

Fall 2007 ABA Report – Panhandle and South Plains.

Compiled by Anthony Hewetson

The year continues to be a bit odd – weird weather getting weirder by the day and migrant patterns not making a lot of sense. We had a great fall for warblers – well over twenty species recorded in the region – but flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, and grosbeaks were, at best, so-so. Some winter species – Winter Wrens and Golden-crowned Kinglets come to mind – seem to have almost completely passed us by. Other winter species – Carolina Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, Townsend's Solitaires – are in the best numbers I have seen in ten years.

Waterfowl through Vultures

Snow Goose – 6 at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 25 Aug (BP) – provided a very early report for the Panhandle.

Ross's Goose – One at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 25 Aug (BP) – provided an incredibly early report for the Panhandle.

Brant – One well-described bird at Earl Crow Park, *Lubbock* 22 Nov (PK) – provided the eighth record for the South Plains of this accidental species.

Wood Duck – 2 at Clapp Park, *Lubbock* 19 Aug (AH) – provided a very early report; only the second August report for the South Plains.

Clark's Grebe – One at Lake Meredith, *Moore* 24 Oct (BP) and one at Lake Meredith, *Hutchinson* 18 Nov (BP).

Brown Pelican – One at White River Lake, *Crosby* 16-28 Sep (JB, AH) – was the eighth record of this species; accidental to the South Plains.

Great Egret – 4 at Lake Meredith, *Moore* 27 Oct (BP) – provided a very late fall record for the Panhandle.

Roseate Spoonbill - One near Ransom Lake, *Lubbock* 17 Aug (PK, AH, photos) – represented the fourth record of this species; accidental to the region.

White Ibis – 5 over Farwell, *Parmer* 4 August (WC) – provided the first record of the species for the Panhandle.

Raptors through Terns

Harris's Hawk – One adult near Barwise, *Floyd* 9 Sep (AH) – represented a very rare sighting of this species on the South Plains whereas one in Gray 2 Nov (MDL, JDL) represented an even rarer sighting of this species for the Panhandle.

Whooping Crane – One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 27-28 Nov (JS) – represented the seventeenth record of this species; accidental for the South Plains.

Willet – 2 at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 25 Aug (BP), one near Ralls, *Crosby* 25 Aug (AH), two at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 15 Sep (BP), one at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 22 Sep (EC), and one near Abernathy, *Hale* 26 Sep (AH) – made for an exceptional fall for this very rare migrant through the region.

Dunlin – 2 at Lake Meredith, *Moore* 24-27 Oct (BP) – provided a solid fall record of this very rare migrant through the region.

Sanderling – 2 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 15 Sep (AH) – represented the ninth record for this species; accidental to the South Plains.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – 3 near Morton, *Cochran* 22 Sep (TS) – represented the fifth record of this species; accidental to the South Plains.

American Woodcock – One at Mitchell Creek Preserve, *Donley* 9 Nov (BD, DD, BP) – represented a first county record of this species; accidental to the Panhandle. One in Lubbock, *Lubbock* 27 Oct (RL) – represented the third record of this species; accidental to the South Plains.

Red-necked Phalarope – 2 near Idalou, *Lubbock* 25 Aug (AH), one at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 25 Aug (BP), 6 at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 15 Sep (AH), 22 at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 30 Sep (BP), 6 at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 27 Oct (BP), and one at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 3 Nov (BP) – represented the best fall for this species in at least a decade for the entire region. 71 at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 22 Sep (EC) – represented a record number for any site in the region.

Sabine's Gull – 2 at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 22 Sep (EC) had dwindled to one at Cactus Playa, *Moore* 29 Sep (BP, photos) – representing one of less than ten records of this species for the Panhandle.

Least Tern – One near Hale Center, *Hale* 9 Sep (AH) – represented a first county record for this species; accidental to the South Plains.

Pigeons through Woodpeckers

Chuck-will's-widow – One near Roaring Springs, *Motley* 25 Aug (AH) and one in Matador, *Motley* 7 Oct (AH) – represented the first two records for the county of this species; essentially accidental to the South Plains.

