

**North American Birds**  
**Winter 2021-2022**  
**South Texas**

The warm and unseasonable warm weather from fall continued well into December. After the holidays cold weather finally started invading South Texas but the winter birds didn't arrive with the cold air. Most wintering species were in reduced number or virtually absent (Cedar Waxwings, sparrows, etc.) from South Texas this winter.

**Notable Observations:**

Fulvous Whistling-Duck – Two Fulvous Whistling-Ducks reported from Aransas NWR in Aransas Co 6 Dec (ph. Jon McIntyre) along with 10 birds seen near Port Lavaca in Calhoun Co 16 Dec (Brent Ortego et al) were of note.

Cackling Goose – Up to 7 Cackling Geese present near Edcouch in Hidalgo Co 9-15 Jan (Connie Unsicker et al; ph. Dan Jones) was a rare occurrence for the LRGV.

American Wigeon – A count of 3,356 American Wigeon made at Laguna Atascosa NWR in Cameron Co 28 Dec (Mark Conway) was pretty impressive.

Canvasback – Impressive for the southerly location were 350 Canvasback reported from Osprey Overlook at Laguna Atascosa NWR in Cameron Co 23 Jan (Ryan Rodriguez, Shawneen Finnegan, Dave Irons).

Harlequin Duck – Two **Harlequin Ducks** discovered at the Port Aransas Jetty Nueces Co 19 Feb (ph. Tripp Davenport) sent shockwaves throughout the Texas birding community considering the ultra rare status (i.e., only two prior state records) of this species in the state!! Even the fishermen who were on the jetty got excited! The birds stayed through the end of the season (ph. m.obs.).

Black Scoter – A female Black Scoter graced the South Padre Island Jetty in Cameron Co 14 Dec (ph. Brad McKinney).

Long-tailed Duck – Two Long-tailed Ducks were found on the cooling pond at the STP Nuclear Power Plant in Matagorda Co 20 Dec (ph. Stephen Gast).

Common Goldeneye – A Common Goldeneye was present 16-28 Dec at South Padre Island in Cameron Co (m.obs.) provided for a rare deep South Texas record.

Groove-billed Ani – Groove-billed Anis wintered at several scattered locations in the LRGV with the most notable being two birds reported from Roma Bluffs in Starr Co 8 Feb (Ken Blankenship et al). Further north up to eight birds could be found at Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve in Nueces Co (ph. Brad Shine, David Grise; m.obs.). In Port Aransas up to four Groove-billed Anis hung out at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center (m.obs.).

Chimney/Vaux's Swift – A Chimney/Vaux's Swift observed at Riverside Park in Victoria Victoria Co 23 Dec (Ron Weeks) added to the pile of frustrating Texas records with Vaux's Swift still not officially on the state list. The observer tried for photos but was unsuccessful.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird – An immature male Broad-tailed Hummingbird seen at a feeder at Hazel Bazemore Park Nueces Co 18 Dec (Emma Mathis) was likely a late migrant.

American Avocet – A group of 26 American Avocets reported from the Falfurrias Gravel Pits in Falfurrias Co 24 Dec (Steve Glover, Greg Cook) was noteworthy for the location well away from species' typical coastal habitat.

American Golden-Plover – An American Golden-Plover seen at Kaufer-Hubert Memorial Park in Kleberg Co 5 Feb (Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey) is hard to decipher if it was a very early spring migrant or perhaps a wintering bird.

Dunlin – Twenty Dunlin seen near Falfurrias in Brooks Co 24 Dec (Steve Glover, Greg Cook) were well inland away from the coast. The 4,910 Dunlin counted on the Boca Chica mudflats in Cameron Co 15 Dec (ph. Justin LeClaire, Stephanie Bilodeau) was an amazing concentration of birds.

Purple Sandpiper – A Purple Sandpiper discovered on the South Padre Island Jetty in Cameron Co 18 Jan (ph. Mark Wilson; Van Pierszalowski) was sporadically seen to at least 1 Feb (ph. Jim Danzenbaker).

