

Trans-Pecos region of Texas – Summer 2019 (1 June 2019 – 31 July 2019)
Noteworthy Bird Sightings

Compiled by Eric Carpenter and Jim Paton

Counties Covered: Brewster, Crane, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Val Verde, Ward, Winkler

Seasonal Summary:

El Paso area: It was a pretty uneventful summer birdwise with minimal birder activity. Temperatures were generally hot with limited rainfall. A stronger monsoonal pattern did not pick up until August. High water at area reservoirs again resulted in no consistent shorebird habitat. Spring migration did not trickle much into June aside from a few of the usual late migrants like Western Wood-Pewee, Warbling Vireo, and Western Tanager. Fall migration commenced early with more species of passerine than usual on the move by late July, producing several notably early records. This may reflect the dry conditions pushing birds into well-watered neighborhoods. Tropical Kingbirds were a continuing presence at lone *El Paso* and *Hudspeth* sites. Several observers noted low numbers of Calliope Hummingbirds at their feeders.

Notable Species observed during the period:

CINNAMON TEAL – A female Cinnamon Teal with seven young at Dell City 15 Jul (Jim Paton) made for a rare *Hudspeth* breeding record.

BUFFLEHEAD – A female Bufflehead continued from spring at Ascarate Park, *El Paso* through at least 22 Jun (ph., John KIseda) for a rare local summer record.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO – Continued habitat restoration at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park resulted in five detections of Yellow-billed Cuckoo there in Jun (John Sproul) but no confirmation of nesting. Elsewhere in *El Paso*, one was spotted in west El Paso 21 Jun (ph., Jim Paton). The species maintains a tenuous presence in the El Paso area.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD – An adult male Anna's Hummingbird in El Paso, *El Paso* 26-28 Jul (ph., John KIseda) was one of few summer records for Texas.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD – Though arrival dates were typical (mid-Jul), several observers noted low numbers of Calliope Hummingbirds at their feeders (Jim Paton, Barry Zimmer).

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD – Two Broad-billed Hummingbirds were northwest of Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis* 18 Jul (D.D. Currie, Dell Little) with at least 1 continuing 31 Jul+.

VIOLET-CROWNED HUMMINGBIRD – Violet-crowned Hummingbird had a great showing with one west of Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis* 8-29 Jul (ph. Lorrie Lowrie) and another at a different location northwest of Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis* 25 Jul+ (Madge Lindsey, Cecilia Riley, ph. Mike Gray).

WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD – The lone White-eared Hummingbird was one west of Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis* 4 Jul+ (ph. Lorrie Lowrie).

COMMON GALLINULE – A Common Gallinule with two young at McNary Reservoir 23 Jul (Jim Paton) was the first evidence of nesting at that *Hudspeth* site. Common Gallinule is rarely seen at the reservoirs and is more expected in nearby brushy irrigation canals.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW – Twenty-seven Long-billed Curlews at Tornillo, *El Paso* 23 Jul (Jim Paton) was an excellent total for summer.

CASPIAN TERN – Unseasonal was a Caspian Tern at Lake Amistad, *Val Verde* 2 Jul (Mark Lockwood).

LITTLE BLUE HERON – A Little Blue Heron wandered as far west as Independence Creek Preserve, *Terrell* 14 Jul (ph. Nick Glover).

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON – Away from any significant water sources, a young Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Van Horn, *Culberson* 24 Jul (Mark Lockwood) may have been passing through. Two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen numerous times in west El Paso, *El Paso* all period (ph. John Groves) and likely nested. Another adult was at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, *El Paso* 1 Jul (John Sproul). The species seems to be increasing locally.

BLACK VULTURE – Black Vulture is rare but regular along the Rio Grande in *Hudspeth* to about McNary Reservoir, but accidental farther west. Three were near Ft. Quitman, *Hudspeth* 30 July (ph., Jim Paton), feeding with numerous Turkey Vultures on fish trapped in drying pools.

OSPREY – A rare summer Osprey was at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, *El Paso* 21-22 Jul (John Sproul).

WHITE-TAILED KITE – One White-tailed Kite was seen a number of times in Jun at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, *El Paso* (John Sproul, m.ob.) through 25 Jun, with two present 22 Jun (John Sproul), but no nesting was noted.

COOPER'S HAWK – Two pairs of Cooper's Hawk successfully nested in west El Paso, *El Paso* where such events are increasing but still rare: one nest fledged four young (ph. Jody Lawrence) and the other at least one (Jim Paton).

COMMON BLACK HAWK – Out of place was a Common Black Hawk near Devil's River S.N.A., *Val Verde* 3 Jun (ph. John Kuenzli) and another at Independence Creek Preserve, *Terrell* 15 Jul (ph. Scott Summers).