Violet-crowned Hummingbird – One in Lubbock, *Lubbock* 5-27 Nov+ (PS, photos) was the bird of the period – representing the first record of this species for the entire region.

Flycatchers through Swallows

Eastern Wood Pewee – One singing along Red Mud Road, *Dickens* 30 Sep (AH) – provided a first county record for this species; accidental to the South Plains.

Hammond's Flycatcher – One at Yoakum County Park, *Yoakum* 1 Sep (AH) – represented the twelfth record of this species; status currently poorly understood for the region.

Northern Shrike – One near Thalia, *Foard* 26 Nov (JK, TK) – provided a very rare report of this species for the region.

Cave Swallow – 9 near Post, *Garza* 13 Oct (AH) – provided a record late date for this species in the region.

Titmice through Warblers

Carolina Chickadee – One at MacKenzie Park, *Lubbock* 9 Oct (PK) – was early and represented a very rare sighting of this species; essentially accidental to the South Plains.

Red-breasted Nuthatch – One at Yoakum County Park, *Yoakum* 15 Sep (AH) was very early and – represented only the sixth September record for the South Plains. Five October reports and five November reports scattered across the Panhandle as well as three October reports and four November reports scattered across the South Plains – were unusual for so early in the year and probably represented the beginning of an irruptive event.

White-breasted Nuthatch - One in *Hutchinson* 14 Nov (PC) and one on the WTAMU Campus, *Randall* 26 Nov (CF) – represented very rare fall records for the Panhandle – whereas one at MacKenzie Park, *Lubbock* 8 Nov (PK) and 2 at the Lubbock Cemetery, *Lubbock* 25 Nov (AH) – represented an invasion for the South Plains; for any time of year.

Virginia's Warbler – One near Plains, *Yoakum* 14 Oct (AH) – represented a very rare sighting for the South Plains ... though sightings have been increasing throughout the region in recent years.

Blackburnian Warbler – One at the Petersburg Cemetery, *Hale* 26 Sep (AH) – represented a first county record for this species; accidental to the South Plains.

Palm Warbler – One in a Lubbock yard, *Lubbock* 13 Oct (KD), one at Yoakum County Park, *Yoakum* 24 Oct (AH), and one at the Lubbock Cemetery, *Lubbock* 28 Oct (AH) – made for an unusually strong showing this season for a species that is rarely reported more than once a year.

Worm-eating Warbler – one at Lake Six, *Lubbock* 29 Sep (AH) – represented a very rare sighting for the South Plains ... though this is the single best location in the region.

Tanagers through Finches

Eastern Towhee – One at Mitchell Creek, *Donley* 23 Nov (BP, photos) – represented the third definitive record of this species; accidental to the Panhandle.

Le Conte's Sparrow – One at the Petersburg Cemetery, *Hale* 26 Sep (AH) – was very early, representing the third September record for the South Plains.

Painted Bunting – One female in Canyon, *Randall* 6 Oct (MS) – was very late, representing the second October record for the Panhandle.

Bronzed Cowbird – 3 in Littlefield, *Lamb* 13 Aug (AR) – represented a first county record – whereas one in Littlefield, *Lamb* 24 Sep (AR) and one at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Sep (AH) – represented record late dates for the species in the region, suggesting that the species presence in the region is strengthening.

Undocumented Rarities

Red Phalarope – Cactus Playa, *Moore* 27 Oct.

Observers

JB – Jean Broadhvest
EC – Eric Carpenter
WC – Wayne Cherry
PC – Patricia Collins
BD – Brad Dalton
DD – Diane Dalton
JDL – Jennifer DeLeon

MDL – Manuel DeLeon
KD – Ken Dixon
CF – Connie Fordham
AH – Anthony Hewetson
JK – Jan Kaspar
TK – Tim Kaspar
PK – Phillip Kite
RL – Rob Lee
BP – Barrett Pierce
AR – Anona Roberts
MS – Monty Schoenhals
PS – Patrick Shaw
JS – Jude Smith
TS – Tom SoRelle