American Woodcock – Three American Woodcocks reported from Goose Island State Park in Aransas Co 29 Dec (Jeff Gordon et al) were noteworthy. Much further south single birds were reported in Hidalgo Co from Alamo 9 Dec (ph. Anne Mayville et al), Estero Llano Grande State Park 15 Dec (Jim Danzenbaker), Mission (ph. Logan Dovalina), and Edinburg Wetlands 9 Jan (ph. Wayne Alford; m.obs.).

Red-necked Phalarope – A Red-necked Phalarope spotted at the South Padre Island Jetty in Cameron Co 23 Jan (ph. Alina Martin; Joe Corcoran) provided for a rare mid-winter record for the state while another Red-necked/Red Phalarope seen at La Sal del Rey in Hidalgo Co 14 Jan (Jim Danzenbaker et al) was too far away to identify properly.

Parasitic Jaeger – Four Parasitic Jaegers were observed from Matagorda Bay Nature Park/Jetty in Matagorda Co 20 Dec (Petra Hockey, Eric Carpenter, Bill Eisele) while further south at the Port Aransas Jetty a lone bird was reported there 4 Feb (ph. Tripp Davenport) along two birds there 20 Feb (Greg Cook et al) while two birds were seen from the beach 24 Feb (ph. Bob Friedrichs).

Pomarine Jaeger – Four Pomarine Jaegers were encountered offshore in Nueces Co waters 29 Jan (Jon McIntyre).

Black-legged Kittiwake – An immature Black-legged Kittiwake was spotted roosting on the beach at Matagorda Bay Nature Park/Jetty in Matagorda Co 5 Jan (ph. Jean Suplick; Michael Matuson). Much further south, another immature Black-legged Kittiwake found at the South

Padre Island Jetty in Cameron Co 22 Jan (Gary Rosenberg, ph. Chris Benesh) was also a one day wonder.

Bonaparte's Gull – Two adult Bonaparte's Gulls reported from Falcon Lake, Falcon State Park in Starr Co 5 Feb (John Pike) were noteworthy for the westerly location.

Little Gull – A Little Gull was found at Green Lake in Calhoun Co 16 Dec (ph. Hank Arnold, Diane Nunley). It was reported again at this location 23 Dec (Brent Ortego). An adult and a 1<sup>st</sup> winter bird delighted birders 24-28 Feb at Port Aransas in Nueces Co (ph. m.obs.).

Franklin's Gull – Franklin's Gull can be enigmatic in South Texas especially in mid-winter. It's hard to decipher if these birds are still heading south or coming back north or just wandering/wintering. So, the three birds seen at the Hargill Playa in Hidalgo 10 Jan (Jim Danzenbaker, Jim Zervos) along with a lone bird reported from Falcon State Park Starr Co 13 Jan (Jonathan Lautenbach, David Lautenbach) added to the enigma.

California Gull – A 2<sup>nd</sup> winter California Gull stopped by the South Padre Island Jetty Cameron Co 10 Jan (ph. Javi Gonzalez) while an adult was spotted on the beach on Mustang Island Nueces Co 26 Feb (ph. Jon McIntyre).

Iceland Gull – The adult Iceland Gull that spent the previous winters along the JFK Causeway in Nueces Co returned for another season 1 Dec (ph. Mel Cooksey). Two 1<sup>st</sup> winter birds were reported from the Brownsville Landfill in Cameron Co 4 Jan (Mary Gustafson).

Caspian Tern – A careful count of 67 Caspian Terns made as the birds flew upriver at Salineno in Starr Co 26 Feb (Martin Dellwo) was impressive for the inland location.

Pacific Loon – A Pacific Loon was reported from Ingleside San Patricio Co 17-22 Jan (Skip Cantrell et al).

Magnificent Frigatebird – Single Magnificent Frigatebirds reported at South Padre Island in Cameron 14-30 Dec (Brad McKinney et al), Saluria Bayou in Calhoun Co 26 Dec (ph. Allan Berger), and Port Aransas in Nueces Co 11 Dec – 5 Jan (m.obs.) were notable for their lateness.

Trindade Petrel – A light morph **Trindade Petrel** photographed in the fog from the Port Aransas Jetty Nueces Co 22 Feb (ph. Skip Cantrell) sent shockwaves throughout the Texas and even out-of-state birding communities!! This first state and Gulf of Mexico record made lots of birders envious and inspired them to bird these and other jetties a lot more!! This species of *Pterodroma* was certainly not on most Texas birders' radar.

