

FINAL
North American Birds Journal
North Central Texas Region
Fall (August-November) 2019 Bird Report

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Highlights

The very cooperative long visiting post-breeding Swallow-tailed Kite and a Brown Booby, both in Dallas County, were favorite highlight for many birders early in the season. Other highlights included: Pomarine Jaeger, Sabine's Gull, Common Tern, Couch's Kingbird, Violet Green Swallow, and four unexpected warblers: Worm-eating-Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Prairie Warbler, all of which unfortunately were only one-day wonder highlights and see only by a few observers.

The number of late migrant birds reported was way above normal. Only those that are regional late records based on available data are included in this report. The overall family review and seasonal weather summaries are presented below the potentially noteworthy sightings.

Potentially Noteworthy Sightings

Common Merganser – Casual was a Common Merganser at Muddy Creek Inlet, Lake Ray Hubbard, *Dallas* 6 Nov (Chris Runk),

Least Grebe – Casual was a Least Grebe at Village Creek Drying Bed, *Tarrant* 10-21 Nov (Colby Ayers, m.ob., ph.).

Western Grebe – Only two single Western Grebes were reported this fall: Lake Kemp, *Baylor* 26 Oct (Greg Cook) and at Lake Throckmorton, *Throckmorton* 6 Nov (Scotty Lofland). This species ranges from rare to casual yearly in fall.

Clark's Grebe – Casual east of normal range was a Clark's Grebe on Lake Wichita *Archer/Wichita* 31 Oct (Scotty Lofland, ph.), and another or the same on Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant*, 1 Nov (John Allendorf), and one at Miller's Creek Reservoir, *Baylor* 15 Nov (Greg Cook).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo – Totally unexpected was a region late record Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Lake Tawakoni SP, *Hunt* 15-18 Nov (Vernon Patterson, ph.).

Anna's Hummingbird – Well east of expected seasonal range was an immature Anna's Hummingbird which visited a restricted access feeder on Cross Creek Dr. Kennedale, *Tarrant* 22-30+ Nov (Marta/Gary Wnonowska, Ed Wetzel, ph.) providing n-central Texas only its fourth documented record.

Surf Scoter – Rare regionally but locally uncommon the past few years was a Surf Scoter at Southside Water Treatment Plant, Seagoville, *Dallas* 20-26 Oct (Roland Castaneda, ph. m.ob.); another was a L. Pat Cleburne, *Johnson* 27 Nov (Ty Allen).

Whooping Crane – Always a rare sighting was a flock of eight Whooping Cranes southbound over Joshua, *Johnson* 31 Oct (Ty Allen, ph.) and five over Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* 6 Nov (Terry Schmidt).

Piping Plover – Four Piping Plovers were unusually late: a single Piping Plover at Lake Lewisville Park, *Denton* 30 Aug (Ken Pankhurst); a first fall bird at North Lake, *Dallas* 30 Sep – 2 Oct (Roland Castaneda, ph.), which was banded at Adobe Creek Reservoir, Colorado and a very late immature Piping Plover was found at Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* 13 Oct (John Allendorf).

Red-necked Phalarope – Always a rare find was up to two Red-necked Phalaropes at Hagerman NWR, *Grayson* 24-25 Aug (Mike Cameron, ph.) and a single at Lemmon Lake, *Dallas* 29 Sep (Ben Sandifer, ph.).

Pomarine Jaeger – Accidental inland away from the coast was an Arctic storm-driven **Pomarine Jaeger** flying south over North Fork Buffalo Creek Reservoir, *Wichita*, 11 Nov (Ben Sandstrom, ph.).

Iceland Gull – Locally uncommon in recent years but rare regionally was a first winter Iceland (Thayer's) Gull at the White Rock Lake spillway, *Dallas* 1-30+ Nov (Chris Runk, m.ob., ph.).

Sabine's Gull – Always a rare unexpected find was a Sabine's Gull at Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* 23 Oct (John Allendorf, ph.).

Common Tern – Four single Common Terns was an above average total for this rare fall migrant: Lake Lewisville Park, *Denton* 23 Aug (Winston Caillouet, ph.), Miller's Creek Reservoir, *Baylor*, 24 Aug (Scotty Lofland, ph.); Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* 11 Oct (Greg Cook, John Allendorf). Very late was another single at Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* 11 Nov (John Allendorf, ph.).

Brown Booby – A Brown Booby was a surprise visitor to Mountain Creek Library Pond, *Dallas* 29 Sep-11 Oct (Jason Fisher, Ed Wetzel, ph., m.ob.).

Glossy Ibis – Two Glossy Ibis were found at Hagerman NWR, *Grayson* where they are rare but regular migrants: 1 Sept (Christian Walker, Brad and Laura Shine, ph.) and one 16 Sep (Jana Singletary).

Swallow-tailed Kite - The nearly annual post-breeding Swallow-tailed Kite returned to southeast Dallas area around the intersection of Blindsey/South Belt Line roads, *Dallas*, 1-9 Sep (Ed Wetzel, m.ob., ph.).

Golden Eagle – East of normal regional range was a Golden Eagle over FM 2846, Holiday, *Archer* 3 Nov (Scotty Lofland, ph.).

Ash-throated Flycatcher – An Ash-throated Flycatcher was an unexpected find northeast of normal range along Clear Creek Heritage Center, *Denton* 27 Nov (Blaine Carnes).

