uncertain. *Due to identification difficulties, may be more regular than we know.*

Ringed Kingfisher - Ringed Kingfishers seemed to retreat a bit from positions in central Texas due to the flooded rivers that came as a result of the summer rains. However, they did seem to return towards the middle of the period, including a single bird along the Llano R. near Mason,

Mason 25 Oct (Dixie Feuerbacher & Bobbye Frazier). *Seemingly becoming established in river drainages in south and southeast portions of region.*

Red-naped Sapsucker -Red-naped Sapsuckers were photographed at 2 locations: one near Uteley, *Bastrop* 21 Oct (Brush Freeman) and another along the Leon R. on the n. side of L. Belton, *Bell* 28 Oct (Rich Kostecke). *Still less than annual in the eastern portion of the area, perhaps owing to lack of attention given to YB Sapsucker-types.*

Western-type Flycatcher -A Western-type Flycatcher was studied at McKinney Roughs, *Bastrop* 28 Nov (Brush Freeman). *Species has visited Bastrop area in past fall/winters at different locations.*

Black Phoebe - Up to 2 Black Phoebes were in Abilene, *Taylor* 17-19 Nov (Dan Symonds) while two others were near Midland, *Midland* 11 Nov (Bill Lupardus). *Sightings are just beyond the tip of established range.*

Say's Phoebe - Say's Phoebes seem to be regular fall visitors to north and east of Austin. One was at Granger L. Dam, *Williamson* 11 Nov (Tim Fennell) while another was at L. Pflugerville, *Travis* 12 Nov (Tim Fennell). *Seemingly regular now in/around the Granger area in fall/winter.*

Ash-throated Flycatcher - A late Ash-throated Flycatcher was near Thrall, *Williamson* 11 Nov (Tim Fennell). *Late migrant or over-wintering bird.*

Great Kiskadee - The Great Kiskadee from last fall returned to Abilene, *Taylor* 5 Nov+ (Laura Packer). *Exceptional find so far north.*

Couch's Kingbird – A single Couch's Kingbirds was near Uteley, *Bastrop* 10 Sep (Brush Freeman) and two were in Austin, *Travis* 6 Oct (Victor Emanuel). *Reported with some frequency around the Austin area.*

Cassin's Vireo - A Cassin's Vireo was studied at McKinney Roughs, *Bastrop* 29 Nov (Brush Freeman). *Status difficult to determine due to identification difficulties.*

Hutton's Vireo - Becoming more expected in the hill country, Hutton's Vireos were noted near Utopia, *Uvalde* 22 Sept+ (Mitch Heindel) and throughout the period at Lost Maples S.N.A., *Bandera* (Mitch Heindel). *Perhaps uncommon though localized resident of parts of the hill country.*

Green Jay - Green Jays occurred in larger than usual numbers in the northern part of their range, with a single bird even noted as far north as s. San Antonio, *Bexar* 25 Nov (Andy Garcia). *Part of a good "invasion" of this species.*

Gray-breasted Martin – A Gray-breasted Martin was briefly studied near Utopia, *Uvalde* 15 Oct (†Mitch Heindel) and documentation will be reviewed by the T.B.R.C. There are only 2 accepted records for the state, both being specimens collected in the 1880s.

Red-breasted Nuthatch - Red-breasted Nuthatches had a good fall with fair numbers noted in by many observers in numerous locations. The earliest of these was a single bird near Uteley, *Bastrop* 1 Sep (Brush Freeman). *Exceptional fall for this irruptive species.*

Rock Wren – On the eastern edge of their expected breeding range, a fledging Rock Wren and 2 adults were at L. Georgetown Dam, *Williamson* 1 Aug (Tim Fennell). *Nice breeding record on edge of range.*

Canyon Wren - Canyon Wrens are not prone to wandering so an individual at Independence Park, Gonzales, *Gonzales* 9 Aug (ph. Greg Lasley) was quite noteworthy. *First county record?.*

Western Bluebird - An impressive 10 Western Bluebirds were noted in n. *Kimble* 19 Nov (Noreen Baker). *Species is not reported that often in region.*