Masked Booby – Port Aransas Nueces Co seemed to be the epicenter for Masked Booby this winter: one was picked up on the beach near Horace Caldwell Pier and taken to rehab 26 Dec (Andrew Orgill, Rylee Gonzales), another bird picked up near here 9 Jan (ph. Andrew Orgill, Rylee Gonzales), and another bird observed feeding near the South Jetty 23 Jan (Willie Sekula, Kim Garwood). Further down the Texas coast a sub-adult was reported from the jetty at South Padre Island Cameron Co 24 Jan (ph. Jim Lind).

Brown Booby – A group of 13 Brown Booby seen in Corpus Christi Nueces Co 17 Jan (ph. Dan Hayes) was a good sign since this species took a beating last February with Arctic Storm Uri.

Golden Eagle – Golden Eagles made their presence known this winter in South Texas. Single birds were reported from the King Ranch – Santa Gertrudis Division in Kleberg Co 2 Jan (ph. Tom Langschieff et al), Laguna Atascosa NWR Cameron Co 8 Jan (Javi Gonzalez), Sandia in Jim Wells Co 14 Jan (ph. Jane Tillman; Mark Lyon), near Riviera Kleberg Co 19 Feb (Caleb McKinney) & 27 Feb (ph. Adam McInroy).

Rough-legged Hawk - Rough-legged Hawks were well south of range in the Coastal Bend with one southwest of Austwell, Refugio Co 16-23 Jan (ph. Angel Zakharia, ph. Susan Foster) and another east of Riviera, Kleberg Co 16 Jan+ (ph. Mike Stewart, m.obs.) present for the second consecutive winter.

Roseate Spoonbill – An immature Roseate Spoonbill present 1-27 Feb (ph. Mario Galvan; m.obs.) at Laredo Webb Co was of note for the well inland westward location.

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl – A vocalizing Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl heard at Chapeno Starr Co 18 (rec. Van Remsen, Steve Mlodinow) recalled days of old when the species was seen consistently at the clothesline below Falcon Dam.

Red-headed Woodpecker – An immature Red-headed Woodpecker observed in Aransas Co 15 Dec (ph. Kevin Cochran) was a good find for the Coastal Bend.

Bat Falcon – A **Bat Falcon** discovered at Santa Ana NWR in Hidalgo Co 8 Dec (ph. Rebecca Gelenter) disappeared for another ten days (much to the horror of birders!!) before it was refound 18 Dec (Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts). Word got out quickly that morning and birders began making the pilgrimage for this long overdue U.S. and Texas first! The Bat Falcon could be incredibly frustrating and hard to find at times and at other times incredibly cooperative. It continued to delight birders through the end of the season.

Rose-throated Becard – The Rose-throated Becard found in Nov at Bentsen RGV State Park Hidalgo Co was seen off and on through the end of Feb (m.obs.). Another Rose-throated Becard was seen at Salineno Starr Co 7 Feb (ph. Troy Corman; Tom Lewis).

Dusky-capped Flycatcher – A calling Dusky-capped Flycatcher was detected and seen at Salineno in Starr Co 9 Dec (Jim Danzenbaker). Another Dusky-capped Flycatcher visited Laguna Atascosa NWR in Cameron Co 21 Dec – 19 Jan (ph. Loch Kilpatrick; m.obs.).

Social Flycatcher – The Social Flycatcher continued to delight birders the whole season at UT Brownsville Cameron Co (m.obs.).

Fork-tailed Flycatcher – The Fork-tailed Flycatcher continued from the fall at San Benito Wetlands Cameron Co to 18 Dec (m. obs.).

Plumbeous Vireo – A Plumbeous Vireo was present at the Roselawn Cemetery in McAllen Hidalgo Co 13-17 Jan (Jon McIntyre et al).

Warbling Vireo – A Warbling Vireo was reported from Santa Ana NWR Hidalgo Co 29 Jan (Simon Tolzmann et al).

Blue Jay – A Blue Jay reported from Choke Canyon State Park – Calliham Unit in McMullen Co 4 Dec – 27 Feb (ph. John Terry, Skip Cantrell) was well away from the species more easterly habitats.