RINGED KINGFISHER – Up to 2 Ringed Kingfishers were at Independence Creek Preserve, *Terrell* 14-21 Jul (Nick Glover, Cecilia Riley) where the species has been intermittently found over the past few years.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER – As many as 3 Dusky-capped Flycatchers were in Boot Canyon, Big Bend N.P., *Brewster* during the spring but the only summer report there was a single bird 21 Jul (Romey Swanson); at least 3 pair were in the Davis Mountains west of Fort Davis, *Jeff Davis* 6 Jun (Steve Cardiff, Donna Dittman).

SULPHUR-BELLIED FLYCATCHER – A Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher seemed to be on territory was along Alamito Creek about 30 miles south of Marfa, *Presidio* 10 Jun – 5 Jul (ph. Stu Wilson, ph. Mark Lockwood) though only 1 bird was ever seen.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD – A pair of Tropical Kingbirds at Independence Creek Preserve, *Terrell* 3 Jun+ (ph., audio, Eric Carpenter) was a nice find as there are still very few records of paired birds away from the coast and Rio Grande corridor. At least several pairs of Tropical Kingbirds nested successfully at Ascarate Park, *El Paso* where as many as a dozen or more birds were readily seen all period with fledglings photographed (m.ob., John KIseda). In *Hudspeth*, a pair was present all period near Dell City (ph., Jim Paton) where nesting was suspected but not confirmed. Tropical Kingbird was first found at these sites in 2018.

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD – A highlight of the summer in Texas was a Thick-billed Kingbird at the Lawrence E. Woods Picnic Area, *Jeff Davis* 21 Jun (ph. Wendy McCrady) which, unfortunately appeared to be a one-day wonder.

WARBLING VIREO – Though it does not nest in *El Paso*, Warbling Vireo commonly lingers into Jun as a spring migrant and begins to return in fall by late Jul. One at Hueco Tanks State Historical Site 20 Jul (Kevin Floyd) was still notably early.

RED-EYED VIREO – Both late and off-course to the west was a Red-eyed Vireo at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., *Brewster* 7 Jun (ph. Ulysses Ortiz). A Red-eyed Vireo in northwest *Hudspeth* 15 Jul (ph., Jim Paton) was just the second county record but the first documented, and only the second for summer in the El Paso area.

YELLOW-GREEN VIREO – The Yellow-green Vireo from the spring at The Post park south of Marathon, *Brewster* remained throughout the period (m.ob.).

STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE – An interesting oriole that looked to be perhaps a Streak-backed Oriole from a southern subspecies/population in far southern Mexico or central America was present at The Post park south of Marathon, *Brewster* 9-10 Jun (ph. Mark Lockwood).

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH – A Louisiana Waterthrush along Cibolo Creek near Shafter, *Presidio* 14 Jul (ph. John O'Brien) was intriguing as either a lost summering bird or perhaps an early post-breeder/migrant.

TROPICAL PARULA – A male Tropical Parula at Rio Grande Village, Big Bend N.P., *Brewster* 15 Jun (ph. Mike Stewart) was perhaps the same bird that was seen nearby during the spring.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER – At least 4 vocal Black-throated Gray Warblers were along the lower portion of the Dog Canyon trail, Guadalupe Mountains N.P., *Culberson* 1 Jun (Chris Runk); a lone bird and a pair were detected in the same area 5 Jul (Dominic Le Croisette). A Black-throated Gray Warbler was early at Hueco Tanks State Historical Site, *El Paso* 20 Jul (Kevin Floyd) but there are previous county records for late Jul.

SLATE-THROATED REDSTART – The seemingly paired-up Slate-throated Redstarts found in late spring in Boot Canyon, Big Bend N.P., *Brewster* continued through the period (ph., m.ob.) though no signs of successful nesting were ever reported.

WESTERN TANAGER – Western Tanager can occur at odd dates throughout the summer in *El Paso*, especially in Jul, but such records are rare in *Hudspeth* due to much less coverage. A male Western Tanager was in northwest *Hudspeth* 15 Jul (ph., Jim Paton).

NORTHERN CARDINAL – Northern Cardinal has consolidated its presence at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, *El Paso* with at least one to three or more birds all period and nesting confirmed of at least one pair (m.ob., John Sproul). It continues to be casual elsewhere in the county.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *El Paso*, *El Paso* 3 Jun (ph., John Kiseda, Kathy Kiseda) was one of few summer records.

Cited observers:

Steve Cardiff, Eric Carpenter, D.D. Currie, Donna Dittman, Kevin Floyd, Nick Glover, Mike Gray, John Groves, John Kiseda, Kathy Kiseda, John Kuenzli, Jody Lawrence, Dominic LeCroisette, Madge Lindsey, Dell Little, Mark Lockwood, Lorrie Lowrie, Wendy McCrady, Ulysses Ortiz, John O'Brien, Jim Paton, Cecilia Riley, Chris Runk, John Sproul, Mike Stewart, Scott Summers, Romey Swanson, Stu Wilson, Barry Zimmer,