Mountain Bluebird - A single Mountain Bluebird wandered near L.B.J State Park, *Blanco* 24 Nov (ph., Tim Fennell). *Irregular visitor to eastern portion of region.*

Blue-winged Warbler - Always a nice find in central Texas, single Blue-winged Warblers were noted in nw. Austin, *Williamson* 1 Sep (Mikael Behrens), and another one in Austin, *Travis* 3 – 28 Sep (Kenny Anderson). *Less than annual during the fall in eastern part of region.*

Black-throated Blue Warbler - A female Black-throated Blue Warbler lingered in Austin, *Travis* 30 Oct – 4 Nov (Kenny Anderson, m.ob.). *Rare but regular fall visitor.*

Black-throated Gray Warbler - Providing a first refuge record, a Black-throated Gray Warbler put in an appearance at Balcones Canyonland N.W.R., *Travis* 20 Sep (Chuck Sexton). *Excellent find in eastern portion of region.*

Pine Warbler - A Pine Warbler was noted as far west as n. *Kimble* 19 Nov (Noreen Baker). *More common along eastern edge of region.*

MacGillivray's Warbler - MacGillivray's Warbler seems to be regular as far east as *Comal*, where different individuals were photographed near Cibolo 27 Aug and 5 Sep (Susan Schaezler).

Western Tanager - A female Western Tanager was a surprise in nw. Austin, *Travis* 13 Sep (ph., Ron Wild). *Rare find for the Austin area.*

Green-tailed Towhee - Out-of-range Green-tailed Towhees include one near Thrall, *Williamson* 11 Nov (Tim Fennell) and another at Mitchell L., *Bexar* (Georgina Schwartz et al.). *Species prone to wander a bit; probably almost an annual visitor to eastern portion.*

Lark Bunting - A few Lark Buntings were east of their usual haunts with one nw. of Dripping Springs, *Hays* 3 Nov (Byron Stone), 4 in se. *Bell* 4 Nov (Randy Pinkston) and two birds near Thrall, *Williamson* 11 Nov (Tim Fennell). *Almost annual though in varying numbers to eastern edge of region.*

Dickcissel - A late Dickcissel was near Thrall, *Williamson* 11 Nov (Tim Fennell).

Bullock's Oriole – Quite late was a Bullock's Oriole in Midland, *Midland* 22 Nov (Don & Joann Merritt).

Audubon's Oriole - A slight northern push of Audubon's Oriole was noted with 2 birds near Rio Medina, *Medina* 26 Oct – 1 Nov and again on 28 Nov, and one bird at Mitchell L., *Bexar* 18 Nov (Georgina Schwartz et al).

Purple Finch - Two Purple Finches were noted at Pedernales Falls S.P., *Blanco* 3 Nov (Don & Joan Felch, *vide* Byron Stone), a location where this species has spent time in past years. *Not found (nor reported) that frequently (and in lesser numbers) then several years ago.*

Cassin's Finch - Excellent finds for the region, single Cassin's Finches were photographed at Andrews, *Andrews* 24 Oct (Erik Breden) and near Utopia, *Uvalde* 27 Nov (Mitch Heindel).

Cited observers and contributors:

Kenny Anderson, Noreen Baker, Andy & Julia Balinsky, Mikael Behrens, Lorie Black, Erik Breden, Eric Carpenter, Grant Critchfield, Mike Creese, Gil Eckrich, Victor Emanuel, Dodge Engleman, Ed Fair, Craig Farquhar, Don & Joan Felch, Tim Fennell, Dixie Feuerbacher, Bobbye

Frazier, Brush Freeman, Tony Gallucci, Andy Garcia, Mitch Heindel, Anthony Hewetson, Alvin & Donna Kelly, Rich Kostecke, Greg Lasley, Leslie Linehan, Bill Lupardus, Ray Matlack, Lori Markoff, Janice McClintock, Don & Joann Merritt, Claude Morris, Gary Newgord, Sabrina Nicholson, Laura Packer, Judy Quick, Randy Pinkston, Martin Reid, Susan Schaezler, Georgina Schwartz, Chuck Sexton, Mike Sims, Byron Stone, Dan Symonds, Rose Marie Stortz ,Heidi Trudell, Peg Wallace, Ron Wild, Howard Williams