Couch's Kingbird. A vocal migrant Couch's Kingbird was seen at Village Creek Drying Beds, *Tarrant* 29 Aug (Christian Walker, ph.).

Violet Green Swallow – An easterly out of normal range, well-described immature Violet Green Swallow was seen irregularly at North Holiday Park, Lake Benbrook, *Tarrant* 11-13 Oct (Greg Cook, John Allendorf, ph.).

Bushtit – Very scarce and casual in w-central Texas as a Bushtit north of normal regional range at Lake Throckmorton, *Throckmorton* 9 Nov (Scotty Lofland).

Philadelphia Vireo – Casual in fall was a well described Philadelphia Vireo along the western shore of Lake Arrowhead, *Archer* 7 Sep (Scotty Lofland).

Worm-eating Warbler – Casual at best and west of normal range was a Worm-eating Warbler at Lake Lewisville Environmental Center, *Denton* 19 Aug (Alan Gann).

Golden-winged Warbler – A first fall Golden-winged Warbler at the Fort Worth Nature Center, *Tarrant* 15 Oct (Cody Norris) was a rare regional record.

Kentucky Warbler – A Kentucky Warbler was unexpected net capture at the Lake Lewisville Environmental Center, *Denton* 20 Aug (Alan Gann, ph.).

Cape May Warbler – A Cape May Warbler was a great rare find at the Wise County Park, Lake Bridgeport, *Wise* 22 Oct (Michelle Summers, ph.). This species has now been found in the region three of the last four years. In the past its status has been casual at best with many years (10-20) between sightings.

Black-throated Blue Warbler – Always an exciting casual find was a very cooperative male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Prairie Creek Park, Richardson, *Collin/Dallas* 16 Oct (Elke Soliday, Pat Michaelson, Ross Rasmussen, ph., m.ob.).

Palm Warbler – A Palm Warbler at Village Creek Drying Beds, *Tarrant* 14-30+ Nov (Ed Wetzel, m.ob. ph.) was late.

Prairie Warbler – A Prairie Warbler at the Lake Lewisville Environmental Center drip, Denton 5 Aug (Alan Gann, ph.) was an unexpected rare find west of normal range and one at Lanewood Circle, *Dallas* 13 Oct (Annika Lindqvist, ph.) was record late for n-central Texas,

Black-throated Sparrow – A well-described Black-throated Sparrow was at best a casual eastern, out-normal range observation for the central section of the region at Highland Springs Pond, *Collin* 27 Sep (Steve Svedeman).

Bronzed Cowbird – A Bronzed Cowbird found at Hwy. 287 and N. Cooke Rd., *Ellis* 23 Oct (Ted Drozdowski, ph.) was a casual regional find and one of the few reported for n-central Texas.

Weather

Overall it was hotter and drier than normal in the first half of the season. The average temp through August to early October was a sizzling 95 degrees. Many remarked it was the never-ending summer as a stationary high never moved away resulting in no cold fronts for the region. However, by mid-October strong fronts arrived and temps were well below normal (10-20 degrees). Winter weather conditions arrived very early this year. By late October and into mid-November it felt like normal December/January weather. Rainfall ranged from below to near normal.

Overview

Herons/Egrets, Waders, and Wetland Birds

As water levels lowered in early fall, heron and egret numbers increased in the region. Spoonbill post-nuptial wanderers were in near average numbers while White Ibis numbers ranged from average to below average. Wood Stork numbers were well below average compared to previous years with only one notable flock of 60.

Shorebirds

Most water bodies had only marginal edge habitat for migrant shorebirds. Regional species diversity was near average overall, but daily diversity and abundance was well below average most days. The lack of good foraging habitat in most locales was a major contributing factor.

Terns

Breeding Least Terns were again scarce at most locales continuing the current trend during the past five years – high water levels the last two years certainly was a factor. Overall the species continues to decline in the region. Migrant Black Tern numbers were generally near average.

Raptors

The first strong cold front in October resulted in a large number of Swainson's hawks and of course Turkey Vultures. In contrast, it was a very poor fall migration of Broad-winged Hawks and accipiters. Winter hawk reports to date are very low.

Hummingbirds

Rufous hummingbird reports were below average. Ruby-throats numbers appeared to be near average.

Passerines

Based on general observation reports and Ebird reports it appeared that the early fall migration was a typical trickle of birds. The number of mostly single individual late warbler reports in October was significantly above average, Warbler rarities in October were above average, late passerines were above average. The late movement was likely due to the large stationary warm weather high over the central US during September.

Winter Birds

By the end of November wintering birds were in present in number only at widely locations. Overall lower than normal bird numbers were present in more than a few localities. Very little ice and snow cover south in the US this winter to date.

Observers

Ty Allen
John Allendorf
Winston Caillouet
Mike Cameron
Roland Castaneda
Greg Cook
Ted Drozdowski
Jason Fisher
Alan Gann
Annika Lindqvist
Scotty Lofland
Pat Michaelson
Cody Norris
Ken Pankhurst
Vernon Patterson
Ross Rasmussen
Chris Runk
Ben Sandifer
Ben Sandstrom
Brad and Laura Shine

Jana Singletary
Elke Soliday
Michelle Summers
Steve Svedeman
Christian Walker
Marta/Gary Wnonowaka