American Crow – Two American Crows reported from Taft in San Patricio Co 17 Dec (David Grise) were west of this corvid's usual range.

Chihuahuan Raven – A Chihuahuan Raven reported near Beeville in Bee Co 24 Dec (Gene Blacklock) was well east of the species usual haunts.

Purple Martin – A male Purple Martin seen in Palacios Matagorda Co 2 Jan (Bob Friedrichs) was early for spring.

Bank Swallow – A Bank Swallow spotted hawkling insects over Mittag Pond near Riviera in Kleberg Co 5 Feb (ph. Martin Reid, Sheridan Coffey) may have been an early migrant.

Brown Creeper – A Brown Creeper reported from Santa Ana NWR in Hidalgo Co 18 & 20 Dec (Lisa Murray, Dean Silvers; Laura Bunton) was rare for deep South Texas.

Wood Thrush – A Wood Thrush reported from Port Aransas Nueces Co 9 & 20 Dec (Warren Pulich Jr.) may have been a late migrant.

Clay-colored Thrush – Four Clay-colored Thrushes reported from Beeville in Bee Co 27 Dec (Jeremy Webster) illustrates the species continuing northward march in South Texas.

American Pipit – A very large flock of 200 American Pipits was observed in a field near Crystal City in Zavala Co 23 Jan (ph. Troy Hibbitts, Marla Hibbitts).

Sprague's Pipit – Two Sprague's Pipits flushed on a Webb Co ranch near Laredo 4 Feb (Willie Sekula) were noteworthy for the Brush Country location.

Brewer's Sparrow – A Brewer's Sparrow seen near Palacios in Matagorda Co 9 Dec (Robyn Savage) was well east of the species typical wintering grounds.

Green-tailed Towhee – A Green-tailed Towhee seen near Port Lavaca in Calhoun Co 16 Dec (ph. Robyn Savage) was well east of the species usual wintering area.

Orchard Oriole – A female Orchard Oriole observed in Victoria in Victoria Co 12 Jan (ph. Joanna Kahlhoefer) provided for a rare inland winter record.

Hooded Oriole – A male Hooded Oriole was seen off and on throughout the season at at the South Texas Botanical Gardens in Corpus Christi in Nueces Co (ph. Ruben Ayala).

Louisiana Waterthrush – In Goliad Co three Louisiana Waterthrushes were reported along the San Antonio River in Goliad and Goliad State Park (Derek Muschalek) 16 Dec.

Golden-winged Warbler – A male Golden-winged Warbler that visited a birdbath in an Aransas Co yard 9 Dec (ph. Jan Wimberley) was likely a very late fall migrant.

Tennessee Warbler – A Tennessee Warbler seen in Cameron Co at the Laguna Vista Nature Trail 15-21 Dec (ph. Madeleine Sandefur) along with a bird on South Padre Island Cameron Co 7-11 Dec (ph. Dan Jones) were likely late migrants. A bird present at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center in Port Aransas Nueces Co 26 Dec (ph. John Hoverman) and a bird seen at Bentsen State Park 1 Jan (ph. Jeff Corcoran) may also have been a late migrants.

American Redstart – A female American Redstart reported from Goliad State Park Goliad Co in late Nov was seen again 4 Jan (ph. Steve and Sue Whitmer).

Northern Parula – A Northern Parula reported from Lake Findley in Jim Wells Co 12 Dec (Nancy & Bill LaFramboise) may have been a late migrant.

Tropical Parula – A Tropical Parula visited the Falfurrias Cemetery in Falfurrias Co 20 Dec (Jay Packer, Amy Packer, Ryan Shaw).

Magnolia Warbler – A Magnolia Warbler found near Flour Bluff in Nueces Co 18 Feb (ph. Jason Page) was likely a locally wintering bird.

Yellow Warbler – A Yellow Warbler observed at Laredo Webb Co 22 Feb (ph. John Diener, Lizzie Diener).

Black-throated Blue Warbler – Black-throated Blue Warbler is always a treat to see in South Texas so a stunning male present at Laguna Atascosa NWR in Cameron Co 5 Jan+ (ph. Kevin Aanerud; m.obs.) was especially sweet in winter.

