

Summer 2007 ABA Report – Panhandle and South Plains.

Compiled by Anthony Hewetson

The year continues to be a bit odd – mostly due to large amounts of moisture piled up ... and continuing to pile up ... throughout the region. Water levels have finally started dropping in some regions and shorebirds are starting to show up but nothing particularly unusual. Waders continue to delight and I suspect fall may be downright dazzling for these guys. A few early migrant songbirds make up the rest of the picture ... along with the continued success of the relatively new breeding contingent: Cave Swallows, Yellow-breasted Chats, Field Sparrows, Indigo Buntings, Bronzed Cowbirds.

Grasshopper Sparrows and Dickcissels bred successfully throughout the region – in the highest numbers anybody can recall.

Waterfowl through Vultures

Snow Goose – 4 at Cactus Playa, Moore 24 Jun (BP) – provided a very late report for the Panhandle.

Ross's Goose – 4 at Cactus Playa, Moore 24 Jun (BP) – provided an incredibly late report for the Panhandle.

Gadwall – 2 broods 18.1 miles east northeast of Tulia, Swisher 13 Jul and 3 broods present at the same location on 27 Jul (2 assumed to be the same one as seen on the 13th) (BJ) – only about 10 or so nesting records for the state.

Northern Shoveler – brood of 9 on a playa about 17.4 miles east of Happy, Swisher (BJ) – another very rare nesting record.

Least Bittern – 2 including at least one juvenile at Lake Six, Lubbock 15 May-26 Jul (CM, photos, mob) – provided the eighth record for the region and the first breeding record for the South Plains.

Little Blue Heron - one adult near Cotton Center, Hale 8 Jul (AnH) – very rare in the region; this is the first July report since 2000 for the South Plains.

Raptors through Terns

Osprey – One near Abernathy, Hale 10 Jun (GB) – accidental in the region during the summer; the third June report ever for the South Plains.

Sora – One at Lake McLellan, Gray 2 Jun (LS) – accidental in the region during the summer; the second June report ever for the Panhandle.

Snowy Plover – One pair on three eggs and several other pairs at Pauline Lake, *Hardeman* 10 June (BP) – first report of breeding in Hardeman County.

Upland Sandpiper – 2 just north of Lubbock, *Lubbock* 8 Jul (AnH) – these were either very early migrants, possibly the earliest reported for the South Plains, or breeders; in either event the species is accidental during the summer.

Franklin's Gull – One in Lubbock, *Lubbock* 2 Jun (TS) - accidental in the region during the summer; the third June report ever for the South Plains.

Least Tern – 3 adults with at least one nest at Childress Lake, *Childress* 10 Jun (BP) – first record for the county and, obviously, first breeding record for the county.

Pigeons through Woodpeckers

Chuck-will's-widow – The pair at nest with two young along Mitchell Creek, *Donley* continued through 2 Jun (BP, photos) – the first confirmed breeding record for the Panhandle; very exciting. One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 10 Jun (AnH) – was incredibly far west for the species in our region.

Red-headed Woodpecker – One near Bull Lake, *Lamb* 10 Jun (AnH) – was far west of its usual haunts in the region.

Flycatchers through Swallows

Willow Flycatcher – One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 28 Jul (AnH) and one in Tahoka, *Lynn* 29 Jul (AnH) – very early migrants; the fourth and fifth July records ever for the South Plains.

Least Flycatcher - One at Plains County Park, *Yoakum* 28 Jul (AnH) – a very early migrant; the third July record ever for the South Plains.

Cave Swallow – 4 west of Post, *Garza* 9 Jun (AnH), 22 east of Post, *Garza* 16 Jun (AnH), and 8 at the Meadow Rest Area, *Terry* 25 Jun (AnH, RL) – firmly established in the region but no evidence, this year, of further expansion.

Titmice through Warblers

Yellow Warbler – 2 in near Bula, *Bailey* 10 Jun (AnH) – very late migrants; only the ninth June record for the South Plains.

Yellow-breasted Chat – 15 adults and at least 2 fledglings at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Jun (AnH) – the only know nesters in the region; this recently-discovered population is still going strong.

Tanagers through Finches

Field Sparrow – 6 adults and one nest with 4 nestlings at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Jun (AnH) – the only known nesters in the region; this recently-discovered population is hanging on.

Black-headed Grosbeak - One at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 10 Jun (AnH) – a very late migrant; only the second June record ever for the South Plains.

Indigo Bunting – 6 adults and 2 fledglings at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Jun (AnH) – the only nesters located in the region this year but this recently-discovered population is hanging on.

Bobolink – One very well-described female at Oasis Creek Ranch, *Hemphill* 14 Jul (BP) – accidental for the region; one of a mere handful of reports from the last decade.

Bronzed Cowbird – 1 male at Lubbock State School, *Lubbock* 7 Jun (PK), 2 males at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 10 Jun (AnH), 2 males and one female at the Lubbock Cemetery, *Lubbock* 17 Jun (AnH), 4 males and 2 females at White River Lake, *Crosby* 30 Jun (AnH), 4 males and 2 females in Ropesville, *Hockley* 4 Jul (AnH), 2 males at Muleshoe NWR, *Bailey* 28 Jul (AnH), and one male at the Lubbock Cemetery, *Lubbock* 31 Jul (AnH) – a good solid season for the species in the region but no evidence of further expansion.

Observers

GB – Greg Burnham

AnH – Anthony Hewetson

AvH – Aveline Hewetson

BJ – Bill Johnson

PK – Phillip Kite

RL – Richmond Lee

CM – Claudette Miller

BP – Barrett Pierce

LS – Laura Sare

TS – Tom SoRelle