Prairie Warbler – Single Prairie Warblers were encountered at the Sargent Unit of San Bernard NWR in Matagorda Co 17 Dec (Ron Weeks et al), Selkirk Poinsett Matagorda Co (Susan Heath, Ron Weeks), Brownsville Cameron Co 4 Jan (Javi Gonzalez) and near Mission Hidalgo 8 Jan (ph. Caley Thomas).

Black-throated Green Warbler – Single Black-throated Green Warblers of note were reported from Rosehill Cemetery in Corpus Christi Nueces Co 22 Dec – 1 Feb (ph. Will Puryear et al) and at Angelita Ranch in San Patricio Co 18 Dec (ph. Mikael Behrens).

Golden-crowned Warbler – The Golden-crowned Warbler continued at Valley Nature Center in Weslaco Hidalgo Co 11 Nov continued through the period.

Crimson-collared Grosbeak – The Crimson-collared Grosbeak continued at Quinta Mazatlan in Hidalgo Co until 29 Jan (m.obs.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak – A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported from Calhoun Co 27 Dec (ph. Susan Heath).

Black-headed Grosbeak – A Black-headed Grosbeak again wintered at Goliad State Park in Goliad Co (ph. Ken Karwoski et al). Another bird was seen at a San Patricio Co location 30 Jan (Gene Blacklock).

Indigo Bunting – Six Indigo Buntings reported from Goose Island State Park Aransas Co 28 Feb (Elaine Carwile) were of note for the number.

Lazuli Bunting – A female Lazuli Bunting was reported from Brownsville Cameron Co 20-21 Jan (Peter Weber, Blair Bernson).

#### **Cited Observers**

Kevin Aanerud  
Wayne Alford  
Hank Arnold  
Ruben Ayala  
Mikael Behrens  
Chris Benesh  
Allan Berger  
Blair Bernson  
Stephanie Bilodeau  
Gene Blacklock  
Ken Blankenship  
Laura Bunton  
Skip Cantrell  
Elaine Carwile  
Kevin Cochran  
Sheridan Coffey  
Mark Conway  
Greg Cook  
Mel Cooksey  
Jeff Corcoran  
Joe Corcoran  
Troy Corman  
Jim Danzenbaker  
Tripp Davenport  
Martin Dellwo  
John Diener

Lizzie Diener  
Logan Dovalina  
Bill Eisele  
Shawneen Finnegan  
Bob Friedrichs  
Mario Galvan  
Kim Garwood  
Stephen Gast  
Rebecca Gelenter  
Steve Glover  
Jeff Gordon  
Rylee Gonzales  
Javi Gonzalez  
David Grise  
Mary Gustafson  
Dan Hayes  
Susan Heath  
Marla Hibbitts  
Troy Hibbitts  
Petra Hockey  
John Hoverman  
Dave Irons  
Dan Jones  
Joanna Kahlhoefer  
Ken Karwoski  
Loch Kilpatrick  
Nancy & Bill LaFramboise  
Tom Langschied  
David Lautenbach  
Jonathan Lautenbach  
Justin LeClaire  
Tom Lewis  
Jim Lind  
Mark Lyon  
Jon McIntyre  
Adam McInroy  
Brad McKinney  
Caleb McKinney  
Alina Martin  
Emma Mathis  
Michael Matuson  
Anne Mayville  
Steve Mlodinow  
Diane Moravek  
Derek Muschalek  
Lisa Murray

Diane Nunley  
Andrew Orgill  
Brent Ortego  
Amy Packer  
Jay Packer  
Jason Page  
Van Pierszalowski  
John Pike  
Warren Pulich Jr.  
Will Puryear  
Martin Reid  
Van Remsen  
Ryan Rodriguez  
Gary Rosenberg  
Madeleine Sandefur  
Robyn Savage  
Ryan Shaw  
Dean Silvers  
Brad Shine  
Jean Suplick  
Connie Unsicker  
John Terry  
Caley Thomas  
Jane Tillman  
Simon Tolzmann  
Peter Weber  
Jeremy Webster  
Ron Weeks  
Steve and Sue Whitmer  
Mark Wilson  
Jan Wimberley  
Jim Zervos